

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P15/S1177/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	14.4.2015
<b>PARISH</b>	THAME
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Jeannette Matelot Green David Dodds Nigel Champken-Woods
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr N Clarke
<b>SITE</b>	Charter House 14 Wellington Street Thame, OX9 3BW
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Conversion of existing building (D1 use) to 6 flats with associated car parking and amenity space (fenestration alterations as amended by revised plans accompanying agent's email dated 8th May 2015. Additional supporting information and revised plans showing new openings and changes to internal layout as shown on amended plans accompanying agent's email dated 10th June 2015)
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	470828/205901
<b>OFFICER</b>	Simon Kitson

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application is referred to Committee because the officers' recommendation conflicts with the Town Council's views.
- 1.2 Charter house is an existing unlisted property (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) set within a plot approximately 635 sq.m. in area within the confines of Thame town centre. The site falls within the Thame Conservation Area.
- 1.3 In 1994, planning permission was granted for the change of use of the former hotel building into 6 flats and this was superseded by a subsequent approval for the use of the building as a resource centre for South Oxfordshire Adult Services Mental Health Team and Social Services. This use would fall within Class D1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) and any alternative use would require planning permission due to a restrictive condition attached to planning permission P94/N006.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 As detailed in the application submission, this proposal seeks full planning permission for the conversion of the building into six flats, with associated parking and amenity space. A copy of the proposed plans is **attached** as Appendix B.
- 2.2 Two amendments have been submitted, mainly revising the fenestration detail and reducing the number of bedrooms on one flat. The most recent amendment was also accompanied by further information providing a rationale for the NHS' disposal of the property. This document is **attached** as Appendix C

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Thame Town Council – Objection:
- Loss of an essential community facility, contrary to SOLP Policy CF1
  - Lack of affordable housing provision

- Overdevelopment of site – 1 bedroom apartments would be preferable
- Poor quality of living accommodation, due to lack of amenity space

Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – Approval, with conditions

- Cycle parking facilities

Neighbour Comments (4)

- The obscure glazing in the 8/5 amendment is welcomed
- Concerns over number of parking spaces provided
- Potential concerns over light pollution
- Questions raised over level of internal insulation

#### 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P94/N0447/CA](#) - Approved (08/09/1994)  
Demolition of chimney. (Retrospective).

[P94/N0065](#) - Approved (18/04/1994)

Demolition of rear extension to hotel and change of use from hotel use to Resource Centre for South Oxfordshire Adult Services Mental Health Team and Social Services.

[P93/N0735](#) - Approved (17/03/1994)

Conversion of hotel to residential use into 6no. two bed flats.

#### 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies;

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSS1 - The overall strategy

CSTHA1 - The strategy for Thame

CSQ3 – Design

CSEN3 – Historic environment

CST1 – Town centres

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

D1 - Principles of good design

D2 – Vehicle parking

D3 - Outdoor amenity area

D4 – Neighbour impact

D10 – Waste management

CF1 - Protection of recreational or essential community facilities

G2 - Protect district from adverse development

H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt

CON7 – Conservation Areas

T1/T2 – Highway access and parking

5.3 Thame Neighbourhood Plan Policies;

H5 – Windfall sites

H6 – High quality development

GA6 – On site parking

ESDQ15 – Design and access

ESDQ16 – Site and surroundings

ESDQ17 – Town character

ESDQ20 – Historic context  
ESDQ27 – Inclusive design  
ESDQ28 – Outdoor amenity space  
ESDQ29 – Integration of car parking

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

#### 5.4 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

#### 6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 This proposal is considered against the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP), the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) and saved policies within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP). The following criteria are particularly relevant to this proposal:-

- Whether the proposal would result in the loss of an essential community facility, without suitable alternative provision elsewhere within the locality
- Whether the proposed use would have a harmful impact upon neighbouring amenity or the local highway network
- Whether the scale and design would have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the site, street scene or wider conservation area.

#### **Principle of Development**

- 6.2 The use of the building to provide six residential flats (**attached** as Appendix D) has been previously approved by the council in 1994. Although the D1 use in the intervening period before this submission might comprise a material change in circumstances, the NPPF has introduced a greater presumption in favour of sustainable development and there has been a considerable relaxation of planning restrictions at a national level for the re-use of redundant buildings.
- 6.3 Furthermore, the site does not fall within the defined primary or secondary retail frontages of the town centre and the loss of employment restrictions under SOLP Policy E6 would not apply to a change of use from a Class D1 facility to residential. As the existing use does not fall within Class B1, B2 or B8, there are no Development Plan policies specifically restricting this change of use.
- 6.4 A planning condition under P94/N0065 restricts the use of the building to Class D1 (non-residential institution) and officers note the Town Council's assertion that the proposal is in conflict with SOLP Policy CF1, which protects 'essential' community facilities. In response, officers consider that the existing use as a 'resource centre' is not a primary healthcare facility afforded protection under this policy or the Neighbourhood Plan and officers consider that the proposed change of use to residential is acceptable in principle.
- 6.5 Notwithstanding the above point, the applicant has provided further supporting information (Appendix C) suggesting that the NHS-run facility is both surplus to requirement, following a rationalisation of the service, and unsuitable for an alternative clinical use.

#### **Scale and design**

- 6.6 The property was a hotel prior to its use as a social services facility and it arguably has retained a clear residential character. Consequently, the external changes proposed

are minimal and the visual impact upon the street scene or wider conservation area would be negligible.

- 6.7 It is noted that the proposal would provide approximately 55 sq.m. of communal space at the western corner of the site and this is a main area of concern for the Town Council. Whilst it is agreed that this is a relatively limited area, officers do not object to this aspect of the proposal given that this is a sustainable town-centre location, a walkable neighbourhood and of a generally high density with many residential properties above retail and commercial premises. On this basis, officers consider that this aspect of the proposal would not be in conflict with the council's adopted design standards, outlined within SOLP Policy D3 and Section 3.2 of the SODG. It is also noteworthy that the Government's established changes to permitted development rights, set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, allow for the change of use of a range of redundant town centre premises to dwellinghouses without the need for planning permission or the provision of any private external amenity space. This should be viewed as a material planning consideration in this instance.

#### **Residential amenity**

- 6.8 Having regard to the general built-up location and the relatively close-knit grain of residential development, officers consider that the proposed use is appropriate from the perspective of neighbouring amenity and, subject to the attached condition, it would not result in a material loss of privacy with respect to the adjacent properties.

#### **Access and parking**

- 6.9 The site is in a sustainable town centre location in close proximity to the town centre and within walking distance of shops, public transport and other key facilities. The Local Highway Authority raise no objection to the proposal on the basis that the vehicle movements associated with the proposal in terms of the previous/existing usage of the site do not constitute "severe harm" as required in the recent Government guidelines contained within the NPPF.

#### **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposed change of use is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy. The proposal would not cause material harm to the overall character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal is also considered acceptable in terms of the impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and it would not be prejudicial to highway safety.

#### **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement within three years**
- 2. Development to be in accordance with the approved plans**
- 3. Materials to be as on plan**
- 4. South-east facing windows to be obscure-glazed**
- 5. Cycle parking facilities to be provided in accordance with details to be agreed**
- 6. Parking and turning areas to be provided as on plan prior to occupation**

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