

Planning application no.	21/01466/FUL	
Site	14 Abingdon Close, Wolverhampton, WV1 2PR	
Proposal	Proposed conversion of existing dwelling house into 2 self-contained flats and bricking up of ground floor hallway window.	
Ward	East Park;	
Applicant	Mr. B. Sanghera	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Stephen Simkins Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy	
Accountable Director	Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration	
Originating service	Planning	
Accountable employee	Jobe Elwell	Planning Officer
	Tel	01902 551358
	Email	Jobe.Elwell@wolverhampton.gov.uk

1.0 Summary recommendation

1.1 Delegated authority to grant permission subject to conditions.

2.0 Application site

2.1 The application property is a semi-detached dwelling-house, situated towards the end of a cul-de-sac. The surrounding area is residential in character, comprising of uniform semi-detached two-storey houses. The houses traditionally included grassed front gardens, some of which have now been hard-surfaced to provide driveways for off-street parking. The application dwelling has an existing block-paved driveway that can accommodate 3-4 cars, accessed via an existing dropped kerb. There is a telegraph pole and a non-protected tree opposite the property adjacent to the highway. The application property and the surrounding dwellings all include private rear gardens which can be accessed by side passageways. According to the Council's mapping software, there are four existing apartments within Abingdon Close. The application dwelling currently contains two bedrooms, with a living / dining room, kitchen, utility room, bathroom, WC and storage cupboards, with a private rear garden.

3.0 Application details

- 3.1 This application seeks to convert No.14 Abingdon Close into two self-contained one-bedroom apartments. This proposal includes the bricking up of an existing front hallway window, otherwise no external changes to the property have been proposed.
- 3.2 The apartments would be divided into ground floor and first floor flats, with the ground floor accessed via the side passageway through the side door, and the first floor accessed via the front door which would lead straight upstairs.
- 3.3 Amended plans have been received which has sub-divided the rear garden horizontally, providing private amenity space to each apartment, each of which includes bin storage areas and a cycle storage unit. The block plan demonstrates off-road parking for at least three cars, accessed via the existing dropped kerb, which shall be serviced by a double EV charging port attached to the front of the house. An acoustic mitigation and fire attenuation scheme has been demonstrated between the two apartments.

4.0 Relevant policy documents

- 4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 4.2 Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UDP)
- 4.3 Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)

5.0 Publicity

- 5.1 Four neighbours were initially consulted on the application.
- 5.2 Seven objections were received in relation to the application and a public petition containing 26 signatures. These objections were based on the following grounds:
 - The additional dwelling would exacerbate existing parking issues within the close, potentially leading to more arguments between neighbours.
 - The additional dwelling would place pressure on existing utilities and services e.g. reducing water pressure and oversaturating the sewage system. It is the perception that this will lead to increased flooding.
 - This will create additional noise pollution within the area.
 - Neighbouring privacy will be adversely affected.
 - This will adversely affect the property prices of neighbouring dwellings (*not a material planning consideration*).

6.0 Consultees

- 6.1 Transportation – no objection but raised the following points:

- Whilst the site has an existing dropped kerb, this should be increased to span the length of the driveway to provide easier access. This would subsequently require the removal of the tree and telegraph pole.
- The application will require an electric vehicle charging port to comply with planning policy.
- A construction management plan will need to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any development.

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 When considering development proposals the Local Planning Authority should consider a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
[JA/10012022/C]

8.0 Appraisal

- 8.1 The only change to the external appearance of the dwelling will be the removal of the ground floor front hallway window, which is considered to not result in an adverse impact to the street scene. As the property is not increasing in size or gaining any new windows, this is considered to not present an adverse harm on neighbouring visual amenities or privacy.
- 8.2 The amended plans to provide separate parking spaces, with separate private garden provision, cycle and bin storages ensures that the two dwellings can operate independently from one another. The acoustic mitigation scheme ensures that the two apartments will not result in a detrimental harm to the amenities of either property. The gardens have been arranged so that their space will remain private and free from overlooking from the other flat and are of a sufficient size to deliver adequate amenity provision. Thus, the amenities of any future residents would be secured and protected.
- 8.3 The existing two-bedroom dwelling-house would be reasonably expected to accommodate at least two working adults with space for children. A two-bedroom dwelling requires two off-road parking spaces to comply with policy. Two one-bedroom flats require three off-road parking spaces (1.5 each), which has been demonstrated on the block plan. Provided the cars are arranged correctly there should even be space to accommodate a fourth parking space on the driveway for visitors. It is acknowledged that parking is an existing issue for the area, however it is expected that the two one-bed flats would generate a very similar parking demand to the existing two-bedroom dwelling. Although occasions may arise where the parking capacity may be exceeded, given that the parking provision complies with planning policy, this would not justify a reason for refusal. Furthermore, the cycle storages should reduce reliance on car parking, and together with the electric vehicle charging ports, this will encourage sustainable transport.

8.4 Since the Transportation Officer's comments were received, amended plans have been submitted which has provided a double EV charging port and has re-positioned the parking spaces. Whilst the removal of the tree and telegraph pole and extending of the dropped kerb was recommended, the tree is considered to deliver a positive contribution to the visual amenities of Abingdon Close. The social and environmental benefits of trees within the public realm have been well documented, and its loss would adversely affect the appearance of the street scene, which is considered unjustified in this instance. Instead, the parking layout has been reconfigured, allowing all vehicles to independently access the existing dropped kerb. This is considered to have overcome this concern from the Transportation Officer. Whilst a construction management plan was requested, it is considered that the limited scale of physical development would not require large vehicles or generate high volumes of traffic that would justify this request or pass as a 'reasonable' condition.

8.5 The remaining concerns raised by local residents include the perceived additional demand on services, utilities and creation of flooding. Whilst local flooding and poor water pressure may be a characteristic of the local area, given that there is to be no net increase in the number of bedrooms, only one additional bathroom and one additional set of kitchen taps, this is considered to not present a material increase in the demand on existing services. This is significantly unlikely to increase the likelihood of flooding or exceed the capacity of underground infrastructure, therefore does not justify a reason for refusal in this instance. Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest that this conversion into two apartments would lead to a notable increase in noise pollution given that there is to be no increase in bedroom capacity.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 For the reasons given above, the proposal is considered to have overcome all of the material considerations raised by consultees and neighbours alike. There remain no material planning considerations that would justify a reason for refusal.

10.0 Detail recommendation

10.1 On balance, it is concluded that this application should be granted subject to the conditions as outlined below:

- 3-year timescale condition
- Permission in accordance with approved plans and documents only
- Matching materials condition
- No additional windows or doors to be included
- Obscure glazing to ground floor front bathroom window
- Acoustic mitigation measures to be implemented in accordance with approved drawing

- Provision of EV charging port in accordance with approved drawing
- Driveway to be retained for residential parking for at least 3 domestic vehicles
- Bins to be brought out for collection but otherwise stored in respective rear gardens

