

# PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:P05/2761

Type of approval sought	Full Planning Permission
Ward	St. James's
Applicant	Parkstone Developments Ltd
Location:	<b>THE OLD POST OFFICE, WOLVERHAMPTON STREET, DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS</b>
Proposal	<b>EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO FORM 22 APARTMENTS</b>
Recommendation Summary:	<b>APPROVE SUBJECT TO A 106 AGREEMENT</b>

## SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 1 The site contains the former main Post Office. The building occupies a corner position at the junction of Priory Street and Wolverhampton Street. The site lies within the Conservation Area, and the Post Office building, which dates from 1909, appears on the statutory list graded II. The building has three storeys and a basement, and is constructed of ashlar with quoined corners and rustication to the ground floor. Sash windows exist throughout the building, generally in architraved surroundings with triple key blocks at the heads. Balconies, a coat of arms, pediment and modillioned eaves all make the building architecturally noteworthy.

## PROPOSAL

- 2 Permission is sought for external and internal alterations to form 22 apartments. The proposals show that the alterations to the internal layout would result in 5 apartments with 2 bedrooms each and the remaining 17 apartments with 1 bedroom each. No parking provision is proposed, however this is a tight site which currently has no parking provision.

## HISTORY

<b>APPLICATION No.</b>	<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>DECISION</b>	<b>DATE</b>
CC/79/6	LBC infilling of two rear windows	Granted	15/3/79
CC/79/7	Infilling of two rear windows	Granted	15/3/79
81/50231	Installation of window	Granted	12/3/81
81/50232	LBC Installation of window	Granted	12/3/81
84/50195	LBC sign	Granted	12/3/84
84/51593	C/u PO to offices	Granted	4/10/84
84/51594	LBC c/u PO to offices	Withdrawn	24/9/84
87/50554	C/u basement PO to weight lifting club	Granted	23/4/87
88/52430	C/u 1 <sup>st</sup> flr PO to hairdresser	Granted	29/11/88
89/50296	Advert consent for signage	Granted	22/6/89
89/50310	Advert consent for signage	Granted	22/6/89
90/51465	C/u 1 <sup>st</sup> flr hairdressers to photographic studio	Granted	21/9/90
98/50009	C/u to restaurant/bar with staff accommodation and office suite	Granted	2/4/98
98/50324	LBCC/u to restaurant/bar with staff accommodation and office suite	Granted	17/4/98
P00/508080	New opening in front elevation	Granted	5/7/00
P00/50809	LBC new opening in front elevation	Granted	21/7/00
P00/50933	Advert consent for signage	Granted	26/7/00
P00/50972	LBC signage	Granted	16/6/00
P02/2045	LBC signage	Granted	13/1/3
P02/2046	Fascia and projecting signs	Granted	8/1/3
P04/1095	LBC renovations and conversion to 12 apartments	Granted	25/10/4

P04/1096	C/u and alterations to form 12 apartments	Granted	25/10/04
P05/2760	LBC for conversion to 22 apartments	Pending	

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3 No responses received, any additional responses received between the writing of this report and the committee meeting will be noted on the pre-committee notes.

## OTHER CONSULTATION

- 4 **Traffic & Road Safety:** It would be normal in this type of development to require 1.2 parking spaces per unit of residential accommodation but this has often been waved in town centre locations where there is off street parking available in the evenings and week ends on public car parks, there is access to alternative forms of travel (in this case local bus services), and is adjacent to the town centre.

However, there is some concern that development of 22 flats is far greater than would normally be expected for this type of small or infill development.

In the basement there is an indication that four parking spaces are to be provided from an existing side access. These four spaces are inadequate in width at 2.3m to be considered acceptable and should be reduced to 3 wider spaces.

The removal of the vehicular access to Priory Street that was shown on an earlier residential application will be a significant benefit to highway safety. At this access vehicles emerged through a narrow access across a well used pedestrian footway and therefore there would be a positive safety improvement with this application.

- 5 **Environmental Protection:** No objection subject to conditions
- 6 **Historic Environment:** No objection (recommend approval for accompanying Listed Building Consent application)
- 7 **Access officer:** No objections

## **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

### **Unitary Development Plan (2005)**

DD1 Urban design  
DD4 Development in residential areas  
DD6 Access and transport infrastructure  
DD7 Planning obligations  
DD8 Provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities  
AM14 Parking  
H1 New housing development  
H3 Housing assessment criteria  
H6 Housing density  
HE1 Local character and distinctiveness  
HE4 Conservation Areas  
HE6 Listed buildings

The site lies within the Town Centre Conservation Area

### **National Planning Policy**

PPS1 Delivering sustainable development  
PPG3 Housing and draft PPS3 Housing  
PPG15 Planning and the historic environment

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

SPG: Conservation Area Appraisal

## ASSESSMENT

### Principle

- 8 The principle of residential conversion has already be established on this site and is considered to be acceptable in this central location, as it would bring back into use a redundant building which is worthy of retention.

### Differences from previously approved scheme

- 9 The previously approved scheme for the conversion of this building was for the creation of twelve large apartments (at a density of 241dph) and included a small quantity of parking provision. However, the Historic Environment Officer has noted that fewer internal alterations of detriment to the fabric of the historic building are now proposed than were in the approved scheme, and that therefore this scheme is more sympathetic and sensitive to the building and its retention.

### Historic environment

- 10 The building has been designated as having historic or architectural importance of national significance by virtue of its statutory listing, and is therefore considered to be a heritage asset to the built environment of Dudley town centre. Therefore planning policy seeks to retain the building, and where its previous use has ceased, as in this case, find appropriate re-uses for the building. It is therefore considered that its conversion for residential purposes would be acceptable and encourage its reuse and return to vitality. It is therefore considered that the proposal meets the policy test of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### Density

- 11 The proposal would result in development at a density of 443 dph, which is significantly above that recommended in the national planning guidance, however there are other considerations to weigh against this element of the proposed scheme. These include the desire to retain and re-use the existing building, and its central accessible location.

### Design and amenity

- 12 The external appearance of the building would change very little, and therefore would continue to provide a positive contribution to the built environment in this area of the town centre and it is not considered that the proposed new use would cause any harm to the amenities of the surroundings.

### Highways

- 13 There are no concerns raised by the Head of Traffic and Road Safety, and therefore it is not considered that the proposal can be refused on the basis of lack of on site parking. This is particularly given that the site lies within the town centre, and is therefore in a very accessible location close to facilities, services and public transport provision. It is therefore considered that this accords with local and national planning policy guidance.

### POS contributions

- 14 Given that the proposal is for more than 5 dwellings, a contribution towards the provision and enhancement of off site public open space and equipped play facilities would be required, through the imposition of a S106 legal agreement.

## CONCLUSION

- 15 The proposal is considered to be sympathetic to the architectural and historic interest of the building, to comply with local and national policy guidance and unlikely to cause harm to amenities.

## RECOMMENDATION

- 16 The application should be approved subject to:
- a) The applicant entering into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for a contribution to off-site recreational public open space enhancement

- b) The following conditions, with delegated powers to the Director of the Urban Environment to make amendments to these as necessary
- c) In the event that the Section 106 agreement has not been completed within two months of the resolution to grant approval, the application will be refused if appropriate.

Conditions and/or reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. Prior to the commencement of development, details of the materials to be used on all alterations to the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall proceed in accordance with the approved details.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be built in accordance with the approved plans 285/101, 2285/102, 2285/103A, 2285/104, 2285/105 and 2285/106, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
4. Development shall not begin until a scheme for protecting the proposed dwellings from noise from road traffic Priory Street and Wolverhampton Street has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, and all works which form part of the scheme shall be completed before any of the permitted dwellings is occupied.
5. The flat hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a scheme for providing sound insulation between the dwelling and the adjacent lower ground car park and flats above premises has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority and all works which form part of the approved scheme have been completed.

