

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	25/00625/FUL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Reece Black
<u>WARD:</u>	Prescot North	<u>PARISH:</u>	Prescot Town Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Mellissa Spa And Nails, 27 Eccleston Street, Prescot		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	SUBDIVISION OF EXISTING FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR FLAT TO FORM 2 NO. 1 BEDROOM FLATS.		

Site Description

The application site is located at Mellissa Spa and Nails, 27 Eccleston Street, Prescot and is situated within both the Prescot Town Centre allocation and the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area in the Development Plan. The site comprises of a mid-terraced, three-storey building, with a retail, commercial use, as a nail and beauty salon to the ground floor with a commercial shopfront to the front elevation, and the first and second floors containing an unoccupied flat, with brick facing elevations and centralised openings to its frontage.

The rear of the premises also contains a two-storey outrigger projection. Access to the first-floor is taken via 2 no. internal staircases – one centrally located at the back of the ground floor and a narrower staircase within the outrigger. A separate staircase from the first-floor accesses the second floor. There is an external steel staircase to the rear of the premises. The rear garden is heavily vegetated and is bounded by a brick wall, which contains an existing access taken via a gate into the rear garden from the adjacent alleyway.

The property is located on a pedestrianised high street with other retail, commercial and residential uses within the locality. Notably Prescot Shopping Centre is located to the south-east and Shakespeare North Playhouse is situated to the north-west. Immediately to the rear of the application property lies an apartment block (Mckennas View) and the Mill Street Car Park.

The application site is located within a (Low-Risk) Coal Area.

Proposal

The proposal is for the subdivision of the existing first and second floor flat to form 2 no.1 bedroom flats.

The proposed works would create 2 no. self-contained flats. The ground floor premises would not be altered and continue to operate as a commercial and retail unit. No external alterations or extensions are included within the proposal.

External access would still be taken via the side alley from the Mill Street Car Park into the rear private amenity area and the external steel staircase which leads into the first-floor.

The proposed works also show that bin and storage would be provided within the rear private amenity area and a permeable access path to provide access.

The proposal has been amended during determination, however, these amendments are minor and therefore did not warrant any further neighbour consultation or publicity.

Consultations

Environmental Health: – No objections received.

Prescot Town Council: – No comments received.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 33 neighbours. It has also been advertised by way site notice and press notice. No representations have been received.

Planning History

No relevant 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.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

- CS2 - Development Principles
- CS3 - Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution
- CS6 - Town Centres and Retail Strategy
- CS7 - Transport Networks
- CS14 - Principal Regeneration Area – Prescot Town Centre
- CS17 - Housing Sizes and Design Standards
- CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
- CS20 - Managing the Borough's Historic Environment

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

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

DQ5 – Development in Conservation Areas

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS & CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

JOINT WASTE LOCAL PLAN FOR MERSEYSIDE AND HALTON (2013)

WM9 – Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout of New Development

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD's)

New Residential Development (2018)

Town Centre Uses (2022)

Prescot Town Centre Masterplan (2016-2028)

Ensuring a Choice of Travel (2010)

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

Saved Policy H7 in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan states that *proposals for the provision of flats, nursing or residential homes, hotels 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 or 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 size and character to accommodate the development proposed*

The Town Centres uses SPD Section 6 (Guidance: Residential Development within Retail Centres outlines that *the provision of residential development within town, district, major or medium local centres, or local shopping centres / parades will generally be supported when it is demonstrated the residential use will not be detrimental to the vitality and viability of the centre, including through:*

- i) The conversion of under-utilised upper floors of commercial buildings into residential properties;*

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The application site is located the Prescott Town Centre, however, the upper floors of the premises (as other units within the locality) provide residential accommodation above the commercial unit. The proposed change of use would simply increase the number of self-contained housing units within the interior of the application property. In principle, given there is an existing residential use (as is common within the locality) and the proposal would continue the existing use.

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – Paragraph 001 *‘Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres’* outlines that *a wide range of complementary uses can, if suitably located, help to support the vitality of town centres, including residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare and educational development.* It furthers that *residential development in particular can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres, giving communities easier access to a range of services.*

Therefore, for these reasons, the principle of development is acceptable, subject to compliance with relevant policy and guidance.

DESIGN AND HERITAGE

The proposed works would involve no changes to the external appearance of the building. All works would be internal and facilitate the internal subdivision of the residential first and second floor into 2 no. self-contained floors and sever the internal connection between the residential units from the ground floor retail use.

The external access into the site and into the building is already existing and taken by the steel staircase. Therefore, there would be no external alterations or changes, and the proposal would not result in any impact to visual amenities of the site or the surrounding character of the area.

The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 outlines that the LPA must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Policy CS20 (Managing the Borough’s Historic Environment) outlines that *development proposals* should preserve or enhance the borough’s historic and architectural assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and archaeological remains, together with other local areas, buildings and structures of historic importance.

The application has been supported by a Heritage Statement which outlines that Prescott Conservation Area is recognised for its historic urban form, traditional building styles, and architectural significance. The building itself is a modest three-storey brick-built property with a traditional shopfront, sash-style windows, and a pitched slate roof. Its architectural contribution to the Conservation Area lies primarily in the buildings scale, external material, and alignment within the surrounding terrace and street scene of Eccleston Street.

Given that the proposed works are internal with no alterations to the exterior of the building and with no changes to the (residential) use of the building. Moreover, the proposal would reinstate the currently unoccupied residential use of the existing building and contribute to the viability of the commercial unit to the ground floor. Bringing a currently vacant residential unit back into use and occupation should hold

great weight in the determination of this application, particularly where there would be no discernible harm to the wider Conservation Area.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Policy CS19 (Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development) (criterion 2) requires that proposals would be expected to maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, development proposals will be required to (as set out in criterion a) avoid unacceptable impacts on existing residents, business occupiers, and future occupiers. Policy CS19 (9.6) furthers that *the design of new development should avoid unacceptable impacts which affect the amenity and living conditions of occupiers of buildings*. Saved Policy H7 furthers that proposals which convert existing property are suitable in terms of size.

Future occupiers of the proposal

For the consideration of the internal layout, the proposals comply with the Government's minimum space standards as set out in the 2015 'Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard' document, in which the technical requirements set out (d) that *in order to provide 2 bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5m² and (e) a double is at least 2.75m wide*. The first-floor bedroom would measure 11.9m² with a width of 3.3m and the second-floor bedroom would measure 12.5m² with a width of 3.3m. The proposed development would ensure that both self-contained flats would adequate internal space and is greater than the minimum amounts set out within the 'Technical Standards' and would ensure that both of the properties are suitable in terms of size and provide decent levels of residential amenity for the future occupiers.

For the consideration of outdoor private amenity space, the garden to the rear of the plot would be re-surfaced with a permeable pathway and the rest of the garden would retain planting. The rear garden would provide access to both occupiers of the flats, and the garden could be useable by the occupiers of both flats. It is not uncommon for properties such as flats to have communal private amenity areas, garden space etc. For the consideration of two separate residences', it is deemed that the rear garden would be sufficient private amenity area to accommodate the 2 no. flats.

Existing adjacent neighbours:

The introduction of an additional residential unit may create a small increase in noise, activity, disturbance from the uplift to 2 no. flats, however given that the proposal of both flats cumulatively, would have 2 no. bedrooms, (in oppose to the 2 no. bedrooms as the current flat has) it would not be anticipated to result in any appreciable increase activity from occupiers and disturbance from comings-and-goings etc. This view is supported by the Council's Environmental Health Officers, who have reviewed the proposal and raise no objections to the application.

The scheme is contained and internal with no external alterations with no additional or newly created openings which would exacerbate overlooking of neighbouring properties. Therefore, no adverse harm to neighbouring amenities would be considered to occur as a result of the proposed development.

HIGHWAYS

The existing premises does not contain any on-site parking spaces and is located within a pedestrianised section of the Town Centre to the front on Ecclestone Street. There is short-stay car parking to the north of the site, however, would not be relied

upon to provide any permanent parking proximate to the site. Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that the lack of on-site parking provision is a similar situation as with other properties in the immediate locality.

Given that the application site is situated within the heart of the Town Centre it is generally accepted that parking for private vehicles can be sparse or not provided. Materially, it is considered that there would not be any significant material change given the existing flat provides 2 no. bedrooms and the proposal would still provide 2 no. bedrooms cumulatively across the 2-no. self-contained flats. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the proposal would create any significant increase in demand for parking spaces.

Moreover, the application site is considered to be sited in a sustainable location given it has leisurely access to local amenities (such as Tesco within Cables Retail Park for everyday items) and facilities sound links to public transport. Bus stops are located on High Street which run both east and west, with the closest bus stops within a 3 (110m) and 4 (150m) minute walk from the application site. Prescott Railway Station, whilst located further away at a distance of 804m and a 10-minute walk (from Google Maps Estimations). For these reasons, future occupiers of the proposal would not likely be reliant upon a private car for access to amenities.

The NPPF (Paragraph 116) states *development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.*

The Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD outlines that for C3 Use properties with 1 bedroom must be able to accommodate a minimum of 1 allocated and 1 communal space) and given the proposal would create 2 no. 1 bedroom self-contained flats, this would result in the requirement for 2 allocated and 2 communal spaces.

Whilst the submitted 'Existing and Proposed Site Layout Plan' (Dwg.No: 1543-02-02-02 REV A) contains an annotation for 'bin and bike storage' no details have been provided. The space allocated for this storage measures 2.9m x 2.5m (7.3 sqm in footprint) which practically would be insufficient to allow the storage of refuse bins and bicycles and allow convenient and practical manoeuvring of the refuse bins and bicycles. As for the car parking considerations, given the application sites location, the proposal would be acceptable without the provision of cycle storage given the site is within a sustainable location with access to public transport routes. Notwithstanding the location of the bin store, no details on elevations, materials etc have been provided, however, these details can be secured by way of planning condition.

For the reasons outlined above, whilst there is limited parking immediately adjacent to the site, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any significant highway safety issues, strain on the local highway network or detrimentally generate an increase to on-street parking (particularly given the pedestrianised section and double yellow lines to nearby roads within the locality. It is for these reasons that a refusal on highway safety and parking provisions would not be recommended as the level of harm is considered to be discernible and would not conflict with the NPPF.

OTHER ISSUES

EXISTING VACANT UNIT

The proposed development would make use of a vacant residential property, whilst providing a further housing unit; both of which would provide acceptable and decent

residential amenities, within an area which is supported for encouraging a degree of residential development (without compromising the vitality and viability of the town centre) and for these reasons would be supported and provide some positive benefits to the locality.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

The application site contains a large amount of dense overgrowth within the plot. Change of use applications are not a reason for exemption for the requirements of BNG, however, the application (and associated development, comprising of bin store area, permeable pathway access) would not exceed the de-minimis figure of 25 sqm and consequently, the application would meet one of the listed reasons for exemption and not be required to comply with the BNG requirements.

COAL RISK AREA

The application site is recorded as being located within a (Low-Risk) coal consultation zone. Whilst the proposed development would predominately involve internal alterations with the external works, i.e. erection of a bin store would not be likely to involve any breaking ground, it is not likely that any issues arising from this constrain would occur as a result of the proposal. Although, for the benefit of the applicant, an informative will be included just to make them aware of the site constraint.

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.

- 3) Notwithstanding the details on the approved plans, prior to the first occupation the converted flats hereby permitted, precise scheme details of bin stores shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide measures for the storage of the requisite number of bins.

The bin stores shall be sited and constructed in accordance with the agreed details before any of the converted flats hereby approved are first occupied and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity and having regard to policies CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted January 2016 and saved policy H5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan and Policy WM9 of the Joint Waste Local Plan 2013.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
24.11.2025	1543-02-01-01	-	LOCATION PLAN
24.11.2025	1543-02-04-02	-	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
24.11.2025	1543-02-03-02	-	PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS
23.02.2026	1543-02-02-02	REV A	EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN

Signed Case Officer¹: Reece Black

Signed Authorising Officer²: Jo Sheridan

Date: 25/02/2026

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 Mining Remediation Authority on 0345 762 6846 or if a hazard is encountered on site call the emergency line 0800 288 4242.

Further information is also available on the Mining Remediation Authority website at: Mining Remediation Authority - GOV.UK

Standing Advice valid from 1st January 2025 until 31st December 2026

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

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