

PLANNING, ACCESS AND DESIGN STATEMENT

**IN RESPECT OF
2 GOSLYN CLOSE
OXFORD
OX3 7ND**

**ON BEHALF OF
OAK TREE HOLDINGS**

Carter Jonas

JANUARY 2021

CONTENTS	Page No.
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL	2
2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE	2
3.0 RELEVANT SITE PLANNING HISTORY	3
4.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	3
5.0 MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	9
6.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS	10

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This Statement concerns itself with a planning application for the change of use of 2 Goslyn Close, Oxford from a C4 House in Multiple Occupation to a Sui Generis House in Multiple Occupation.
- 1.2 The proposal does not involve any built additions to the house itself, although does include a small extension to the existing dropped kerb access, and the addition of bike stores. External to the property, car parking exists already for 3no. cars on the property forecourt and no additional spaces are herein proposed or required. However, new cycle storage is proposed on the site frontage for 8 no. cycle parking spaces in the form of 4 no. Asgard type cycle lockers (www.asgardsss.co.uk/twin-bike-locker). No change to the bin storage space is necessary to accommodate the slightly larger volume of bins needed for the 7+ people that may occupy a sui generis HMO rather than the existing maximum of 6.
- 1.3 This Statement will refer to the relevant site history, the relevant planning policy framework and the proper planning considerations that flow from this, which together act in support of this proposal.
- 1.4 This Statement should also be read in conjunction with the Transport Appraisal produced by HVJ Transport Limited, which deals fully with all transport and parking related considerations.

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 The application site comprises of an end of terrace, two storey property, located on a corner plot in Goslyn Close in use as a C4 House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The plot has a relative wide frontage where 3no. car parking spaces exist on the property forecourt. The rear of the property is used for communal garden/amenity space purposes.
- 2.2 The site stands in the midst of a surrounding, predominantly residential area, in the Headington area of Oxford. The nearby Old Road/The Slade routes are main, local public transport corridors and provide ready access by bus in and

out of Oxford city centre and on foot and bike to the local commercial hub of the Headington District Centre. It is a fully accessible and sustainable part of Oxford.

3.0 RELEVANT SITE PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 In October 2020, an application (reference: 20/01007/CEU) to certify that the existing use of the property as a Class C4 HMO was approved. That is now the lawful use of the property.

3.2 Prior to that, in September 2018 an application (reference 18/01739/FUL) was approved to create a dropped kerb of 5.4m in width and a blocked paved area to allow 3 cars to park.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.

4.2 The Development Plan for the area comprises the Oxford Local Plan 2036 adopted in July 2020. I therefore draw upon the relevant policies of the Oxford Local Plan (OLP) in the consideration of this Statement. I shall return to them below. First, a consideration of the relevant national planning policies follows.

Government Planning Guidance

4.3 Latest Government guidance as a material consideration relevant to the consideration of this application can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019.

4.4 At paragraph 1 the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied.

Achieving Sustainable Development

4.5 The NPPF at paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 continues by stating that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and that these objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways and give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- a) **an economic role** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) **a social role** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) **an environmental role** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.6 In the first place then, it is submitted that the proposed change of use of a site such as this, within the midst of the established residential area of Oxford, putting it into an enlarged HMO use and providing much needed additional smaller and more affordable in market terms, accommodation, must reasonably be considered to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the locality and Oxford on a wider basis. The proposal involved will bring more people into the area and generate greater economic spending capacity, better sustaining local shops, services and other amenities, in

particular within the local Girdlestone Road neighbourhood parade, and the nearby Headington District Centre, in the longer term in so doing. In a related vein, it will perform a social role too, by bringing new residents into the area through the provision of additional small units of residential accommodation that will add positively to the requirement for a mix of units that society's move towards generally smaller households has generated, particularly so in an area otherwise typified by larger family housing. In environmental terms the site is in the right place inasmuch that it relates directly to the existing developed area of Oxford and makes a further efficient use of an existing brownfield site.

4.7 I consider the cross economic, social and environmental benefits are clear and obvious and the proposal is therefore rightly to be defined as a sustainable form of development.

4.8 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF follows and identifies that: "at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development".

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.9 Acknowledging then that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, paragraph 11 of the NPPF echoes paragraph 10 and sets out that both plan-making and decision-taking should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.10 It is submitted herein that the benefits that accrue from the proposal, i.e. the provision of additional units of small sized accommodation, delivering some much needed additional mixed household sized units into this locality (which is otherwise predominated by larger family type units) and so assisting with social cohesion and housing choice, plainly represents a wholly positive and sustainable development opportunity overall for the local area that should properly be supported.

Determining Applications

- 4.11 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF sets out that “planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”. In this context, I am not aware of any material considerations that arise here that would come to outweigh the clear presumption in favour of the proposal, which is a defined sustainable form of development and fully compliant with the relevant provisions of the Development Plan (as detailed below).

Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

- 4.12 Paragraph 59 of the NPPF sets out “the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes”. The proposal goes to the heart of this basic requirement, insofar as it would deliver additional extra units of small sized HMO residential accommodation out of the available site.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 4.13 Paragraph 102 of the NPPF sets out that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals, so that, inter alia, “opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are pursued”.
- 4.14 Supporting paragraph 103 then goes on to state in addition that “development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes”. The site stands fully within the developed area of Oxford, and in a locality where new development can readily be contemplated because of its sustainable, accessible location and the choices of all non-car-borne modes of transport (bus, walking and cycling) that being located nearby to the main Old Road/The Slade and secondary Girdlestone Road routes and its subsequent accessibility to the city centre and local areas affords.
- 4.15 The NPPF makes further clear at paragraph 109, that new development “should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be

an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe" (author's underlining). I cannot conceive of any such "severe" impact on highway related grounds, in going from a 6 bed C4 HMO to a 7 bed sui generis HMO as proposed. The actual difference in highway terms would be only slight at most, if any indeed, and certainly in no way 'severe' as the NPPF sets the bar. Full reference here is directed towards the accompanying Transport Appraisal.

Local Planning Policies

- 4.16 There are a number of locally based policies contained in the OLP that are of relevance and between them act in support of the proposal too. I set all those I consider of relevance out below.
- 4.17 Policy S1 of the OLP 'Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development' sets out that the Council will take a positive approach to new development proposals and which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. Planning applications that accord with the OLP will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, it has already been set out above that the proposal is a defined form of sustainable development and the principle of it at least must be beyond any reasonable dispute. Also, that there are no known material considerations which stand against it. Accordingly, it is submitted that the Council should reasonably approve this planning application without any delay.
- 4.18 Policy RE2 of the OLP 'Efficient Use of Land' expects for development proposals to make an efficient use of land and best use of available site capacity. The proposal goes to the heart of this policy and makes the best use of a relatively large premises and seeks to reuse it in a more efficient manner by developing it out with an enlarged, complementary HMO use, that optimises the available site area, while at the same time producing a development that maintains full compliance with the detail of all of the relevant policies that apply to HMO properties.

- 4.19 Policy HP6 of the OLP deals expressly with the provision of new HMOs. It is a permissive policy in its nature and it generally allows for the change of use dwellings to HMOs. In this case of course, the property is already in a lawful C4 use, so properly there is no 'loss' of dwellinghouse use to contemplate. Thus, the terms of Policy H6 are not herein applicable.
- 4.20 Policy M3 of the OLP deals with car parking provision in new developments. It requires that no more than 3 no. on-plot car parking spaces are provided for a proposed 7 bed HMO. In full accord with this policy requirement, 3 no. on-plot car parking spaces already exist, having been created and laid out on the property forecourt. The attendant Transport Appraisal deals in full detail with this provision and all related parking considerations, including too the proposal to slightly widen the existing dropped kerb, and the reader is referred to it herein. Suffice to say at this juncture, there are no car parking related nor any other highway related matters which rightfully stand against the proposal.
- 4.21 Policy M5 of the OLP covers the provision of on-site cycle parking on the property forecourt, provided within 4 no. Asgard type Cycle lockers, providing covered and secure cycle storage. Each locker provides space for 2 cycles and 4 lockers will be provided. The standard requirement for a 7 bed HMO is a minimum of one on-plot cycle parking spaces per room. The proposed site layout plan details how 8 no. cycle parking spaces within four lockers will be delivered within the site. This is more than compliant with the standard policy requirement of M5 and as such, that matter is squarely dealt with.
- 4.22 Policy H16 of the OLP deals with the provision of outdoor amenity space in all new developments and requires that all new dwellings have direct and convenient access to an area of private open space, which in this case all of the occupants of the proposed HMO would, within the communally provided rear garden area. The amenity space provided remains in the same place and of the same size as presently exists in connection with the property as a 6 bed HMO. It provides all the space required to be enjoyed as a conventional amenity area, i.e. room for clothes drying, outdoor sitting, gardening etc. It is hard to understand in the circumstances how this area could be regarded as sufficient and acceptable to serve a 6 bed HMO, but

may not be so regarded for one more person only in a 7 bed HMO. To suggest this would defy any reasonable and proper consideration.

4.23 Policy H15 of the OLP requires that new dwellings should have a good quality of internal living environment. The policy does not however set any particular spatial requirements for the measure of what defines good quality space. In this case, regardless, the quality of the internal space proposed is of a high quality, and provided not just to meet but exceed the standards set in the Council's 'Landlord's Guide to Amenities and Facilities for Houses in Multiple Occupation' guide, which sets minimum internal standards for HMO properties.

4.24 Policy DH7 of the OLP requires that suitable provision for bin storage is made in any new planning application. In this case, bin storage exists already in a secure location on the property forecourt and no further such provision is now required in addition in connection with this proposal in moving from a C4 6 person HMO to a sui generis 7+ person HMO.

5.0 MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle

5.1 In policy terms, the principle of the proposed sui generis HMO use of the property must be beyond any reasonable dispute, given the property is in a complementary C4 HMO use already.

Precedent

5.2 Consent was given to a very similar proposal at 3 Everard Close, which backs directly on to 2 Goslyn Close, and was a property of identical construction, with a similar sized garden area and with a similar sized extension (reference: 19/00612/FUL) for '*Change of use from House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) to a large House in Multiple Occupation (Sui Generis). Provision of car parking, bin and cycle storage*'. The two schemes are clearly closely comparable in all the relevant planning considerations here.

Parking

- 5.3 Car parking exists on site for three cars. Relevant policy for a 7 bed HMO requires no more than 3 no. car parking spaces, and 3 no. spaces exist. So, from existing (6 bed C4 HMO with 3 no. car parking spaces) to proposed (7 bed sui generis HMO with 3 no. car parking spaces) the car parking standard is the same. No change. No difference in car parking terms at all between the two uses and no more required by policy.
- 5.4 The cycle parking requirement for a 7 bed HMO is for 7 no. spaces. 8 no. cycle parking spaces are proposed within the site, on the property forecourt, which are safe and convenient in location, all as required by the relevant policy.

Amenity Provision

- 5.5 In terms of internal space provision, the Development Plan is silent with regards any particular standards necessary for an HMO property. The only Council based such advice is contained in the 'Landlord's Guide to Amenities and Facilities for Houses in Multiple Occupation', within which minimum internal space standards for HMO properties are detailed. In that regard and quite straightforwardly, the proposed internal space is all designed to ensure full compliance throughout with the standards specified in the Guide.
- 5.6 Externally, the rear garden area is unchanged from the existing C4 HMO use to the proposed sui generis HMO use. The amenity area affords room for all the usual considerations of clothes drying, sitting out, gardening, and as stated, provides all of these opportunities now as exists to the occupants of a 6 bed HMO, as it would come to a 7 bed HMO. The addition of one more person to the use of the garden cannot sensibly be seen as anything other than fully acceptable.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposal has been shown herein to be in full accord with the relevant terms of the cited Development Plan policies, with national policy too and in

full compliance with the relevant terms of the Council's Landlord's Guide to Amenities and Facilities for Houses in Multiple Occupation.

- 6.2 The property as exists is already in HMO use and the proposal simply extends that same HMO use by one person further only in effect.
- 6.3 The provision of cycle and refuse storage takes place in an entirely conventional and satisfactory manner and is fully policy compliant in its provision.
- 6.4 Car parking exists and is provided to the required standard for a 7 bed HMO.
- 6.5 The quality and quantity of internal space provision meets the requirements of the Council's Landlord's Guide for HMOs.
- 6.6 The external rear amenity space is unchanged from the existing provision to the dwellinghouse use and is considered suitable too for the proposed slightly enlarged HMO use.
- 6.7 The application site stands in an accessible location in Oxford and represents a sustainable form of development which both local and national policy permit for.
- 6.8 In view of all of the above, it is respectfully requested that planning permission as applied for, be granted.