

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 134276/LE/2022

Date registered valid: 6 July 2022

Proposal: Use of property as a small House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4)

Address: 66 Ashford Road, Manchester, M20 3EH

Ward(s): Old Moat Ward

Applicant: Mr Stephen Sowerby 20 Wittenbury Road, Heaton Norris, Stockport, SK4 3LX

Agent (if any):

Case officer: Robert Tyrer
Tel: 0161 234 4068
Email: robert.tyrer@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: GRANT

Date of recommendation: 31 August 2022

Application details

Type of application: Certificate Lawful Development Existing

Development type: Certificates of lawfulness

Date of site visit: None Required

Standard consultations:

No consultations have been printed and sent.

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 15 July 2022 Expired: 5 August 2022

Site notice

No site notice has been produced

Press advert

No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building



The site relates to a two storey semi-detached property in the Old Moat area of Manchester. The property has a low red brick boundary wall to the front with timber fencing and ground floor bay window. Canopy covered entrance with stone headers and buff brick detailing. To the rear the property has a two storey outrigger and rear garden.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The area is predominantly residential in character.

Description of development

The applicant is seeking a Certificate of Existing Lawful Development for use of the property as a small House in Multiple Occupation (Class C4).

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity – Notification letters were sent to nearby residential properties (appendix 1).

Local residents/public opinion – No objections, comments or representations in support of the application have been received.

Planning History – There has been one previous application at this address for a lawful development certificate for the use of the property as a Class C4 House in Multiple Occupation under planning reference: 126005/LE/2020 which was refused for the following reason:

On the balance of probability there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the dwellinghouse at 66 Ashford Road has been occupied as a small scale house in multiple occupation (Class C4 of the schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)) for a continual period between 8 October 2011 to 30th June 2020.

Issues

Legislative Issues

Sections 191 and 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provide for anyone (not just a person with a legal interest in the land) to apply to the local planning authority (LPA) for a lawful development certificate (LDC). A certificate is a statutory document certifying:

(1) in the case of an application under section 191, the lawfulness, for planning purposes, of existing operations on, or use of land, or some activity being carried out in breach of a planning condition; or

(2) in the case of an application under section 192, the lawfulness of proposed operations on, or use of land.

The onus of proof in regard to (1) is firmly on the applicant and the issue of a certificate will depend on the on factual evidence provided about the history and planning status of the building or other land and the interpretation of any relevant planning law or judicial authority. The relevant test of the evidence in this matter is “the balance of probability” and the applicants own evidence does not need to be corroborated by independent evidence. If the LPA have no evidence to contradict

the applicants version of events or make them less than probable, there is no good reason to refuse the issue of a certificate.

In regard to (2), this provides that, if the LPA are supplied with information satisfying them that the use or operations described in the application would be lawful, if instituted or begun at the time of the application, they shall issue a certificate to that effect; and, in any other case, they shall refuse the application.

In short, the purpose section 192 is to enable any person who wishes to find out whether any proposed use or operations would be lawful to apply to the LPA for that purpose

The application needs to describe the proposal with sufficient clarity and precision to enable the LPA to understand (from a written description and plans) exactly what is involved in the proposal; and to submit whatever supporting information or legal submission that are to be relied upon in order to satisfy the LPA that a certificate should be granted for the proposal.

In making their decision on an application under section 192, the LPA ask themselves the hypothetical question - *"If this proposed change of use had already occurred, or if this proposed operation had commenced, on the application date, would it have been lawful for planning purposes?"* In doing so, the LPA will not only consider whether the proposal would involve "development" requiring an application for planning permission, but whether it would involve a breach of any existing condition or limitation imposed on a grant of planning permission which has been acted upon, and which therefore constrains what can be done on the land. The LPA will not make a proposal fit a scenario; the only question is whether the proposal made by the applicant is lawful at the time of submission.

The Application

This application is pursued under subsection (1) of section 191 which provides for an application to determine whether a specified existing use, operation, or failure to comply with a planning condition or limitation, which has already been carried out on land is lawful for planning purposes.

Evidence – The following evidence has been submitted for consideration:

1. A site location plan edged in red.
2. Tenancy Agreements from 2012/13 – 2022/23

The tenancy agreements shows that there have been between four and five occupants have lived at the property continuously for 10 years from 1st July 2012 (signed 25th July 2012) with the last tenancy agreement provided (signed 10th November 2021) starting on the 1st July 2022. The website for which the property is advertised to rent (<https://www.openrent.co.uk/property-to-rent/manchester/5-bed-semi-detached-house-ashford-road-m20/1252266>, accessed 31.08.2022)) indicates that it the property is no longer available to rent as of 10th November 2021). The LPA have reviewed records and found no evidence to contradict the applicants version of events or make them less than probable.

Conclusion - From the information that has been provided it is considered, that on the balance of probabilities, the rooms comprising the property had been let to individual tenants with access to shared facilities. It is therefore considered that the premises were in use as a small house in multiple occupancy (C4 use) for at least 10 years and this use has subsequently continued accommodating between 3 to 6 people.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: GRANT

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

- 1) From the evidence available and with reference to the relevant planning legislation, Manchester City Council is satisfied that the use is lawful by reason of the said use having been in existence for a period of 10 years up to the date of this application.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

61 Ashford Road, Manchester, M20 3FH
93 Old Moat Lane, Manchester, M20 3EJ
95 Old Moat Lane, Manchester, M20 3EJ
91 Old Moat Lane, Manchester, M20 3EJ
63 Ashford Road, Manchester, M20 3FH
59 Ashford Road, Manchester, M20 3FH
68 Ashford Road, Manchester, M20 3EH
64 Ashford Road, Manchester, M20 3EH

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA