

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT



ITEM: 15

Application Number: I3/00488/LBC

Applicant: University of Plymouth

Description of Application: Internal alterations to provide 90 student bedspaces (within 6 townhouses and 2 cluster flats) and associated communal facilities

Type of Application: Listed Building

Site Address: PORTLAND NORTH, UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH, DRAKE CIRCUS PLYMOUTH

Ward: Drake

Valid Date of Application: 18/03/2013

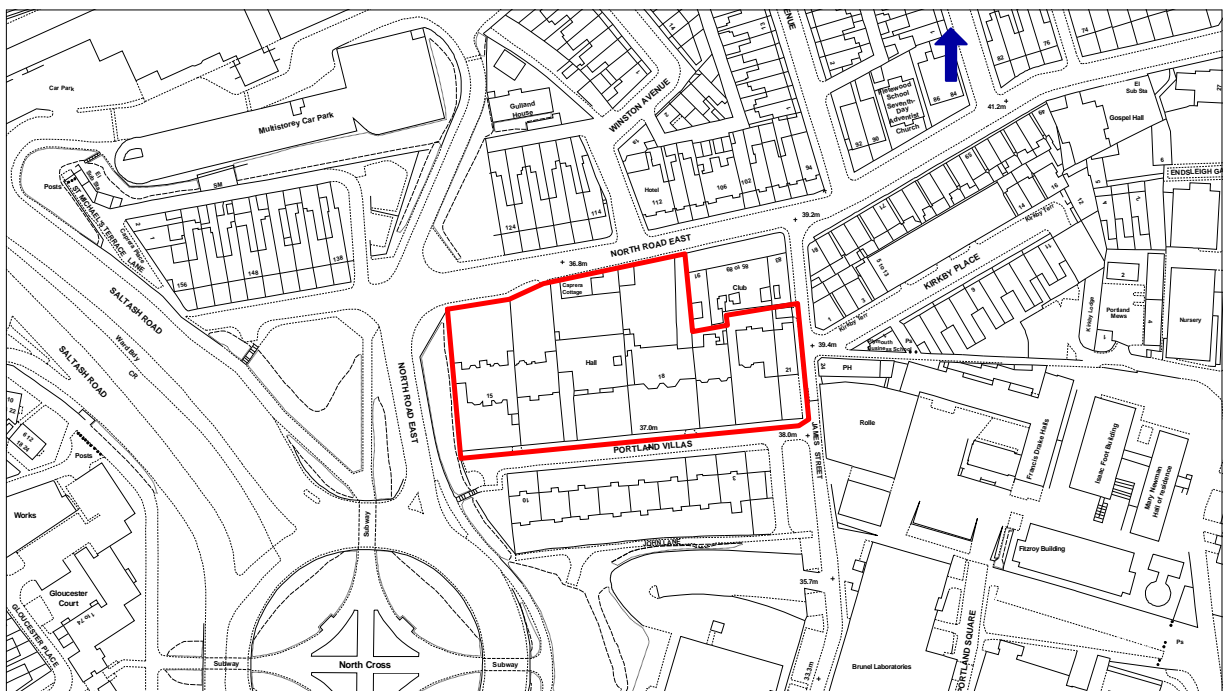
8/13 Week Date: **13/05/2013**

Decision Category: Member Referral

Case Officer : Kate Saunders

Recommendation: Grant Conditionally

Click for Application Documents: www.plymouth.gov.uk



(c) Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Plymouth City Council Licence No. 100018633 Published 2013 Scale 1:2500

This application has been referred to Planning Committee by Cllr Ricketts.

Site Description

15-21 Portland Villas are Grade II listed period properties constructed around the mid- 19th century. The properties have gardens to the front with a further amenity area to the rear of 15-18.

The terrace is located to the north west of the main university campus and is bounded by North Cross roundabout to the west. To the south are similar period properties whilst to the north is Hepworth House, and then North Road East which forms a link from North Cross through to North Hill. To the east are James Street and the modern Rolle Building.

Proposal Description

Internal alterations to provide 90 student bedspaces (within 6 townhouses and 2 cluster flats) and associated communal facilities

The proposal is to revert the majority of the buildings back to their original residential use with minimal alterations to the historic fabric. The application will involve no alterations to the external appearance of the properties. The properties are all slightly different in style which will result in varying layouts however generally a mix of communal space and bedrooms will be provided to the ground floor with additional bedrooms on the upper floors. There will be a range of both single and twin rooms provided, some with the benefit of en-suite facilities.

Pre-Application Enquiry

A formal pre-application was submitted, reference 12/02287/MAJ, to consider the conversion of existing buildings and new development to provide approximately 820 student bedspaces. Plans were not provided about the proposed development at the subject properties although the principal of conversion to student accommodation was supported.

Relevant Planning History

This application has been submitted alongside a number of other applications, which are currently under consideration that will provide a total of 885 student bedspaces with a range of associated facilities including cafes, common rooms, and a sports hall.

Consultation Responses

No external consultations requested or received.

Representations

Nineteen letters of representation have been received. Eighteen letters are objecting to the proposals and raise the following issues:

- Detrimental to the nature, character and dynamic of this part of the city centre
- Too many student properties in the area already
- Effect the amenities of neighbouring residential properties
- Contribute to existing noise and waste pollution
- Affordable housing should be provided in the area not more student housing
- Parking problems will increase
- Anti-social behaviour will increase e.g. car damage, graffiti, litter
- So many extra people in one area will lead to overcrowding
- The introduction of further tall buildings may create “wind tunnels”
- Poor quality of life will be created for students and staff
- Noise study is not representative
- No management plan is in existence yet
- Small hotels and guesthouses have closed as a result of the university letting out their rooms during the summer months.
- The applications should be considered by Planning Committee
- The public consultation event was done at a busy time of year when people couldn't attend
- The density of buildings on campus is already too high
- Loss of offices will change the nature of the campus
- HMOs will lie vacant in surrounding areas and what impact will this have
- An agreement should be used to increase campus patrols at night to limit noise, there should be daily refuse collections on North Hill (Thurs-Sun) and the University should provide a 24hr shop on campus.
- Staff don't know where they will be relocated to and there may be an impact on students

One letter of support has been received which suggests that moving students on to campus will lead to existing HMOs in surrounding areas e.g. Mutley being turned back in to family housing.

Analysis

1. This application turns on Policy CS03 (Historic Environment) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007 and the Development Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document 2010. Appropriate consideration has also been given to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
2. The main planning consideration is the effect on the character and fabric of the listed building, as detailed below.
3. Each of the villas found within Portland Villas North is a manifestation of the 19th century prosperity, development and expansion of Plymouth. Each of the villas provides a good example of a villa of this period; the buildings are largely intact with their original principal rooms and numerous original architectural features that reinforce their significance.

4. Each villa in this range has a strong architectural style albeit all are from the same build period. They should be treated individually where alterations are proposed to ensure the architectural details and style for each are preserved and also matched where alterations take place.

5. Number 15 has been internally decorated to give a Tudor veneer to the interior that is behind the neoclassical exterior. The high quality ceilings in the principal rooms on the ground floor, the beams, the staircase and the stained glass window all reflect a post-medieval design vocabulary. Proposed interventions in this property are very limited but the blocking of a doorway in the dividing wall between the principal rooms will need to be approached with a good deal of sensitivity, in order to preserve the character of the large reception room.

6. Number 16 includes many original features but is not considered to be remarkable in internal decor or configuration. Current proposals will involve remodelling the first floor to remove modern additions and see it return to a more domestic character, respecting original divisions but subdividing the front, first floor room, which has been altered to accommodate administration functions.

7. Number 17 is unique and its facade belies the unusual combination of domestic residence and place of worship that make up the property. The private space includes some finely appointed rooms and surviving period features, while the chapel and associated lobby which form a large proportion of the property are in good condition and can still very much be read as a place of worship. The proposed development will not affect the chapel, associated staircase or the lower ground floor. The domestic area of No. 17 includes a number of lavish fireplaces, which enhance the significance of the property with the same being true of the door and staircase furniture. The former chapel, which now accommodates university administration offices will continue to do so under this application. The proposals for the change of use to the remainder of No 17 will be carried out in a light touch way with minimal impact to the fabric of the building. Further information will be required of the proposed en-suite pods to ensure they are constructed and installed in a sensitive manner.

8. The significance of No. 18 rests principally on the fine 19th century work apparent in the villa, which includes the Tudor-style plaster ceiling in what is currently the Boardroom, architraves, picture rails and ceiling roses. A new opening is proposed to the ground floor of No. 18, to serve a new bathroom, this should be located centrally on the axis of the entrance hall as agreed on site so that it reads correctly and sits within the framework of the original built up opening (just visible behind the existing mirror).

9. Number 19 includes a mosaic panel in the porch and door and door furniture. Internally, many period features are preserved, including scrolled corbels, windows, architraves and staircases, while several of the rooms retain high quality fireplaces. These features work with the well-preserved exterior

10. Number 20 and Number 21 present an unusual and slightly confused mix of exterior and interior styles. Their construction is reflective of changing fashions at the time with a move away from classicism and a stronger Tudor influence. Internally, the windows, stained glass and staircase all add to the fabric of the building.

11. The alterations are being carried out in a light touch way as described in the Design and Access Statement, with few new partitions and the retention of ones which have been inserted in recent years and few new openings. The Archaeology and Heritage Desk-based assessment and walkabout document statement has set out the features of each building and in particular has drawn attention to the decorative plaster ceilings and mouldings and the many original fireplaces. These features are to be safeguarded and it is specifically not acceptable that the many ornate and original fireplaces should be cased to prevent possible damage with the new use as the Statement has recommended.

12. The drawings are unfortunately lacking in specific detail but do show generic approaches to the insertion of openings, the blocking of others and removal of existing partitions and insertion of new. In principle these approaches are acceptable but all openings where original should be maintained visually, with architraves and archways, quoin beads etc retained and the new blocking up and plaster finishes set back. In addition where at all possible the original panelled doors should be re-used elsewhere. Furthermore new ceiling cornices should be inserted to match existing to the former 'new' separating partitions on the bedrooms side of the partition if the cornices are plain or decorative in the principal rooms. It is accepted that the ceilings may need to be lowered above the bathrooms to accommodate some plumbing and extraction as the bathrooms are one above the other on ground and first floors, but this is not shown on the drawings and will therefore be requested via condition. New lengths of skirting and architraves should also match the existing pattern and again this will be conditioned.

13. The new use as student housing will also necessitate associated plumbing, drainage and ventilation, which can raise issues. New kitchens will be provided to all properties in varying positions on the ground floor; further details will be requested via conditions. The insertion of bathrooms to the upper floors will also necessitate careful consideration of plumbing and drainage runs alongside ventilation extraction/ducts etc. Further details will again therefore be requested via condition

14. Fire precautions will inevitably be more strenuous with provision of living accommodation compared to offices. There is possibly a requirement under building regulations for upgrading the fire resistance including that of the original doors (if not already upgraded for the previous use), the provision of horizontal separation between floors and protection of staircases, which may be of particular relevance for No. 20. Details of fire precautionary measures will be requested as part of the conditions. Fire separation should be carried out within the floor construction zone and above the floor-boarding where decorative ceilings exist. Normally the undergirding of decorative plaster ceilings will not be acceptable.

15. It is also possible that sound and thermal insulation measures may be required and again if so then these details will be provided as part of the condition discharge process.

16. Existing historic floor tiles in vestibules, and original floor-boarding should also be retained together with the many existing original staircases and original fireplaces, grates and hearths.

17. A number of points have been raised in the letters of representation received. This application can only consider the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the listed building therefore the issues raised will be thoroughly considered in the accompanying planning application.

Human Rights Act - The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

Section 106 Obligations

The associated planning application for this site will make infrastructure contributions to mitigate the impacts of the development.

Equalities & Diversities issues

The University, in accordance with their 'service provider duties' under the Equality Act together with UPP are committed to inclusive design and accessibility for everyone, where reasonably possible, including learners, staff and visitors with a range of physical, sensory, cognitive and learning impairments.

The University has taken the view that provision of access bedrooms should be considered on a campus-wide basis. Within the existing portfolio of rooms, there are a number of 'accessible' rooms many of which include student / carer specific facilities.

In 2012, 183 applicants for enrolment with Plymouth University declared a disability and for those wishing to live in the accommodation, in accordance with the University's service provider duties, many reasonable adjustments have been made to suit the individual student's requirements. These include 14 bedrooms specifically designed for use by wheelchair users, purpose designed kitchens allowing wheelchair turning and circulation space to manoeuvre around, designated disabled persons' parking spaces available for Blue Badge holders and the 'deaf alert' pager fire alarm system has been and will continue to be installed in all halls of residence.

The proposal takes into consideration UPP's Inclusive Design Policy and appropriate best practice solutions will be adopted where it is reasonable to do so. Best practice includes British Standard 8300:2009 + A1 2010, Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. Guidance published by the Equalities Commission has also been considered in the development of the scheme strategy.

Where full wheelchair access cannot be reasonably achieved e.g. in some of the proposed refurbishments of existing buildings, or where accommodation is above ground floor level and an acceptable assisted escape strategy cannot be developed, no wheelchair accessible units will be provided. It should be noted, however, that accommodation for students with ambulant or sensory impairments is to be provided in all residential units.

Conclusions

The change of use and refurbishment of Portland Villas will adopt a "light touch" approach which will ensure the historic character and fabric of the properties is preserved and enhanced. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation

In respect of the application dated **18/03/2013** and the submitted drawings 338-PVN--PL-GA-001, 338-PVN-PL-GA-010 Rev A, 338-PVN-PL-SITE-002, 338-PVN-PL-SITE-010, 338-PVN-PL-GA-002, 338-PVN-PL-GA-011, Phase 1 Geo-environmental Desk Study Report ref. RP5464-B, Transport Assessment Issue 4 dated 13.03.13, Overarching Sustainable Energy Statement Issue 2 March 2013, Statement of Community Consultation, Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Philosophy dated 12.03.13, Planning Statement Issue 3 dated 13.03.13, Archeaology and Heritage Desk-based Assessment Issue 2 dated 14.12.12 and accompanying Design and Access Statement, it is recommended to: **Grant Conditionally**

Conditions

TIME LIMIT FOR COMMENCEMENT

(1) The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason:

To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

APPROVED PLANS [LISTED BUILDING CONSENT]

(2) The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 338-PVN--PL-GA-001, 338-PVN-PL-GA-010 Rev A, 338-PVN-PL-SITE-002, 338-PVN-PL-SITE-010, 338-PVN-PL-GA-002, 338-PVN-PL-GA-011

Reason:

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of good planning, in accordance with policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

NEW PARTITIONS

(3) No works shall take place until details of the proposed new partitions have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said details shall include the design, method of construction, material and finish of the proposed partitions. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

OPENING DETAILS

(4) No works shall take place until details for blocking existing openings or creating new openings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said details shall include the design, method of construction, material and finish to be used. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

FIRE PROTECTION

(5) No works shall take place until details of any fire protection methods have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

SOUND INSULATION

(6) No works shall take place until details of any sound insulation methods have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

BATHROOMS AND KITCHENS

(7) No works shall take place until details of the proposed plumbing, drainage and extraction equipment to be installed in association with new bathrooms and kitchens have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

BATHROOM PODS

(8) No works shall take place until details of the proposed new bathroom pods have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said details shall include the design, method of construction, material, finish and method of fixing to be used. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

JOINERY DETAILS

(9) All new joinery to be installed including skirtings and architraves shall replicate existing patterns and designs.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

CEILING CORNICES

(10) All new ceiling cornices to be installed shall replicate existing patterns and designs.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

IRONMONGERY

(11) No works shall take place until details of the proposed ironmongery have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

INFORMATIVE: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL [WITH NEGOTIATION]

(1) In accordance with the requirements of Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 and paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way with the Applicant including pre-application discussions and has negotiated amendments to the application to enable the grant of planning permission.

Statement of Reasons for Approval and Relevant Policies

Having regard to the main planning considerations, which in this case are considered to be: the effect on the Listed Building, the proposal is not considered to be demonstrably harmful. In the absence of any other overriding considerations, and with the imposition of the specified conditions, the proposed works are acceptable and comply with (1) policies of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007 and supporting Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents (the status of these documents is set out within the City of Plymouth Local Development Scheme) and (b) relevant Government Policy Statements and Government Circulars, as follows:

CS03 - Historic Environment

SPDI - Development Guidelines

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework March 2012