

Planning application no.	17/00885/FUL	
Site	185 and 187 Penn Road, Wolverhampton, WV3 0EQ	
Proposal	Change of use from two semi-detached dwellings to a 12-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation	
Ward	Blakenhall	
Applicant	Mr J Bisla	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John C Reynolds Cabinet Member for City Economy	
Accountable Director	Keren Jones, Service Director, City Economy	
Originating service	Planning	
Accountable employee	Alisha Paul	Planning Officer
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1.0 Summary recommendation

1.1 Refuse.

2.0 Application site

2.1 The site consists of a pair of semi-detached dwellings on Penn Road in the Copthorne Road Conservation Area. The area is characterised by large plots and long private gardens. The dwellings are currently used as family homes. Planning permission has previously been granted for the change of use of both dwellings to a care home.

3.0 Application details

3.1 The proposal seeks a change of use of two semi-detached dwellings to a 12 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The proposal includes a car park in the rear garden, accessed from Penn Road, providing a total of eight car parking spaces. A refuse store (waste and recycling) is proposed at the rear, accessed from Hayling Grove.

4.0 Relevant policy documents

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.2 The Development Plan:
Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UDP)
Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)

5.0 Publicity

5.1 52 letters of objection were received from 26 households.

The reasons for objection include:

- (i) Impact on amenity, including noise;
- (ii) Highway safety, including increase in road traffic and road parking;
- (iii) Impact on the character of the conservation area;
- (iv) Loss of two family homes.

6.0 Consultees

6.1 Environmental Health: no objections subject to conditions.

6.2 Transportation: no objections subject to conditions.

6.3 Police: object based on fear of crime.

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
[RB/08012018/K]

8.0 Appraisal

8.1 HMOs are in a different use class to single dwelling houses because generally they can be different in their character. In some cases they can provide much needed acceptable accommodation for people in housing need. On the other hand, if they are not properly designed and managed they can give rise to anti-social behaviour and cause a fear of crime. To address this issue the Council, as local planning authority, has introduced an Article 4 Direction that means all proposals for HMOs of three or more people require planning permission. This allows the local planning authority to consider each application on its own merits, taking into account:

- i) The impact on the character of the area, taking account of the character of the existing use compared to the character of the proposed use.
- ii) The potential for anti-social behaviour and fear of crime, taking into account evidence from neighbours and the police.
- iii) The creation of safe and accessible environments where crime, disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. (National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 69).
- iv) The potential impact on highway safety.

- 8.2 The occupation of this property by 12 people would be out of character in this area as it will adversely impact the character of the conservation area. It would not contribute to the creation of a safe and accessible environment and as such the resultant fear of crime could undermine the quality of life and community cohesion (NPPF paragraph 69).
- 8.3 The intensification of use of the house for up to 12 people, each possibly acting as a separate household, with their own friends, families, lifestyles and patterns and times of movements, would be significantly greater than that of two family homes. The proposal would house 12 individual occupants, this would detract from the present level and quality of residential amenity in the area, significantly increasing the potential for noise and disturbance, particularly in terms of increased comings and goings from Hayling Grove where a new access is proposed. The property contains an unusually large number of 'communal rooms' which were originally marked as bedrooms (the original proposal was for 17).
- 8.4 The proposed car park in the rear gardens of the properties would result in excessive utilisation of garden land for parking and would result in the loss of green space and private amenity space which is important to the character of the Conservation Area. The proposal fails to enhance or preserve the character of the Conservation Area.
- 8.5 Police have objected to this proposal on the grounds of the development being contrary to the promotion of a safe and accessible environment where the fear of crime would undermine quality of life and community cohesion (NPPF paragraph 69). The introduction of a concentration of individual residents is concerning as crime figures for the immediate area show signs of anti-social behaviour and acquisitive crime. Figures show that crimes such as possession of offensive weapons, drugs offences and causing harassment alarm and distress have been reported since October 2016.
- 8.6 The development includes a driveway that runs from the rear of the property to the front. This creates permeability within the site and could be used as a cut-through as the plans specify no clear separation or boundary treatment. Coupled with the above crime statistics, it is likely that this increase in permeability and lack of a defensible perimeter will make both the development and the residents within it more vulnerable to both vehicle crime and burglary.
- 8.7 No management plan for the property has been provided. Police have quoted that residents within HMO's are up to eight times more likely to suffer from mental health issues than residents in single dwelling properties. A proposal of 12 persons living in this type of premises without correct management or access to services is not promoting a safe and cohesive environment.
- 8.8 The alleyway to the side of the premises is considered a crime generator. The combination of a crime generator situated directly adjacent to an HMO which may house vulnerable residents again does not contribute to a safe and cohesive community or environment.

8.9 Highways have not objected to the proposal because there is unlikely to be a significant impact on highways safety. However, the car park proposed in the rear garden is not acceptable as it would result in excessive utilisation of garden land for parking and would result in the loss of green space and private amenity space which is important to the character of the Conservation Area. The proposal fails to enhance or preserve the character of the Conservation Area.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 The proposal is not acceptable as it will adversely impact the character of the Conservation Area and cause detriment to neighbours' amenities. The proposal would fail to promote a safe and cohesive environment and may exacerbate crime and/or the fear of crime.

10.0 Detail recommendation

10.1 That planning application 17/00885/FUL be refused planning permission based on:

- Impact on the Conservation Area and the character of the local area
- Loss of amenity
- Contrary to the promotion of a safe and cohesive community exacerbating crime and/or the fear of crime.

