

Committee date 09/07/2024

Application No: 08/24/00030

Application Type: Full Planning Permission

Case Officer: Shanta Parsons

Registered Date: 24/04/2024

Expiry Date: 18/06/2024

Parish: Bridgwater

Division: Bridgwater South

Proposal: Change of use from a licensed 6 bedroom house of multiple occupation (HMO) to a 7 person house of multiple occupation (HMO).

Site Location: 27 Ashleigh Avenue, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 6AU

Applicant: Mr T Moores



Committee decision required because

The views of the Town Council are contrary to the recommendation.

Recommendation

Grant Approval

Background

The application site is formed of a terraced dwelling located on the south side of Ashleigh Avenue. There is space for 2 cars at the rear of the premises. The dwelling is currently occupied as House of Multiple Occupation with its existing configuration set up with 6 bedroom spaces with shared facilities. This is classed as a dwelling although it is occupied as a 6 person HMO which falls within the definition of a C4 dwelling.

The proposal seeks consent for the change of use to a 7 bed HMO. This would be achieved via a loft conversion to create a further en-suite bedroom. On the ground and first floors there would be 6 bedrooms, one with en-suite facilities and a shared bathroom for the other occupants. There would be a communal open plan kitchen/dining room.

Relevant History

None

Supporting information supplied by the applicant

Covering Letter

Consultation and Representations

- Date of consultation: 24 April 2024
- Date of revised consultation (if applicable):
- Press Date (if applicable): 30 April 2024
- Site Notice Date (if applicable): 03 May 2024

The submitted comments are available in full on the Council's website.

Consultees the following were consulted:

Consultee Name	Summary of Response
Planning Enforcement	None received
Bridgwater Town Council, Bridgwater Town Hall	objection

	Objection due to an overdevelopment of HMO's, lack of parking, and the change in character on the road. Also, causing an increase in rubbish which will result in a lack of management of recycling and refuse
Bridgwater South 1 - Kathy Pearce	None received
Bridgwater South 2 - Brian Smedley	None received
Environmental Health - Somerset Council (Sedgemoor Area), Email Address Only	No objection
Somerset Highways	Standing Advice
Strategic Housing (private sector housing)	No objection The landlord has complied with HMO regulations and all fire precaution measures are in place. The landlord has worked closely to ensure the property is up to a standard. I understand he has created parking spaces to the rear of the property to take pressure off street parking.
Somerset Council - Public Health Specialist	None received
Parrett Drainage Board	None received

Local representations:

Neighbour notification letters were sent in accordance with the Councils Adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

5 representations and a petition with 64 signatures have been received making the following comments (summarised):

Material Planning Considerations	
Objections	Officer Comment
Increased Traffic and parking congestion	Matters referred to under 'Highways and Parking' within Main Issues section
Increased noise and activity, disturbance at all hours of the day.	Matters referred to under 'Residential Amenity' within Main Issues section

Poor cleanliness of the property due to poor waste management and high number of occupants.	
The increase in HMO's in the area is taking affordable family homes from local people. If there are anymore HMO's/ tenants on the Avenue we will lose the wonderful community we have.	Matters referred to under 'Principle' within Main Issues section
Anti-social behaviour/illegal activities	Matters referred to under 'Other Matters' within Main Issues section

Summary of objections - non planning matters

- Anti-social behaviour/illegal activities

Most Relevant Policies

National Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan (2011-2032)

S2 Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor

D2 Promoting high quality and inclusive design

D14 Managing the Transport Impacts of Development

D25 Protecting Residential Amenity

Main Issues

Principle

Policy S2 of the Local Plan states *"To create the most sustainable pattern of development, Bridgwater will be the focus of the district's housing, employment and retail growth. As the principal town in the district it will accommodate the majority of new development."*

The proposal involves the change of use from a dwelling currently used for the occupation as an HMO (for a maximum of 6 individuals) to a larger HMO to accommodate 7 individuals. As such the assessment is for the increase in occupancy from 6 individuals to 7.

The application site lies within the principal town of Bridgwater, identified as such for its sustainable location. The site is within walking distance of the services and facilities within the local centre in Taunton Road, the town centre, the retail parks together with train station and bus station.

The proposal will not result in any alterations to the building and therefore the character and appearance of the terrace and surrounding street scenes will remain unaffected. As the use of the building will remain residential the use is compatible with adjoining buildings in the area.

There is no objection in principle to a larger HMO in this location, which would provide accommodation for an additional person over and above the existing permitted development rights.

Residential Amenity

Policy D25 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan 2011-2032 sets out that development will not be supported where the proposals would result in an unacceptable impact upon the residential amenity of future occupiers or of the occupiers of nearby dwellings.

The proposal put forward is for 7 en-suite bedrooms, each bedroom is served by a window providing natural light to occupants. There is an open plan communal kitchen, dining area at ground floor.

The works to carry out the proposal are limited to a conversion of the loft space and internal dividing wall at first floor level. If the site was retained in C3 use, the conversion of the loft could take place without the benefit of planning permission and the proposed works are therefore not considered to themselves give rise to any unacceptable impact in terms of the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers.

The Town Council raise issues regarding the addition of rubbish resulting in a lack of management of recycling and refuse. To the front of the house, there is an existing walled garden which is used and is proposed to be used to store refuse bins which would be collected according to the standard refuse collection service.

The increased occupation to 7 individuals is not considered to give rise to any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring occupiers nor the future occupiers of the property and complies with Policy D25 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan 2011-2032.

Highways and Parking

Policy D14 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan 2011-2032 seeks to ensure provision is made for inclusive, safe and convenient access for all and that the nature and volume of expected traffic from development would not compromise highway safety and that development proposals must provide safe access to roads of adequate standard within the route hierarchy and ensure that the expected nature and volume of traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local or strategic road networks in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated.

The Town Council object to the lack of parking. The Highways Officer refers to the Council's Standing Advice. The application site is located in a sustainable location within the principal town of Bridgwater where the train station, bus station and services and facilities within the town centre are all accessible. Approximately 140 metres to the east of the site is the small neighbourhood centre, approximately 420 metres to the north is a major supermarket and store and the town centre is approximately 740 metres away.

There are two car parking spaces at the rear of the premises and no parking restrictions within the highway in Ashleigh Avenue. However, this appears to get congested reducing the option to parking outside the premises.

Overall, it is not considered that the increase in traffic arising from the additional 1 person would result in a significant or unacceptable impact on the highway network. It is considered that the proposal complies with Policy D14 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan 2011-2032.

Other Matters

In respect of the occupants carrying out illegal activities and an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance by individuals, this is not controlled by planning legislation.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to sufficiently comply with the requirements of local and national planning policy.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION

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

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed in schedule A.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 The accommodation hereby permitted shall be for up to 7 persons only and there shall be no internal subdivision to provide additional bedrooms.

Reason: In the interests of clarity as to the extent of the planning permission.

Schedule A

Location Plan Drg No. 24-001-02 Rev. B

Existing & Proposed Site Plan Drg No. 22-022 04 Rev. B

Existing Floor Plans Drg No. 24-001-01 Rev. C

Proposed Floor Plans Drg No. 24-001-03 Rev. C

DECISION
