

Area West Committee – 15 August 2012

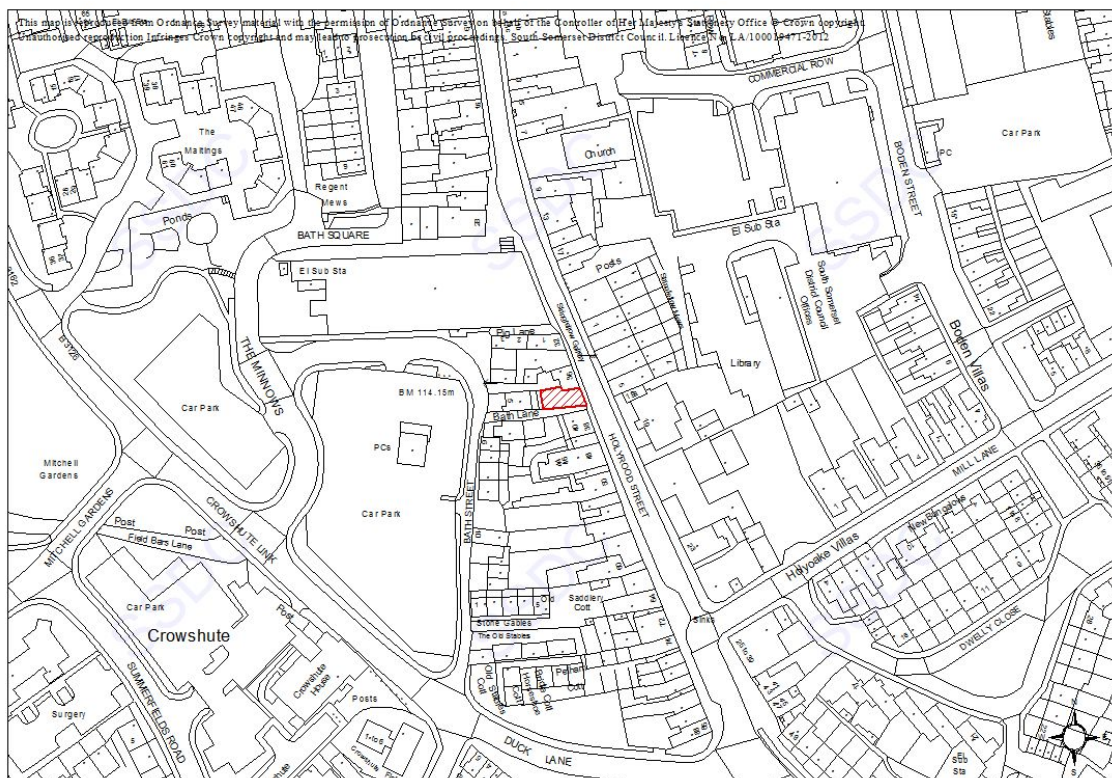
Officer Report On Planning Application: 12/02242/FUL

Proposal :	Alterations and the change of use of premises from financial and professional services (Use Class A2) to 1 No. residential unit (GR 332169/108418)
Site Address:	36A Holyrood Street, Chard, Somerset
Parish:	Chard
HOLYROOD (CHARD) Ward (SSDC Member)	Ms B Halse (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	John Millar Tel: (01935) 462465 Email: john.millar@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	25th July 2012
Applicant :	Mike Loveless & Sons
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Greenslade Taylor Hunt 1 High Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1QF
Application Type :	Minor Other less than 1,000 sq.m or 1ha

REASON(S) FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application is to be considered by Area West Committee at the request of the Ward Member, with the agreement of the Area Chair. It is felt that the application should be given further consideration by members, to consider the potential impact of the proposed development in relation to the guidelines set out within the recently adopted County Parking Strategy.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The property is a vacant ground floor commercial premises, last used as a betting office, located on the west side of Holyrood Street. The site is within the Chard defined development area, conservation area and within the designated Town Centre. There are a mix of residential and retail premises in the immediate vicinity and two separate flats above the unit. The majority of premises to the north are retail, as they are within the primary shopping frontage area and the properties to the south are a higher percentage of residential, with some ground floor retail units. The properties to the rear of the site, on Bath Street, are mostly residential. A high number of the properties to the south are also listed buildings.

The application is made for the change of use of the ground floor unit from A2 use to be used as a residential unit. The proposal includes some internal alterations to subdivide the rear of the unit to provide two bedrooms and a bathroom. Externally, the frontage of the property will remain as existing, with the signage removed. There is a door and two windows to the side of the property, along Bath Lane, which are proposed to be replaced providing three new casement windows.

HISTORY

01/02510/COU: Use of retail premises as a betting shop - Permitted with conditions.

Various other consents for the change of use of other floors for separate residential accommodation and the provision of new residential properties to the rear.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise,

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan:
STR1 - Sustainable Development
STR2 - Towns
Policy 9 - Built Historic Environment
Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

South Somerset Local Plan 2006:
ST5 - General Principles of Development
ST6 - The Quality of Development
EH1 - Conservation Areas
EH5 - Development Proposals Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings
MC4 - Other Uses in Town Centres

Policy-related Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012):
Chapter 2 - Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres
Chapter 4 - Promoting Sustainable Transport
Chapter 6 - Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes
Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design

Chapter 12 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-2026):

Goal 8 - Quality Development: Sustainably sited and constructed high quality homes, buildings and public spaces where people can live and work in an environmentally friendly and healthy way.

Goal 9 - Homes: A balanced housing market with a range of low carbon affordable homes with the flexibility to meet the changing needs of the population.

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (March 2012)

CONSULTATIONS

Town Council: Recommend refusal - on the grounds that normal parking provisions do not apply.

SSDC Technical Services: No comment.

County Highway Authority: The proposal relates to the alterations and change of use from Class A2 to Class C3.

The application site is located in the centre of Chard as such under the new guidelines set out in Somerset County Council's Parking Strategy a two bed-roomed residential unit should have two parking spaces provided. From the details submitted as part of the planning application it appears that no parking has been provided. This would usually result in an objection from the Highway Authority.

However it is apparent that the previous use of the site would have generated significantly more vehicle movements to those which would be associated with the proposed use. Therefore on this basis the Highway Authority raises no objection to this proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been advertised by press and site notice for the requisite period. No comments have been received.

CONSIDERATIONS

The application is made for the change of use of the ground floor of the property from betting office (A2 use) to a residential unit. The property has been vacant since August 2011, with the unit being advertised to let since then, however there has been minimal interest from prospective tenants. The site is within the designated Town Centre but beyond the primary shopping frontages. Policy MC4 states that within defined town centres but outside of the primary shopping frontages, a variety of uses will be acceptable provided they don't lead to a concentration of such uses that would be harmful to the vitality and viability of the centre. The accepted uses included offices for financial and professional services, premises for sale of food and drink, non-residential institutions, assembly and leisure and residential. It is noted that the change of use away from retail is already established so consideration has to be given to the impact of further change to residential. The recently adopted 'National Planning Policy Framework' also acknowledges the need to support the vitality and viability of town centres, including the

recognition that *"residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres"* and that Local Planning Authorities should *"set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites"*.

In this case, it is not considered that the proposed change of use will have any detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. There is a good mix of retail and residential in this area beyond the core shopping frontages and it is not considered that the change of use to residential will lead to a harmful concentration of such uses.

In terms of impact on the character and appearance of the building itself, the conservation area, and nearby listed buildings, there are no changes proposed to the front elevation, with the only works being to replace the windows and door to the side, which is along a narrow row of properties, providing access from Holyrood Street to Bath Street. This external alteration is not considered to have any material affect on the appearance of the property to the side and as such will have cause no harm to the character and setting of the immediate area.

The proposal does not include the provision of any outdoor amenity space, however while not being ideal, this is a similar arrangement to the existing flats above and other local properties within the town centre. In terms of impact on residential amenity, the proposal will not lead to any direct overlooking of neighbouring properties or other detrimental impact and as such there are no amenity concerns.

There is also no parking provision proposed, despite usual requirements for two spaces under the County Parking Strategy. This lack of parking has lead to an objection from the Town Council. This issue has however been considered by the County Highway Authority and they note that the previous use would have generated significantly more vehicle movements than those associated with the proposed use. For this reason, no objection is received and the proposal is viewed as being acceptable. Due to the proposal receiving support from the Highway Authority, it is considered appropriate to recommend approval of the scheme.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle, will cause no unacceptable harm to residential amenity or highway safety and will not have any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and nearby listed buildings or have a detrimental impact on the vitality or viability of the town centre. As such, the recommendation to Members is to approve planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval with conditions

01. The proposed change of use of the premises to a residential unit is acceptable and will not create a concentration of such uses that would be harmful to the vitality and viability of the town centre. Furthermore, it has no adverse impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings or conservation area and causes no unacceptable harm to residential amenity or highway safety, in accordance with the aims and objectives of policies 9, 49, STR1 and STR2 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review, saved policies ST5, ST6, EH1, EH5 and MC4 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 and the provisions of chapters 2, 4, 6, 7 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the following approved plans: '1958-03', '1958-04', and '1958-05', received 30th May 2012.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the development authorised and in the interests of proper planning.
