

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	24/00438/FUL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Reece Black
<u>WARD:</u>	Prescot North	<u>PARISH:</u>	Prescot Town Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Prescot Dry Cleaning Centre, 40 High Street, Prescot		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	CHANGE OF USE OF 1NO. RESIDENTIAL FLAT AT FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR TO OFFICES (CLASS E(G)(I)), ERECTION OF TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS		

Site Description

The application site is located to Prescot Dry Cleaning Centre, 40 High Street and is located within an area allocated as both Prescot Town Centre and Prescot Twon Centre Conservation Area in the Development Plan.

The application property is a three-storey, end-terraced dwelling located on a corner plot where Atherton Street meets High Street. The property benefits from aa two-storey rear outrigger, a single storey rear extension, an external rear staircase and a rear yard – the rear courtyard is enclosed by a brick wall access, taken via the gate fronting onto High Street. The ground floor is currently occupied by a dry cleaners (Class E(a)), with the first and second floor occupied by a residential flat (Class C3). There is a Grade II Listed Building at no.37 High Street located to the north (List Entry Number: 1199549).

Proposal

The proposal seeks permission for the change of use of the first and second floor residential flat (Class C3) to offices (Class E(g)(i)). The first floor will comprise 5 no. office rooms, toilets and a communal kitchenette area, with the second floor to include 3 no. offices.

A two-storey rear extension is also proposed which will adjoin onto the existing two storey outrigger, following the removal of the external staircase and brick boundary wall. It would have a depth of 7.65m from the main rear wall and a total width of 6.7m. A part dual-pitch together with a flat roof is proposed and would have a maximum height of 7.25m. To the side elevation facing High Street, a door access at ground floor and a window, sill and header at first floor is proposed (which will be re-used from the removed window to the main rear elevation). The proposed development is outlined to be finished in Weathered Cheshire Pre War – Dual Faced brickwork to the walls and matching slate roof tiles.

The existing gate to the rear yard facing High Street will be replaced by a timber door with louvres above for ventilation. A new entrance door to the offices is also proposed to this elevation and will be finished in wood/timber. Refuse storage is proposed within the rear yard, with cycle storage for 2 no. bicycles proposed within the hallway at ground floor.

Consultations

Town Centre Management: No objections raised.

Environmental Health: No objections; subject to conditions controlling hours of construction.

Highway Authority: No objections; subject to suggested condition for a submission of further details for provision of cycle storage.

Conservation & Design Officer: No comments received. Suggestions were provided during the site visit and these notes were sent in writing to the applicant to consider.

Prescot Town Council: No comments received.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 20 no. neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice and a 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 UDP, 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 (January 2016)

Policy CS1: Spatial Strategy for Knowsley

Policy CS2: Development Principles

Policy CS4: Economy and Employment

Policy CS6: Town Centres and Retail Strategy

Policy CS7: Transport Networks

Policy CS14: Principal Regeneration Area – Prescot Town Centre

Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

Policy CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment

Policy CS26: Waste Management

Saved Policies - Knowsley Replacement UDP (June 2006)

Policy S2: Diversification of Uses within existing Centres

Policy DQ3 Gateway Sites and Corridors

Policy DQ5: Development in Conservation Areas

Policy ENV2: Noise and Vibration

Joint Waste Local Plan (2013)

Policy WM9: Sustainable Waste Management Design & Layout for New Development

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Ensuring a Choice of Travel (2010)

Design Quality in New Development (2016)

Prescot Town Centre Masterplan SPD 2016 - 2028

National Policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Other Material Considerations

Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2012)

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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

The main considerations for this application are:

- Principle of Development;
- Neighbouring Amenities;
- Design and Visual Amenity;
- Heritage Assets
- Parking and Highway Safety;
- Waste;
- Biodiversity Net Gain.

Principle of Development

The proposal is for a change of use of a residential flat to offices (8 no. in total) with an extension to the existing building and the application site is within an area designated as a town centre. Therefore, in principle the change of use and extension would be acceptable and supported, subject to compliance with relevant national and local planning policies.

The application site is located within the Prescot Town Centre, with appropriate access to the Prescot railway station, local bus routes, major road networks and local services

and amenities. It is therefore sustainably located in accordance with CS1 of the Local Plan. The application site is also not designated within any particular action areas identified within the Prescott Town Centre Masterplan SPD. However, the proposal would contribute to a wide mix of town centre uses, ensuring that Prescott Town Centre can provide a healthy and balanced offer, in accordance with Policy CS14 of the Local Plan. The Council's Town Centre Management team has also raised no objections.

The proposed office use will also complement with the scale and role of Prescott Town Centre and would not have a detrimental impact upon its retail function. The application site is also adjoined by various uses would not result in an unacceptable grouping of units, in accordance with Saved Policy S2 of the Knowsley Replacement UDP. The proposal involves the change of use of a residential flat to offices across the first and second floors of the application building. Offices are defined as a main town centre use in the Glossary at Annex 2 of the NPPF and within Annex A of the Local Plan. The proposal seeks the change of use for a main town centre use, within a site located within the Prescott Town Centre. The principle of the proposal is therefore acceptable, in accordance with CS4 and CS6 of the Local Plan and the NPPF, and a Sequential Assessment and a Retail Impact Assessment will not be required.

Residential Amenities

Policy CS2 of the Local Plan seeks to, amongst others, minimise negative impact upon noise or vibration levels and ensure any negative impacts are appropriately mitigated. Policy CS19 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 135 of the NPPF seeks to maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Saved Policy ENV2 of the Knowsley Replacement UDP states that development that will either cause an unacceptable increase in noise or vibration levels or itself be subject to unacceptable noise or vibration from an existing source will not be permitted.

Flats A-G at no.23-25 Atherton Street

There are 7 no. existing flats which adjoin onto the site at no.23-25 Atherton Street to the south. The proposed extension would extend along the shared boundary with these neighbours and will result in a degree of overshadowing onto no.23-25's rear elevation windows and rear yard. However, the nearest rear window (first-floor) to the proposal which will be most impacted is obscurely glazed and is situated within a setback wall between two storey rear outriggers. The light received to this window is therefore deemed to already be comprised; moreover, the proposal will feature a flat roof to the south side, which reduces its overall massing and allows for a degree of light to pass through to this window. The light received to no.23-25's rear yard is also considered to already be limited by the high yard boundary walls and the existing single/two storey rear extensions surrounding it. The window above this (second-floor) would be minimally impacted by the proposal. The windows to the rear elevation of the existing outrigger are not considered to suffer any unacceptable impact to residential amenities. As such, on balance the proposal's overall impact in terms of overshadowing and loss of light is deemed to be acceptable. Additionally, no windows are proposed to the side elevation facing these neighbours and the impact upon loss of privacy and direct overlooking will also be minimal.

No.36 High Street

No.36 is the adjacent building to the west which is in current use as a hairdresser at ground floor and an office at first floor. There are no openings to the side elevation of no.36, which faces towards the application site. The proposed extension would also be distanced over 1.5m away from no.36 and would not extend beyond the front and

rear elevations of this neighbour. The proposal is therefore deemed to have a negligible impact in terms of overshadowing, overlooking and loss of light, privacy and outlooks upon no.36.

No.40 High Street

No.40 includes an existing dry-cleaning business which will be set beneath the proposed offices at ground floor. However, the applicant is in ownership of the whole building and the proposal involves no changes to the ground floor of the dry cleaners. Moreover, given the nature of the proposed use being for offices and that the dry cleaners are currently in commercial use, any impact in terms of noise and disturbance is likely to be acceptable.

No.37 High Street

No.37 is the adjacent building to the north which is currently in use as an office. The proposed extension includes new openings to the side elevation which will face towards this neighbour. However, the openings are to serve the proposed office use and would be distanced over 15m away from the front elevation of no.37. The highway of High Street also provides further separation and the proposal would replicate the same total height as the application property's existing two storey rear outrigger. The proposal's impact in terms of loss of light, privacy and outlooks is therefore deemed to be minimal.

Based on the above, the proposed development is considered to have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbouring residential properties. Environmental Health have also raised no objections, subject to a condition restricting construction hours. However, this requirement is already controlled via other legislative frameworks and will be included as a planning informative instead. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, Saved Policy ENV2 of the Knowsley Replacement UDP and Paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Design and Visual Amenity

Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Local Plan seeks to promote good quality design and ensure that development respects its setting taking into account relevant design requirements, and best practice and that new developments to respond to and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment.

The proposed two storey rear extension would be highly visible from public vantage points and from the key gateway corridor of the A57 road. However, it would appear as a proportionate and subordinate addition, given that it would have a matching ridge and eaves height with the existing two storey rear outrigger. The proposed new window will also be reused from a rear elevation window to be removed and will be horizontally aligned with the existing first floor, side elevation windows to. Although the submitted plans outline that the new facing brickwork would be installed to match the style and materials, the aesthetic details of the detailed decorative brickwork that frames the opening, for the avoidance of doubt, this (together with the cill and lintel) will be further secured by condition. The proposed timber door to the rear yard will also be a replacement of an existing gate, with the proposed new entrance door considered to be of a similar size (with specific details to be secured by condition).

Whilst a flat roof is proposed, this will only be to part of the roof and will be hidden

behind the proposed dual pitch roof element fronting onto High Street. The proposal will also infill an existing gap, with similar red brickwork to be used to the walls and matching slate tiles to be used on the roof, which will complement with the character of the surrounding area. Given that a small gap will be maintained with no. 36 High Street, a terracing impact would not be considered to occur. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable regarding its impact upon design, the street scene and visual amenity, in accordance with Policy CS2 and CS19 of the Local Plan, Saved Policy DQ3 of the Knowsley Replacement UDP, the Design Quality in New Development SPD and Paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Heritage Assets

Prescot Conservation Area focuses on the historic core of the former towns. The application property is not a Listed Building.

The proposal, as amended would be deemed to preserve the local distinctiveness and character of the Conservation Area. The scale is acceptable and would not result in adverse harm. As outlined in the design section, the works completed would largely involve the reusing or introduction of very similar / sensitive materials for the proposal to ensure it appears coherent and not detract from the existing character. The application outlines that the scheme proposes no changes to Atherton Street elevation or any changes are made to the shop front on the ground floor.

Regarding the brick details it has been proposed that Weathered Cheshire Pre War – Dual Faced type will be employed for the external facing walls. There is a decorative brick in detail, (in a contrasting brick) of the windows, which should be replicated. The applicant has shared the details and information; however, it would be necessary to secure further precise details including samples, which can be secured by condition. Details of the two new doors will also be secured by condition. The condition would be deemed necessary given the prominent position in the street scene the proposal would have within the Conservation Area. It is considered, subject to the confirmation of a suitable brick dealt by condition, that the proposal would suitably integrate within the Conservation Area and its immediate landscape. No concerns are raised on the setting of Listed Building.

Overall, notwithstanding the details of exterior brick to be used, the proposal would be considered to have a neutral impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of no.37 High Street. The proposal would be in accordance with Policy CS20 of the Local Plan, Saved Policy DQ5 of the Knowsley Replacement UDP, The NPPF and the Section 72(1) of the LBCA 1990.

Parking and Highway Safety

The proposed scheme has been reviewed by the Council's Highway Authority who have not raised any objections to the scheme. They have suggested a condition be applied, however, to secure further precise details on the provision of cycle storage.

No designated private car parking spaces are outlined within the proposal. Although as outlined, the proposal would be sited within an area with sound provision and access to transport and is within a sustainable transport location given Prescot Train Station and sufficient bus routes through High Street. The proposed development would be considered to accord with the relevant policies and 2 no. cycle storage spaces, secured by condition, would be deemed adequate. Therefore, the proposal would comply with CS7 and the Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD.

Waste

The submitted plans indicate that a rear yard will be provided which will include space for refuse storage. Whilst this area is small, the limited space within the rear yard is an existing situation and is deemed to be sufficient enough to store waste bins. Given that they will be contained within this yard, they will also be discreetly stored and well hidden from public vantage points. An access door will also be maintained to allow for the movement of these bins to be presented on collection days, where this access door will feature louvres above to allow for ventilation. As such, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of waste management, in accordance with CS26 of the Local Plan and WM9 of the Joint Waste Local Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act 2021 introduced a new mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain to ensure that most new developments increase baseline biodiversity value by a minimum of 10%. However, the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 prescribe exemptions for categories of development to which biodiversity net gain does not apply. This includes development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than: 25sq.m (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat and 5m of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows.

The application site is fully hard surfaced and contains no priority habitats or on-site linear habitats which will be affected by the proposed development. The proposal is therefore considered to fall below the de minimis threshold and would be exempt from delivering BNG.

Conclusion

The development is acceptable in principle and would not have an unacceptable impact upon neighbouring amenities, design and visual amenity, heritage assets, parking and highway safety and waste management. The proposal would comply with the policies of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted January 2016), the Saved Policies of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (Adopted June 2006) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

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 any description of materials in the application, no above ground construction works of any phase of development shall take place until samples and full specification of materials to be used externally on the

proposed development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details (doors, main brick, decorative brick, cill and lintel detail) shall include the type, colour and texture of the materials and should be reflective of those at 40 High Street. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed schedule of materials.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Prescott Conservation Area, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted January 2016, Saved Policy DQ5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4) No development shall take place until a scheme for the provision of 2 no. cycle parking details, in accordance with the Council's current standards, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council as Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved before any part of the development is brought into use and shall be retained as such thereafter. For the avoidance of doubt, long stay cycle parking must be covered.

Reason: To ensure that adequate provision is made for parking cycles and motorcycles on the site and to comply with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy, adopted January 2016.

- 5) Prior to the development hereby approved being first brought into use, the provision for waste and recycling bin storage as shown on the approved plans shall be made available for use and thereafter retained.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision for waste and recycling facilities is provided in accordance with Policy CS26 of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy (Adopted January 2016) and Policy WM9 of the Joint Waste Local Plan (2013).

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
16/08/2024	PBP-S55-002	-	LOCATION PLAN
20/02/2025	PBP-S55-001	REV E	EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS, ELEVATIONS
15/10/2025	-	-	WASTE STATEMENT
29/01/2025	-	-	METHOD STATEMENT

Signed Case Officer¹:

Reece Black

**Signed Authorising
Officer²:**

Jo Sheridan

Date:

31/03/2025

Informatives

- 1) No construction work should take place outside the hours of 08:00-18:00 hours Monday to Friday, 08:00-13:00 hours Saturday and not at all on Sundays/Public Holidays.

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