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| Planning application no. | 22/01199/FUL | |
| Site | 4 Beach Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV14 9BS | |
| Proposal | Proposed conversion of 1No. 5-bed dwellinghouse into 1No. ground floor 1-bed apartment and 1No. first & second floor 2-bed apartment. With creation of three off-road parking spaces, sub-division of rear garden and new side staircase and first floor access. | |
| Ward | Spring Vale; | |
| Applicant | Ms Linda Leach | |
| 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 Grant planning permission subject to conditions.

2.0 Application site

2.1 The application property is a semi-detached two-storey dwelling-house, the second dwelling in a uniform row of 6. The surrounding area is residential in character, comprising of similar semi-detached houses, and 6 semi-detached bungalows. The houses traditionally included grassed front gardens, some of which have now been hard-surfaced to provide driveways for off-street parking. There's currently no existing parking provision within the curtilage of the dwelling, instead residents & visitors park on the highway. There is a non-protected street tree in front of the property. There is an existing single storey side extension, adjoining a similar neighbouring structure which offers access to the rear garden. The application dwelling currently contains five bedrooms, with a lounge, kitchen, utility area, WC, shower room, bathroom and storage cupboards, with a private rear garden.

3.0 Application details

- 3.1 This application seeks to convert No.4 Beach Avenue into two self-contained apartments. The ground floor apartment (No.4A) will contain 1 bedroom, 1 kitchen, 1 lounge, with a separate shower room and WC. The apartment occupying the upper floors (No.4) will contain 2 bedrooms, 1 kitchen, 1 lounge and 1 bathroom. An acoustic mitigation and fire attenuation scheme has been demonstrated between the two apartments.
- 3.2 The access to the upper floor apartment will be via a new side access to the first floor, over the roof of the existing single storey side extension. This shall include a 2.2m high bricked enclosure over the existing extension, and an opaque acrylic partition along the metal staircase.
- 3.3 The existing front garden will be removed to make way for a hard surfaced parking area, making provision for three vehicles, serviced by an EV charging port. The rear garden will be sub-divided horizontally providing private amenity space to each apartment.

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 Thirteen neighbours were initially consulted on the application.
- 5.2 Representations were received in relation to the application from three local addresses, objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:
 - The creation of a new dwelling would increase noise levels in the area, adversely affecting neighbouring amenity.
 - The window to the second floor flat would overlook a neighbouring habitable window, adversely affecting their privacy. (*This has since been addressed through subsequent amendments*).
 - The parking provision will not be adequate, there is no space for visitors.
 - These properties were originally created as family dwellings, they should stay in that use, for that purpose.
 - Concerns over what tenancy the development will provide and who the occupants could be (*outside of planning control*).
 - The development would adversely affect the property prices of neighbouring dwellings (*not a material planning consideration*).

6.0 Consultees

6.1 Transportation – no objection

6.2 Private Housing – (no objection), raised the following points:

- The ground floor bedroom being accessed solely from the kitchen may be a fire hazard. Additional fire safety precautions and fire escape windows may be required to the ground floor front bedroom. *(This will be formally considered and addressed at the Building Regulations stage).*

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. [MAK/SE/06/01/2023/1]

8.0 Appraisal

- 8.1 The principal of the subdivision of the existing 5-bedroom dwelling to create two apartments of 1 & 2 bedrooms is considered acceptable. The building would still retain its C3 dwellinghouse use, and the material operation of the property would be broadly similar to its existing use. It is acknowledged that some objections have raised issue over the intensification of the dwelling use, however a 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom flat is considered to not create any additional harm over that presented by a single 5-bedroom dwelling.
- 8.2 The accommodation for occupants of both flats is considered acceptable. Each have their own lounge, kitchen and bathrooms, with separate private gardens and bin and cycle storage areas. Therefore, 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 dwelling. Thus, the amenities of any future residents would be secured and protected. These elements can be secured by condition.
- 8.3 Although some representations have objected to the proposal on the grounds that the parking provision will be inadequate, the Transportation team are satisfied that the application complies with the relevant policies, and that the proposed arrangements do not present a hazard to highway safety or traffic flow. Furthermore, parking pressures would actually be reduced by the proposal; currently the 5-bedroom dwelling has no private parking spaces, whereas the total 3 bedrooms proposed would be served by three off-road parking spaces. Additionally, the cycle storages should reduce reliance on car parking, and the electric vehicle charging port will encourage sustainable transport.
- 8.4 The addition of the brick wall partition above the single storey side extension is considered acceptable. The use of brick ensures the appearance will integrate appropriately with the existing dwelling, and the limited height and width, together with the set back from the principal elevation ensures that this will appear suitably subservient and unobtrusive. Subsequently, this will not present an unacceptable harm to the character of the street scene in this instance.

- 8.5 Concern over potential noise to a neighbouring bedroom was found to be valid. Subsequently, the brick partition was introduced, which is considered acceptable to reduce harmful overlooking and mitigate the noise of using this door to within acceptable levels. Overlooking into neighbouring gardens will also be prevented by the opaque acrylic partition on the staircase. Although some noise will remain when occupants enter and exit via this route, this only leads to the garden, so this is not expected to present a frequent issue.
- 8.6 Similarly, an existing second floor, side facing, clear glazed bedroom window was found to present overlooking into the neighbouring bedroom window. Subsequently, amended plans have been submitted which will replace this with obscure glazing as part of the proposal. This acceptably negates any harmful overlooking. Furthermore, this would improve the levels of privacy for the neighbouring dwelling, when compared to the existing arrangement. This can be secured via condition.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 The amended scheme is compliant with all relevant planning policies and the proposal is considered to have overcome all of the material considerations raised by consultees and neighbours alike.

10.0 Detail recommendation

- 10.1 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 second floor side facing bedroom 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
 - Details of bins stores to be submitted to and agreed by LPA prior to first occupation

