

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	24/00171/FUL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Reece Black
<u>WARD:</u>	Prescot North	<u>PARISH:</u>	Prescot Town Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	30 Evans Street, Prescot, Knowsley		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	CHANGE OF USE FROM C3 DWELLING TO 2NO. FLATS		

Site Description

The application site is located at 30 Evans Street, Prescot and is situated within an area which is designated as a Primarily Residential Area in the Development Plan. The application property is a mid-terraced dwelling and is brick facing on its front and rear elevations, together with white UPVC openings and flat, roof tiles. The ground floor to the rear benefits from a single storey outrigger

Bins are stored to the front of the dwelling within an enclosed low brick boundary wall.

The street scene comprises of two uniform building rows of terraced properties.

The application site is currently vacant.

Proposal

The application seeks permission for the change of use from 1 residential dwellinghouse (C3) to 2 flats.

The scope of the works are predominantly internal. There would be only minor external alterations; this would include the installation of two rooflights to the existing rear roof slope.

The agent confirmed via email that each flat would contain single bedrooms – with single beds.

The plans have seen minor amendments to expand the ground floor flat's bedroom to increase the useable floor space.

There would remain a useable garden space which measure circa 29m² available for use by the occupants of the ground floor flat.

Consultations

Prescot Town Council - No Comments Received.
Highway Authority – No objections raised, subject to a recommended Condition.
Environmental Health – No objections received.
Waste Management – No objections received.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 5 neighbours.

There have been 2 letters of objection, 0 letters of support and 0 letters of comment.

The 2 objections received are both from the same residential property and therefore, would be considered as 1 objection.

32 Evans Street - The representations are summarised as follows:-

- The houses are too small for them to be split into flats.
- Already a high turnover and change of new neighbours at the existing property currently.
- There will be an impact on our privacy having the upstairs next door as a property in its own right, looking directly into the rear of our building.
- There will be a noise disturbance due to multiple occupants accessing the property at various times of day and night. Noise nuisance from two flats next door would have a detrimental impact on my job role which is work-from-home based.
- Have been advised that the flats will be let out to NHS workers at the local hospital who in all probability will be scheduled to work unsociable shifts.
- The property will go from being a family home to becoming flats, what type of residents will be living there and will this lead to cases of anti-social behaviour.
- As there will be people living in the upstairs of the dwelling, will this lead to more noise in the night? Will soundproofing be installed to remedy this?
- Concern that this will affect the value of my property and if we decide to sell this could deter potential buyers who might not want to buy a house next to flats.

Some points of objection raised here refer to matters that cannot be considered under planning legislation and therefore will not form a material planning consideration for the determination of the application. Issues such as a frequent change of neighbours, the employment of potential tenants / neighbours and concerns pertaining to property value would not be considered as material planning considerations. The outstanding points raised in the objection will be addressed within the report.

Planning History

No recorded planning history.

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

The site is identified as a site allocated for housing development in the adopted Unitary Development Plan. As such, a change of use of the interior (with very minor external works or alterations) of the existing residential property is considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with local planning policy and guidance.

Regarding the adopted Development Plan policies, the proposed application has regard to policies CS2, CS3, CS17 and CS19 of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2016) and saved policies H5 and H7 of the Unitary Development Plan (2006), together with the Householder Development SPD (2016) and New Residential Development SPD.

These policies and guidance require that new development demonstrates a high standard of design, which does not adversely affect the character of the property or street scene; maintains a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants; avoiding overlooking and overshadowing, as well as an unacceptable overbearing impact; and that adequate parking and garden space would remain for use by residents of the extended property.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles

CS3 - Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution

CS17 - Housing Sizes and Design Standards

CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

H5 - Development within Primarily Residential Areas

H7 - Provision of Flats, Nursing and Residential Homes, Hostels, and Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMOS)

WM9 - Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout of New Development

In addition, the Householder Development SPD (2016) and New Residential Development SPD are a material consideration for the purposes of this planning application and provides additional guidance in relation to householder and residential development within Knowsley Borough.

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating with the applicant, acceptable amendments to the

proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

Saved Policy H5 states that new development within the Primarily Residential Areas (or proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of existing buildings) which is for uses appropriate to a residential area will be permitted provided that the development (either by itself or in conjunction with other developments) would not:

- a) Have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers by reason of noise, disturbance, overlooking, visual intrusion, smells, fumes, on-street parking or other causes
- b) Adversely affect the character or street scene of the area

H7 asserts that proposals for the provision of flats, nursing or residential homes, hostels or Houses in Multiple Occupation (either within new build development or as a result of the change of use of existing property) will be permitted provided that:

- a) There would be no unacceptable increase in the level of noise or disturbance, or loss of privacy, for occupiers of neighbouring property
- b) Any necessary vehicle parking areas would be adequate to meet the needs of the development, safe and screened and/or landscaped so as to avoid causing loss of visual amenity in the area
- c) Bin stores, fire escape and clothes drying areas would be adequately screened or designed so as to avoid causing loss of visual amenity
- d) In the case of proposals to convert existing property, the property would be suitable in terms of its size and character to accommodate the development proposed and
- e) In the case of proposals for nursing or residential homes, hostels or Houses in Multiple Occupation, the proposals would not result in:
 - An existing dwelling having a nursing home, residential home, hostel or HMO on both sides; or
 - More than 2 adjoining properties being used as a nursing home, residential home, hostel or HMO.

CS3 (Principle 4) states that the tenure, type and size of new housing delivered in Knowsley will support the re-balancing of the housing market to better meet housing needs and demands arising in Knowsley. 5.21 of the Core Strategy outlines that a key theme running through the Core Strategy is the need to rebalance the housing market in Knowsley in order to meet the needs of local people. This will include widening the choice of market sector housing across the borough.

Policy CS17 (3) states that for smaller residential developments, a mix of housing sizes should be provided which complement the overall mix available in the area. 8.18 of the Core Strategy stipulates that reflecting national planning policy, Policy CS17 seeks to provide balanced and mixed residential communities, with an appropriate mix of housing sizes and types, to better meet a range of housing needs and demands, across different tenures.

The above policy requirements outline that a change of use from a singular dwellinghouse to two flats, with very minor external alterations, would be supported in principle. The proposal would see the conversion of existing property, which would

be deemed suitable in terms of size and character to accommodate the development. The application site is located within a Primarily Residential Area.

Evidence held by the Council within a document titled Housing Strategy (2022 – 2027), stipulates that in terms of housing requirements, the offer in Prescott needs to deliver bungalows and smaller apartments and a greater emphasis on 1, 2 and 4 bed affordable homes.

The accompanying guidance of H7 (5.53) states that the provision of flats (either through conversion of existing properties or the conversion of existing single dwellings) can provide a valuable addition to the stock of housing. 5.54 outlines that the range of uses described within 5.53, have a legitimate role to play in meeting housing needs. However, as a result of their intensity and nature they can have a greater impact on the surrounding area than other forms of residential development. The cumulative impact of several of these uses on residential areas can be great. The criteria set by policy H7 are intended to ensure that such uses will only be permitted where they would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area and the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring property.

Design, Access and Crime Prevention

The only external alterations which are outlined to take place would be the installation of the two roof lights on the rear roof slope. These would not be facing the street scene or readily visible from the highway. There are no residential properties to the north of the site.

Regarding the internal layout, the technical housing standards – nationally described space standards provide guidance for internal layouts. Point 10 (technical requirements) (c) stipulates that in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5m² and is at least 2.15m wide. The internal floor space of the bedroom within the ground floor flat has been expanded and although is at a shortfall (as measures internally at a width of 2.06m) this is a marginal shortfall and would not be considered to have a detrimental impact. Furthermore, the internal floor space has been increased to provide 8.1sqm³ to ensure sufficient space is available, storage space is provided within this.

The New Residential Development SPD (3.45 – Private Amenity Space) asserts that whatever the size or location of a dwelling there will always be a requirement for some form of private amenity space ranging from balconies, roof gardens and communal private space associated with flats, to back and front garden space. Private amenity space should be usable, accessible, and reasonably free from overlooking, allow for adequate daylight and sunlight, and have regard to the size of the dwelling and the character of the area.

The proposed development would allow a rear garden which would accord with this guidance for the ground floor property. Although, the occupants of the upper storey flat would not have access to the rear garden. Despite this, however, sufficient outdoor amenity spaces are located within close proximity to the application site. This includes Eaton Street Park Meadow and Valerie Park to the west of the application site and under a 5-minute walking distance. On this occasion, this shortfall would be considered acceptable.

The design of the proposed development is subsequently acceptable. The proposal would not be deemed to raise any crime or anti-social behaviour issues.

Overall, the proposed development would have an acceptable design and would comply with policies CS2, CS3, CS17 and CS19, Saved Policies H5 and H7 and largely accord with the New Residential Development SPD.

Residential Amenity

Policy CS19 requires new developments to maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings by avoiding unacceptable impacts on existing residents and future occupants.

Existing residents

The main impacts on the residential amenity surrounding residents would relate to the properties immediately adjacent the application site.

The proposed developments works are predominantly internal and therefore are not considered to result in any adverse harm to visual amenity for nearby residents. The windows are already present for any tenants which could otherwise occupy the existing properties. It would not be considered that the proposal would result in any greater degree of overlooking or loss of privacy than the existing use. Consequently, it would not be deemed to result in any adverse harm on the existing residential amenities or privacy.

The proposed development would largely comprise of internal works. The proposal has been assessed against the Technical Standards and considered on the internal floor space and is deemed adequate for single bedrooms. It would not be considered that the proposal would result in any unacceptable increase of noise and sound disturbance than what could occur within the existing use. This view is supported by Environmental Health who have reviewed the proposal and not raised any objections or provided comments. Soundproofing would not be considered a necessary requirement that the proposal would otherwise be unacceptable without.

The points of objection raised have been addressed and considered within the above. The proposal would be considered not to harm on the character of the existing street scene.

Overall, the proposed development would not be deemed to result in any significant adverse harm to the amenities or privacy of existing nearby residents and would comply with CS2, CS3, CS17 and CS19 and largely accord Saved Policies H5 and H7 and the New Residential Development SPD.

Occupants of the proposed flats

It is considered that the residential amenity of the proposed occupants would be acceptable. As outlined, the proposal would comply with the Technical Standards for proposed internal floor space. The proposal has increased the bedroom of the ground floor space to compensate for any minor shortfall in width. Although, the national described standard is not a material consideration when determining this application, it offers a reference point regarding space that is deemed adequate for good amenity. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Cs17 and CS19 as well as Saved Policy H7.

Due to the lack of accessible private amenity area for the upper storey flat, this property would not have a dedicated clothes drying area. It is considered on the Planning balance; however, this would not be a sufficient justification for a refusal of

the application and therefore, on this occasion, would be acceptable.

Waste Management

At present, bins are stored to the front of the dwelling, within an enclosed area. This is uniform throughout the street scene.

The proposed development has not indicated that additional waste storage would be generated or included any increase in capacity for refuse collection (i.e. additional bins). Discussions were had with the recycling manager from waste management within the Council, who provided the view that the bins the property currently has would be sufficient, however, if both flats were to each pay Council tax, instead of one property, both properties would be eligible for separate waste bins. The enclosed area to the front measures circa 8 sqm² and therefore could accommodate additional bins. This would be down to the needs of any potential future occupants.

Overall, the proposed development be considered acceptable and comply CS2, CS3, CS17 and CS19 and largely accord with the New Residential Development SPD. Saved Policies H5 and H7 and with WM9 of the Merseyside Waste Local Plan.

Highways

The application site is situated in a street where both building rows are terraced property, with all parking being accommodated via on-street.

Saved Policies H5 and H7 outline the importance of adequate parking which would be appropriate to the proposed development and not adversely impact on highway safety.

The proposed development would not be considered to adversely affect the parking conditions, given that it would go from a 2-bedroom house to 2, 1-bed flats.

The NPPF outlines that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residential cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The application has been reviewed by the Council's internal Highway Officers who have not raised any objections, subject to a recommended Condition, relating to eligibility of future occupiers' access to local permit schemes already in place. This is not an issue that can be controlled through the planning application process and a matter for which the Local Highway Authority can control this through their permitting regimes. Subsequently, this Condition won't be included.

The comments received from Highways state that it should be noted that there is insufficient availability of on-street parking in the area within both the town centre and the residents parking areas within the vicinity of the development for any overspill parking to be accommodated. However, the level of parking required for the development would be the same as for the existing two-bedroom property so it is not deemed that the demand for parking would change.

It is noted also that the application site is within close proximity to Prescott Town Centre and sustainable modes of transport via bus stops available on roads such as High Street etc as well as easy pedestrian access to local shops and services. This would ensure that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and ensure that any future applicants had reasonable access to transport.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would accord with CS2, CS3, CS17 and CS19, Saved Policies H5 and H7 and largely accord with the New Residential Development SPD.

Benefits

The proposed development would enable the occupation of a currently vacant property for residential use and would contribute to the mix of housing within the locality, especially where 1-bedroom flats are in demand within Prescot.

Conclusion

The proposal would be acceptable in terms of design, residential amenity and highways. The proposal also complies with the relevant Core Strategy, Replacement UDP policies and guidance in the NPPF and is therefore recommended for approval subject to Conditions.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following Condition(s):-

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
18/07/2024	301	REV A	PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS
10/05/2024	101	-	LOCATION PLAN
10/05/2024	302	-	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

Signed Case Officer¹:

Reece Black

**Signed Authorising
Officer²:**

K Foster

Date:

29 July 2024

¹ I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

² I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

Informatives

- 1 The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority

Standing Advice valid from 1st January 2023 until 31st December 2024