

18/00123/FUL - Benwell House.

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# Planning Committee

## 7 March 2018



<b>Application No.</b>	18/00123/FUL
<b>Site Address</b>	Benwell House, Green Street Sunbury On Thames TW16 6QS
<b>Applicant</b>	Spelthorne Borough Council
<b>Proposal</b>	Conversion of existing third floor roof space to provide six x 1 bed units, erection of dormers and other associated works.
<b>Ward</b>	Sunbury East
<b>Called-in</b>	N/A

<b>Application Dates</b>	Valid: 31.01.2018	Expiry: 28.03.18	Target: Under 8 weeks
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p>The site is located in Sunbury-on-Thames and comprises a three storey purpose built office block constructed in the 1980s.</p> <p>It is located approximately 250m from Sunbury train station and has good road and rail links.</p> <p>Prior Approval was granted under Class O of the General Permitted Development Order to change the office building to a residential use in January 2018.</p> <p>The current application is for the conversion of the existing roof space to create six 1 bed units, installation of two dormer windows to each unit and alteration to the pitch of the feature roofs.</p> <p>The Borough has a need for this type of housing and the design is considered appropriate, with no material impact on neighbouring properties or the character of the surrounding area. The site is in an accessible location and the parking provision is adequate for the development proposed.</p>		
<b>Recommended Decision</b>	This application is recommended for Approval.		

## MAIN REPORT

### 1. Development Plan

1.1 The following policies in the Council's Core Strategy and Policies DPD 2009 are considered relevant to this proposal:

- SP2 (Housing provision)
- HO1 (Providing for New Housing Development)
- HO4 (Housing Size and type)
- HO5 (Density of Housing Development) EM1 (Employment Development) EN1 (Design of New Development)
- EN3 (Air Quality)
- CC1 (Renewable Energy, Energy Conservation and Sustainable Construction)
- CC2 (Sustainable Travel)
- CC3 (Parking Provision)

### 2. Relevant Planning History

SUN/FUL/84/712	Erection of a three-storey office building of 30,000 sq ft (2,787 sq m) gross floorspace, together with 93 car parking spaces and a modified access; (b) the erection of a day centre for aged persons, with 20 car parking spaces; and (c) the erection of three-storey residential accommodation, comprising 25 No. 1-bed flats and 25 No. 2-bed maisonettes, with 75 car parking spaces.	Approved 21.11.1984
SPE/FUL/85/102	Erection of a three-storey office building with gross floorspace of 30,640 sq ft (2,846 sq m) excluding roof plant, together with 95 car parking spaces, a modified vehicular access and landscaping; and (B) a day centre with gross floorspace of 6,552 sq ft (609 sq m) excluding roof plant, together with 11 car parking spaces, a block of 10 garages with gross floorspace of 2,092 sq ft (194 sq m) and landscaping.	Approved 13.03.1985
92/00180/RVC	Relaxation of condition 10 of planning permission E/85/102 to allow a change of occupancy.	Approved 27.06.1992
17/01847/PDO	Prior Approval for the Change of Use from Office to Residential	Prior Notification Approved 15.01.2018

### 3. Description of Current Proposal

- 3.1 The application site comprises 1.98 acres (0.8 ha) on the east side of Green Street, approximately 0.2 miles from Junction 1 of the M3 motorway. It contains a purpose built 3 storey office building dating from the mid-1980s and is constructed of red brick on a yellow brick plinth under a false pitched roof of Roman half roll tiles.
- 3.2 The building received prior approval for a change of use from office to residential in January 2018, to provide fourteen 1 bed units and nineteen 2 bed units over the three floors.
- 3.3 This application is seeking the conversion of the existing roof space to provide six x 1 bed units, with the construction of eight new glazed, pitched roof dormers, amendments to two existing pitched roof dormers and other associated works.
- 3.4 The units would be accessed from a north / south corridor with five of the units facing west and one facing to the east.
- 3.5 There are 95 existing parking spaces within the site and the existing approved conversion to residential accommodation would require a maximum of 33 of these given the accessible location.
- 3.6 The existing site access to Green Street would be used to access the development and no changes to the vehicular or pedestrian access are proposed.

### 4. Consultations

- 4.1 The following table shows those bodies consulted and their response.

Consultee	Comment
County Highway Authority	No objection subject to condition
Street Scene	No objection
Trees	No objection received

### 5. Public Consultation

- 5.1 68 neighbour letters were sent to surrounding properties and 1 letter of representation has been received that raised the following issues:
- None of the units are accessible or provide facilities for disabled people.
  - The lift does not extend to the third floor level

### 6. Planning Issues

- Principle

- Need for housing
- Housing Type, Size and Density
- Design and appearance
- Residential amenity
- Highways issues and parking

## 7. Planning Considerations

### Principle

- 7.1 Prior Approval for the change of use of this office building to residential was granted on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018 because it meet the criteria for permitted development under Class O of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended).
- 7.2 The principle of residential development on the site has therefore been accepted and optimising land for housing accords with Government guidance.
- ### Need for housing
- 7.3 When considering planning applications for housing local planning authorities should have regard to the government's requirement that they boost significantly the supply of housing and meet the full objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in their housing area so far as is consistent with policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 47.
- 7.4 Relevant policies for the supply of housing cannot be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable site (para 49 of NPPF).
- 7.5 The Council has embarked on a review of its Local Plan and accepts that the housing target in its Core Strategy and Policies DPD-Feb 2009 of 166 dwellings per annum is significantly short of its latest objectively assessed need of 552-757 dwellings per annum (Para 10.42 – Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Runnymede and Spelthorne – Nov 2015). In September 2017, the government produced a consultation paper on planning for the right homes in the right places. The proposals included a standard method for calculating local authorities' housing need and proposed a figure of 590 per annum for Spelthorne. On the basis of its objectively assessed housing need the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites.
- 7.6 However, the objectively assessed need figure does not represent a target as it is based on unconstrained need. Through the Local Plan review the Borough's housing supply will be assessed in light of the Borough's constraints which will be used to consider options for meeting need. Once completed, the Borough's up to date Strategic Land Availability Assessment will identify further opportunity sites for future housing development that can then be considered for allocation in the new Local Plan. This will also form the basis for a revised 5-year housing land supply figure.
- 7.7 Para 14 of the NPPF stresses the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that proposals which accord with a development plan should be approved without delay. When the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless *'any adverse*

*impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against policies in the Framework taken as a whole or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.'* This application must be considered having regard to the above requirements of Para 14 of the NPPF.

#### Housing type, size and density

- 7.8 Policy H04 of the CS&P DPD and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Housing Size and Type seeks 80% of dwellings in development of 4 or more units to be 1 or 2 bed in size. This is to ensure the overall dwelling stock meets the demands that exist within the Borough, including the greater demand for smaller dwellings. The provision of an additional six x 1 bed units to the thirty three 1 and 2 bed units already proposed under the prior approval would help to meet this need and therefore the proposed dwelling mix is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.9 The government's technical Housing Standards indicate minimum internal floor space standards for different sizes of dwelling. All of the six units proposed exceed these standards and would therefore provide a suitable level and form of accommodation.
- 7.10 Although Policy HO5 of the CS&P DPD sets out general guidance on density, it excludes the conversion of existing buildings. However, it does recognise that higher densities may be appropriate in suitable areas where non-car based modes of travel are accessible. In this case, the density for the whole development once complete would be 49 units per hectare and this is considered to be appropriate.

#### Design and Appearance

- 7.11 Policy EN1 of the CS&P DPD, which is supported by the Supplementary Planning Document on the 'Design of Residential Extensions and New Residential Development', requires a high standard of design and sub point (a) requires new development to demonstrate that it will:

*"create buildings and places that are attractive with their own distinct identity; they should respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area in which they are situated"*

- 7.12 The design of the proposed dormer windows is compatible with the architecture of the building and subservient to the overall scale of the roof.
- 7.13 The reduction of the roof pitch on the west elevation makes no material impact to the overall design or appearance of the building.

#### Residential Amenity

- 7.14 Policy EN1 (b) requires that new development "achieves a satisfactory relationship to adjoining properties avoiding significant harmful impacts in terms of loss of privacy, daylight, sunlight, or overbearing effect due to bulk, proximity or outlook".
- 7.15 The closest property to the east is over 33 metres away (31 metres to the boundary) and to west, over 46 metres away (40 metres to the boundary). Due to

the distances involved and the landscape screening it is considered that the proposal would have no material detrimental impact in respect of overlooking or loss of privacy to the surrounding properties.

#### Highway Issues and Parking

- 7.16 A Transport Assessment was submitted with the application for Prior Notification which determined that the site is accessible by non-car modes of transport, being located within walking and cycling distance of day to day facilities and public transport services.
- 7.17 There is a southbound bus stop directly outside the site and a northbound stop, 130 metres south of the site. The Sunbury rail station is 250 metres north of the site, which provides two services an hour to Shepperton and London Waterloo.
- 7.18 The addition of six 1 bed units would have no material impact on the traffic generation to and from the site and based on TRICS data the site would still generate fewer trips than the previous office use.
- 7.19 The site currently provides 95 parking spaces and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Parking Standards would require a further 8 parking spaces in addition to the minimum 47 spaces required for the 33 units proposed under the approved Prior Notification.
- 7.20 Given the sustainable location, a lower parking provision could be accepted, however adequate parking is available on site.
- 7.21 No changes to either the existing pedestrian or vehicular accesses are proposed and all servicing can be achieved within the site.
- 7.22 The County Highway Authority's assessment regarding the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision concludes that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway.

#### Other Matters

- 7.23 One of the representations refers to the lack of accessibility for disabled persons. There is no reasoned justification to support the statement that the units are inaccessible or that they do not provide facilities for disabled people. It is acknowledged that a lift is not provided to the proposed new floor of residential accommodation but this is not a reason for the proposal to be refused on planning grounds.

### **8. Conclusions**

- 8.1 The proposal is acceptable in principle and would address the need for additional housing within the Borough.
- 8.2 The size and type of units of units proposed would meet the Borough's stated requirements.

- 8.3 The proposal would have no material impact on the surrounding road network and adequate parking provision is available.

## 9. Recommendation

The application is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason:-.This condition is required by 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 extension hereby permitted must be carried out in facing materials to match those of the existing building in colour and texture.

Reason:-.To ensure a satisfactory external appearance in accordance with policies SP6 and EN1 of the Spelthorne Borough Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document 2009.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and drawings: 1294/PL/01, 1294/PL/10, 1294/PL/11, 1294/PL/20, 1294/PL21, 1294/PL/22, and 1294/PL/23.

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

4. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until facilities for the secure, covered storage of bicycles has been provided in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:-.The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and policies CC2 and CC3 of Spelthorne Borough Council's Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document February 2009.

## 10. Informatives

1. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 Working in a positive/proactive manner. In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF. This included the following:-
  - a. Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
  - b. Provided feedback through the validation process including Information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.

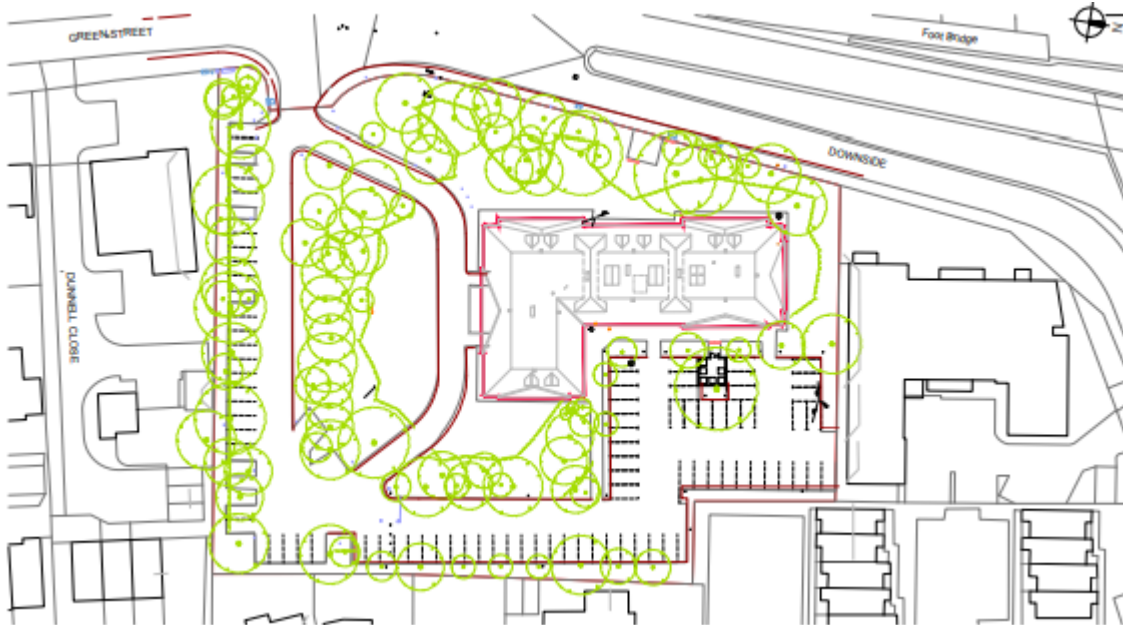


c. Have proactively communicated with the applicant through the process to advise on progress, timescales or recommendation.

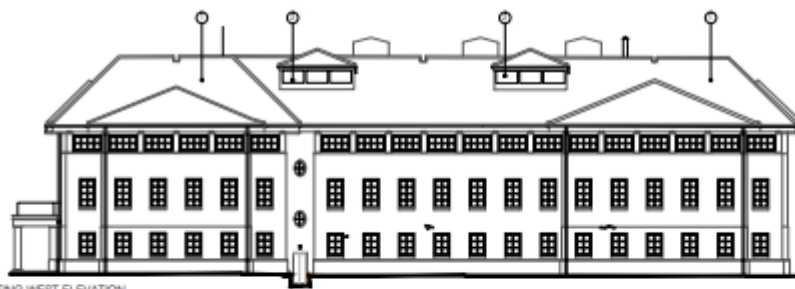
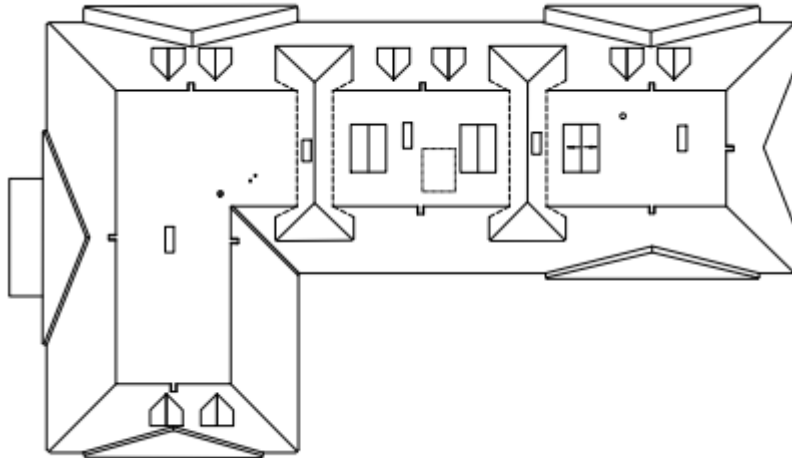
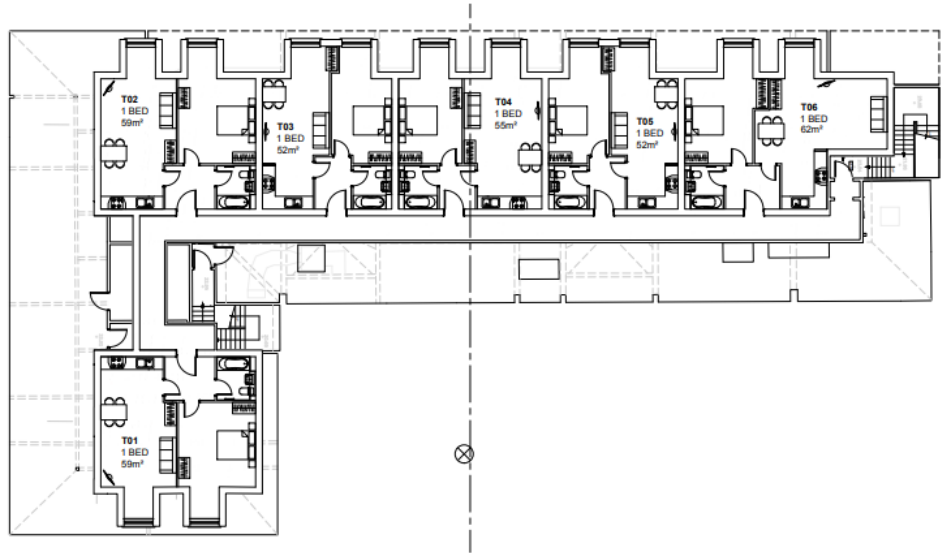
2. Please note that this application is subject to the payment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Full details of the charge, how it has been calculated and what happens next are set out in the CIL Liability Notice which will be sent separately.

If you have not already done so an Assumption of Liability notice should be sent to the Council as soon as possible and before the commencement of development.

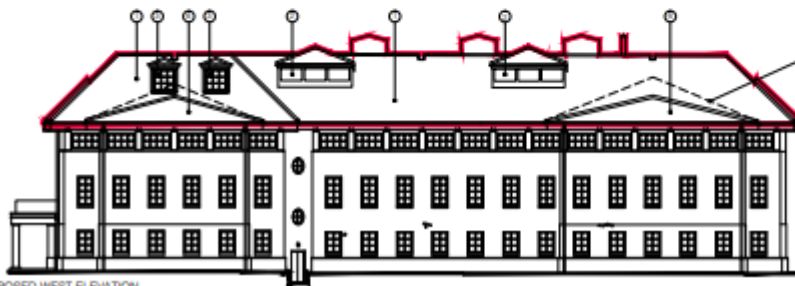
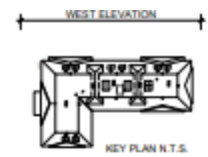
Further information on CIL and the stages which need to be followed is available on the Council's website. [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/CIL](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/CIL).



SCHEDULE OF ACCOMODATION:			
No.	NUMBER OF BEDROOMS	BED SPACES	GIA (m <sup>2</sup> )
T01	1B	2P	59m <sup>2</sup>
T02	1B	2P	59m <sup>2</sup>
T03	1B	2P	52m <sup>2</sup>
T04	1B	2P	55m <sup>2</sup>
T05	1B	2P	52m <sup>2</sup>
T06	1B	2P	62m <sup>2</sup>



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION

