

Application Number/s: 131395/FO/2021

Applicant: Landa Corporation Limited

Agent: Tang and Associates Limited

Location: 65 Bridge Street, Manchester, M3 3BQ

Proposal: Conversion of upper floors (first and second) from 1.no 5-bedroom duplex to 4.no self-contained 1 bedroom apartments.

Ward: Deansgate

Description of Site and Surrounding Area

The application relates to the first and second floor of 65 Bridge Street, a three-storey terraced building located on the north side of Bridge Street within the city centre of Manchester. The building is orientated south and is part of a row of buildings of similar scale but differing appearance, with generally little uniformity. The building has access to the rear onto Back Bridge Street.

Description of Proposal

The application seeks permission to convert an existing 5-bedroom duplex apartment set out over the first and second floor, to 4.no 1-bedroom self-contained apartments. The alterations propose no notable external alterations, but do include minor alterations to the ground floor layout to the retained retail unit to provide the necessary refuse storage.

Amendments Requested

During the course of the planning application assessment, amendments were sought and secured to increase the floor area of the apartments proposed so that they accord with the standards and guidelines set out in DCLG's Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standards. In addition, alterations were secured to proposed access arrangements and refuse storage.

Publicity

Site Notice/s Posted and Dates: Posted 21/09/21 Expired 12/10/21

Press Adverts Published and Dates: Published 14/09/21 Expired 05/10/21

Neighbour Notification: As per Appendix

Representations Received:

Consultations

- Highway Services (Received 16/09/21)
- Environmental Health (Received 16/09/21)
- Greater Manchester Police (Received 01/10/21)
- GM Fire and Rescue (No comments received)

Save Unitary Development Plan Policies:

- Section 5: Flat Conversions
- Section 18: Conservation Areas
- Section 26: Development and Noise

Core Strategy Policies:

- SP1: Spatial Principles
- CC3: Housing
- EN3: Heritage
- DM1: Development Management

National Planning Policy Framework Policies:

- Section 4: Decision-making
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
- Section 18: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Principle of Development

The application seeks permission to split a single dwelling (5-bedroom duplex) into 4 one-bedroom apartments. The principle of the residential use in this location is already established.

Paragraph 120(d) of the NPPF states that authorities shall support the development of space that is deemed 'under-utilised' within buildings, especially if this would assist in meeting identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained, as is the case in Manchester's urban centre. It cites an example of space above shops, as is the case in this situation.

Design & Conservation

The proposed internal conversion of the dwelling to facilitate the creation of 4 self-contained flats requires no notable alterations to the external appearance of the building. The building is not a listed building. The building is, however, located within the Parsonage Road Conservation Area and proximate to the Deansgate Conservation Area.

Due to the fact that no notable alterations are to be made to the external fabric of the building, the fact the building is not listed and is not considered to be in the setting of any listed buildings, it is considered that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the Conservation Areas. As such, the proposal accords with Paragraph 202 of the NPPF, as well as saved UDP Policy 18 and

Amenity of Neighbours

The application property retains a ground floor retail unit, currently occupied by a barbers (Use Class E). Upon consideration that the upper floors are already in residential (C3) use, it is not considered that the conversion to 4 self-contained apartments would materially impact the amenity of the ground floor use.

It is not considered that the proposed use would lead to undue impacts on the amenity of any surrounding occupiers or building uses, with the scheme acceptable in this regard and according with CS Policies SP1 and DM1.

Amenity of Occupiers

The proposed development will lead to the creation of 4 no one-bedroom apartments. Upon initial review and assessment, it was evident that the apartments proposed to the first floor would be unacceptably small, providing substandard living accommodation with bedrooms that also did not accord with the DCLG's Technical Housing Standards. However, the planning officer and agent were able to address this issue. The applicant/agent provided amended plans, demonstrating that all of the proposed apartments are at least the minimum size as set out in the DCLG document, with bedrooms that also accord with the conditions set out therein. As such, the internal accommodation is deemed to be adequate, as required under CS Policy DM1, as well as Paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF.

During the planning application process and upon consultation with the Authority's Environmental Health team, it was considered that there were a number of shortcomings in the submitted application information with regards to potential environmental impacts caused by the scheme, or upon the occupiers of the proposed apartments. However, it was considered that suitable planning conditions would make the otherwise unacceptable development acceptable. The conditions will be added as per recommendation from the environmental health team and with agreement with the applicant/agent.

Highways, Accessibility and Parking

The building is set within Manchester's city centre and is thus in a highly accessible location. The lack of car parking is deemed acceptable and to be expected in this location. The development would not lead to a substantial increase in trip generations. Existing access arrangements are to be retained, with main access from Bridge Street only deemed to be acceptable.

Refuse collection from the rear of the building, from Back Bridge Street, is appropriate and the applicant/agent have demonstrated that this is the process in which nearby buildings are served by refuse buildings.

The proposal is deemed acceptable in terms of impact on highways and access.

Safety and Security

As part of the original proposal, one of the apartment units was to be accessed from the rear elevation of the building from Back Bridge Street. The planning officer and an officer representing GMP considered this to be unacceptable, presenting potentially undue security and safety concerns for future occupiers. As such, the proposal was altered and now all residential units shall be accessed from the front elevation only.

Consultation with GMP also recommended that access control, security rated doors for individual apartments and intruder alarms are provided.

Climate Change

The proposed development would increase the provision of city centre housing, which is in a highly sustainable location and would naturally encourage more trips to be made by sustainable methods such as walking, cycling or public transport. In addition, the increase in density in a retained building with minimum intervention required is positive.

In summary, the proposed development would not be expected to lead to pollution or consume a large amount of materials that would lead to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Conclusion

It is considered that, subject to the discharging of appropriate conditions, the proposal represents sustainable development. As per the NPPF, decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development and Paragraph 11 states that applications should be approved without delay where this is the case.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be granted subject to the following planning conditions:

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons