



Concept Planning
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Date: December 2020
Our reference: Sprayhurst/01

Planning Statement

Site address:

Sprayhurst (Vacant Social club)
Boundary Road
St Helens
Merseyside
WA10 2LR



Applicant:

Concept Planning is acting on behalf of the applicant



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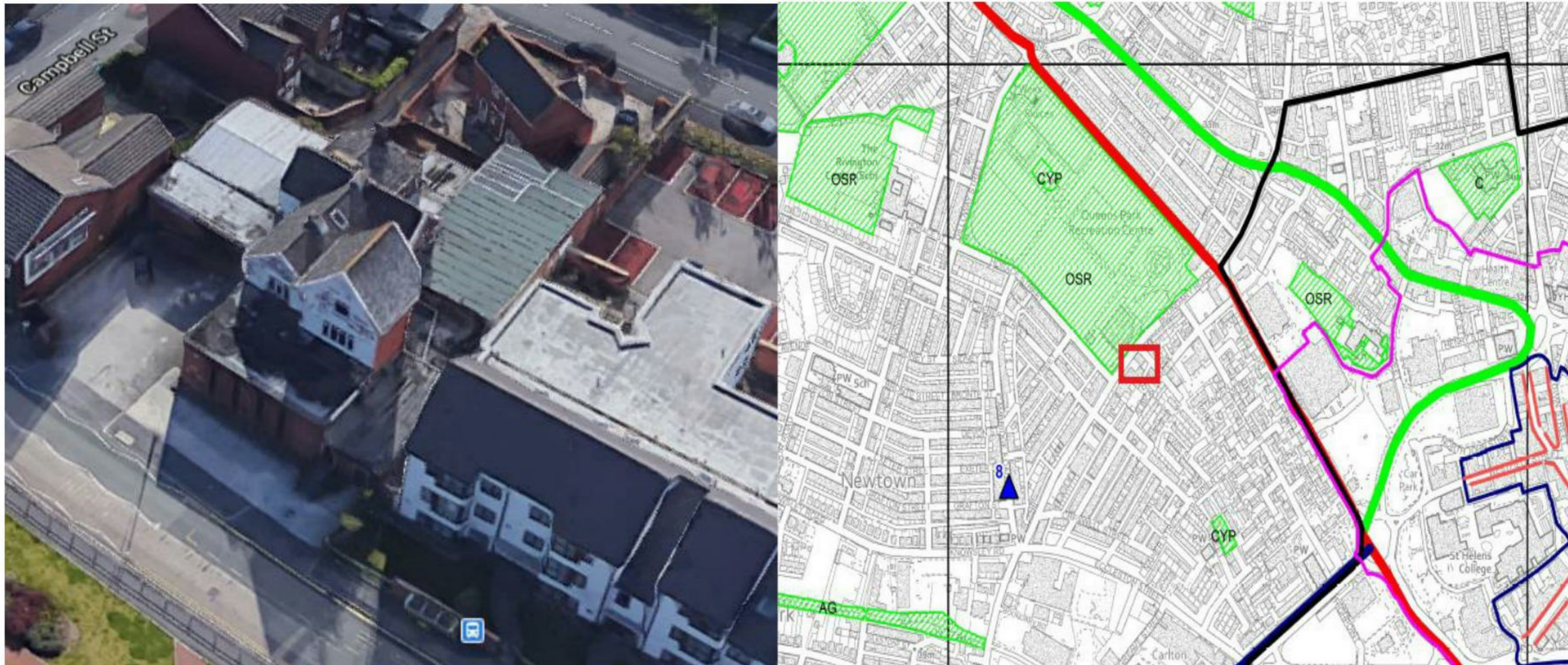
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1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 The Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for a change of use of the premises from an existing sui generis social club (known as Sprayhurst) to Class E (a), (c i, ii), (d) at ground floor and a sui generis seven (7) bed HMO at first floor, in association with external changes including fenestration, access and elevational changes (Parts of the proposed development are retrospective).

2.0 The site and surroundings:

- 2.1 The site is formed of a part single, part two and part three storey building formally the Sprayhurst social club, currently vacant since October 2018. The building is in need of repair and has crossover access to boundary road to the north-west of the site. The site has both parking on the frontage and within a courtyard on site. Opposite the site is Queens Park and the associated Health and fitness centre. The surrounding area is predominantly residential with some commercial shops. The adjacent site at 131a Boundary road was approved in 2010 for sixteen (16) one bed units with parking to the rear.
- 2.2 The site has no land use designation under the unadopted St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 (currently at Draft Submission) policies map as of January 2019, shown below.



3.0 Proposal:

3.1 The site has already undertaken some parts of the proposed development but works to the site have stopped as of November 2020 at the request of the Local planning authority. As such parts of the development are retrospective. For clarification purposes the following aspects are retrospective and regularisation is sought for the changes/works under the current application, alongside proposed changes.

Retrospective elements of development

- Commercial unit 1 (Estate agent) is occupied and operating as of May 2020
- New access to commercial unit 1 has been significantly completed
- A new shop front is partially complete to serve commercial unit 3
- Juliet balcony on second floor principal elevation

Planning is sought for the following changes

- Change of use to commercial unit(s) 2, 3 and 4
- Independent stair access to first floor HMO units on southern flank
- Change of first floor to use as seven (7) sui generis HMO bedrooms
- Fenestration changes including new flank (northern elevation) window and change of existing windows for mix Upvc (first floor) and aluminium (ground).
- Proposed entrance/access to commercial unit 2
- Internal changes including, but not limited to the removal of the internal stairs from ground to first floor and other changes to facilitate the changes of use.

3.2 The material above changes outlined above are sought as part of the change of use of the site from a sui generis social club (known as Sprayhurst) to Class E (a), (c i, ii), (d) at ground floor and a sui generis seven (7) bed HMO at first floor.

4.0 Site planning history:

4.1 Application site

Reference – P/2008/0730

Development description – Erection of awning to provide smoking shelter

Decision – Delegated and approved 28/08/2008

Other pertinent development

4.2 Address – 133a Boundary road

Reference - P/2009/0896

Development description - Three storey development consisting of 16no one bed apartments, 8 of which will be supported housing with some communal facilities and associated car parking.

Decision - Approved 2010

4.3 Address – The Elms, 50 Cowley Hill Lane

Reference – P/2019/0042/FUL

Development description – Retrospective change of use of former health centre use Class D1 use Class C4 (HMO 26 rooms)

Decision – Delegated and Granted 12/03/2019

5.0 Planning Policy context:

5.1 The following relevant policies apply:

1. National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 (NPPF)
2. St Helens Core Strategy (adopted October 2012)
3. St Helens Unitary Local Plan (adopted July 1998 – saved policies). It is considered that all local policies relevant to the proposals are contained within and have been addressed by the Core Strategy Local Plan.

5.2 St Helens borough Local Plan 2020- 2035 is currently in an examination period and is assigned limited weight on account of its status.

5.3 St Helens has a number of SPDs to provide guidance on development within the authority including but not limited to Residential Character and Shopfronts, both adopted on June 2010 and New residential development SPD (adopted June 2011).

5.4 Of pertinence to the development is the St Helens “general guidance on suitability for occupation” related to bedsits and shared houses.

6.0 Principle of use(s):

Class E uses (a), (c i, ii), (d)

- 6.1 The sui generis social club has been vacant since October 2018, however its viability has been questionable prior to that date on account of the failure to attract new members to the club. The introduction of four (4) appropriately sized units will provide vitality to the location and provide viable size commercial units. **Policy CE 1** of the adopted Core Strategy (Strong and Sustainable Economy) seeks to support the creation of and expansion of small businesses. The proposed use of the currently redundant ground floor for the following commercial uses would be positive and enhance the building and location,

Commercial unit 1 - Estate agent (tenant is already occupying -retrospective)

Commercial unit 2 - Hair and beauty

Commercial unit 3 - News agent / early to late shop

Commercial unit 4 - Yoga studio

Sui Generis HMO use

- 6.2 HMO accommodation is an important aspect of the housing market and provides much needed entry level accommodation to a range of individuals. HMO accommodation is especially important in St Helens on account of the diverse community and pockets of high deprivation. Policy **CH1** (meeting St Helens Housing requirements) of the Core Strategy states under sub para (4) development that is “supporting the reuse and conversion of appropriate buildings for housing” will be encouraged. Policy **CH2** (Meeting St.Helens' Housing Needs) builds on this policy by stating a suitable mix of high quality housing will be provided to deliver sustainable communities in accordance with identified local needs. HMOs are a needed and an appropriate form of accommodation in the St Helens Borough.
- 6.3 The proposed HMO units are good quality and exceed the floorspace and quality requirements of the HMO licence criteria. The proposed seven (7) HMO units would provide an important mix of market affordability, permitting flexibility of tenure and especially important for footloose working and those single persons on low income.
- 6.4 The principle of re-using the vacant building for a mixed use commercial and residential use accords with local policy and the adopted NPPF (2019). In addition the development represents sustainable development as per defined in the NPPF (2019). As such the principle of residential development on site is sound and sustainable, and the LPA is requested to approve the planning application.

7.0 Design Principle:

- 7.1 The proposed changes to the external appearance of the building are primary located at ground floor and are to facilitate the use of the site as four (4) commercial units and provide independent and segregated access to the first floor HMOs. The existing building is in need of repair and holds limited design weight. The ground floor elevation fronting Boundary road shall be converted to the entrance to commercial unit 3. The existing elevation is prominent and an oppressive brick flank fronting on to boundary road and is not considered a positive design form.
- 7.2 The fenestration changes to the site include the removal of the ground floor windows and replacement with aluminium framed windows and the first floor windows removed and replaced with UPVC. At second floor the principal window has been replaced with a Juliet balcony. The inserted of a new window on the north-west elevation is a modest addition with no overlooking to neighbouring residential units would occur.
- 7.3 The changes to the design of the building are modest and seek to uplift the otherwise tired building which is in need of repair. The site is not in a conservation area or character area and does not have any special design worthy of conservation.
- 7.4 The final design of the shop adverts shall form part of an advert consent application and the current appearance on the plans is for context in this regard.

8.0 HMO accommodation standard:

- 8.1 The proposed seven (7) bed HMO would all be located at first floor with a communal kitchen come communal area located at second floor. The kitchen has a total floorspace of 24sqm and would be more than adequate for the needs of the occupiers of the HMO units. The size of the kitchen could be subdivided to create a formal kitchen and living room if required. The size of each HMO room has been provided below,

Bed 1 - 21.6sqm (includes en-suite)
 Bed 2 - 9sqm
 Bed 3 – 9sqm (12.7sqm if en-suite added)
 Bed 4 - 14.7sqm
 Bed 5 - 18.9sqm (includes en-suite)
 Bed 6 - 11sqm
 Bed 7 - 15.8sqm (includes en-suite)

- 8.2 The guidance in the St Helens “general guidance on suitability for occupation” related to bedsits and shared houses expects kitchens to meet the following,

“Kitchens, where practicable, should not be shared by more than five persons. The

kitchen should have a floor space of not less than **7m²** and should not be less than **1.8m across the narrowest point**. If it is not practicable to limit sharing to 5 persons, a kitchen may be shared by up to, but not more than, 10 persons. In this case, additional facilities of a sink/drainage or dishwasher; 3m worktop; a cooker with four rings, an oven and grill; a 500mm food storage cupboard per additional occupant; fridge/freezer; additional power socket outlets and additional floor space of 1.0m² per additional occupant up to a maximum of 10 m² must be provided”.

- 8.3 In terms of bedroom sizes for HMO units, the guidance states “where it is practicable, the minimum letting room size is **10m²** unless (typically in the case of premises occupied by students) there is a separate communal room (lounge/sitting room), which is not a kitchen or a kitchen/dining room, in which case the letting room size should be **6.5m²**”. Each of the proposed HMO units with the exception of beds 2 and 3 exceed the minimum 10sqm requirement, however considering the size of the kitchen and its capability to be subdivided to provide two rooms (Kitchen and living room), the modest bedroom deficit of 1sqm for bedrooms No 2 and No 3 is offset and considered acceptable in this instance. The other units provide substantial internal space and in regard to bedrooms 1, 5 and 7 have en-suite.
- 8.4 All the bedrooms have good access to natural light and the proximity to the Queens park permits accessible amenity space. The quality of the HMO standard is considered to be high and would meet an acceptable level of residential accommodation.

9.0 Neighbouring Amenity

- 9.1 Due to the lack of extensions and siting of the building adjacent neighbouring properties would not have their amenity negatively impacted upon in accordance with adopted Core Strategy.
- 9.2 Waste collection from the commercial and HMO units would be via privately managed collection with storage to be located on site.

10.0 Parking Standards

- 10.1 At Para. 105, the NPPF advises that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of the development; the availability of and opportunities for public transport and local car ownership levels. It goes on to state at Para 106 that parking standards should only be set where there is clear and compelling justification.

- 10.2 The development proposes eight (8) parking spaces on site, two (2) of which would be dimensioned for disabled use. Four (4) of the parking spaces would be designated for each of the proposed commercial units on-site (1 space per commercial unit). One of disabled parking spaces would be for visitors and three (3) of the parking spaces would be reserved for the HMO occupiers. St Helens Council does not have parking standards for HMOs within their policy documents however based on the likely occupiers of the HMO units not having cars, the close proximity of St Helens Central train station (21 minute walk), local buses and existing parking capacity on Horace street opposite (adjacent the park), means the provision of three (3) parking spaces for the future HMO occupiers is considered sufficient of the predicted needs.
- 10.3 Subject to an approval for the development there is adequate space on site to provide cycle parking in accordance with standards, thereby encourage sustainable travel.

11.0 Conclusion:

- 11.1 The Planning Statement provides a robust assessment of the proposed development and justifies against adopted planning policy. The proposed mixed-use development would reintroduce a redundant building back into active use for residential and commercial needs in accordance with the adopted St Helens planning policy.