

REPORT TO 30 MARCH 2022 PLANNING COMMITTEE – ITEM 2

Application No:	21/1026	Case Officer:	Beth Winstanley Area Team 2
Applicant:	Mr De'ath	Agent:	Mr Sinkinson
Location:	10A ST GEORGES SQUARE, LYTHAM ST ANNES, FY8 2NY		
Proposal:	CHANGE OF USE OF BUILDING FROM TWO FLATS TO A SINGLE DWELLINGHOUSE INCLUDING FIRST FLOOR SIDE AND REAR EXTENSIONS, ERECTION OF FIRST FLOOR BALCONY TO FRONT ELEVATION, CLADDING OF EXTERNAL WALLS IN RENDER TO FIRST FLOOR, ALTERATIONS TO WINDOW OPENINGS AND REMOVAL OF EXTERNAL STAIRCASE AND STORE TO REAR		
Ward:	Ashton	Parish:	St Anne's on the Sea
Statutory Expiry:	1 April 2022	Earliest Decision:	7 February 2022
Reason for any delay:	Officers negotiating design improvements		To view application file on FBC website click here

Summary of Officer Recommendation

The application relates to works at no. 10a St Georges Square, a detached two storey building which is currently used as two independent flats and is located within the Porritt Houses Conservation Area and positioned next to Ashton Gardens which has the Grade II listed War Memorial located within it.

The application proposes the change the use of the building from two flats to a single dwelling and some physical alterations to facilitate that change of use. These involve enclosing the existing external staircase to create additional internal floor area, creating a first floor extension above an existing single storey extension as an extended bedroom, re-rendering the first floor of the property in white K-Rend, replacing all windows to the property, and the formation of a balcony to the front elevation of the property with a black iron balustrade around.

The building is located within the Town Centre of Lytham St Annes, which is listed as a key service area under Policy S1 of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (Incorporating Partial Review) therefore allowing the principle of removing one residential unit to be considered appropriate and would not create a significant loss in available units within the area.

The proposed works to the external parts of the dwelling will see the existing building improved visually – with the removal of the tired light blue render and replacement with a more appropriate white render. The window replacements will replace the existing aged UPVC which are of poor standard with a more modern alternative which improves the overall visual appearance of the property. The extensions, which are minimal in projection and size will not over dominate the existing building and will be an appropriate and sympathetic addition to the property.

The application site is located within the Porritt Houses conservation area, and adjacent to Ashton Gardens, which contains the Grade II listed War Memorial, therefore the character of the property must not harm or degrade either heritage asset. Overall, the works proposed to the external parts

of the dwelling will improve the visual character of the dwelling – with the retention of the brick dental course and the addition of the sympathetic white render to the first floor of the dwelling. The creation of the balcony to the front elevation will be completed in matching black iron railings which are seen around Ashton Gardens and as boundary treatments to dwellings within St Georges Square, therefore the overall appearance will not be of an overtly modern design. The balcony has a limited overall size and subservient appearance so does not degrade the surrounding character of the area or the nearby heritage assets.

The proposal will not lead to any undue harm to the surrounding neighbours of no. 10 St Georges Square or no. 355 Clifton Drive North due to the distance and minimal works proposed.

As such, the application represents an improvement to the visual appearance of the property, which in turn brings improvements to the conservation area and within the setting of the listed war memorial. The works have been sympathetically designed to enhance the character of the dwelling while also allowing the building to be used for its owner's needs.

The application accords with all relevant policies of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (Incorporating Partial Review) and as such is recommended for approval.

Reason for Decision Level

The officer recommendation for approval conflicts with the views of the Town Council and so it is necessary to present the application to the Planning Committee for a decision.

Site Description and Location

The application relates to a detached building set within the grounds of no. 10 St Georges Square but set serves as an independent residential unit to that property and is currently split in to two self-contained flats, one to the ground floor and one to the first floor. The first floor flat is accessed from an external staircase located to the rear and accessed from Back Clifton Drive North.

The site is located within the 'Porritt Houses' Conservation area, an area to the north of St Annes Town Centre which incorporates Ashton Gardens. The surrounding conservation area is characterised by large semi-detached properties built in stone with several floors. Many of the buildings have been converted into apartments, offices and care homes due to the size and grandeur. The site neighbours Ashton Gardens, where the Grade II listed war memorial is located.

The site is located within the settlement of Lytham St Annes, as defined under Policy GD1 of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (Incorporating Partial Review)

Details of Proposal

In simple terms planning permission is sought to convert the building from two flats to a single dwelling with associated minor extensions and alterations to facilitate that change of use.

In more detail the application is for the following:

- The conversion of the building in to one dwelling house from 2 independent flats.
- The creation of a single storey extension to the south west (rear) elevation of the property to enclose part of the ground floor area that is created by the removal of the external staircase

- The creation of a first-floor extension to the northern side elevation above the existing ground floor side outrigger which will project approx. 2.4m outwards away from the side elevation of the dwelling and have an overall depth of approx. 4.7m. The roof will be gabled with a matching eaves height to the host dwelling of 5.4m and a top ridge height of approx. 7.2m, approx. 0.5m lower than the ridge height of the main dwelling.
- The addition of a first floor extension to the south western (rear) elevation of the property to enclose the area currently used as an external access to the first floor flat.
- The creation of a balcony to the north eastern (front) elevation of the property which will project approx. 2m away from the front wall of the dwelling and will have a width of approx. 5.5m across the front wall of the dwelling. The balcony will have 1m high black steel handrails around the edge.
- The addition of render to the external faces of the dwelling in white.
- The alteration of window openings at the dwelling with the window opening being retained and renewed with slimline framed upvc.
- The removal of the external staircase and store to the rear (south western) elevation of the property.

Relevant Planning/Appeal History

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App. No	Description	Decision	Date	Appeal
78/0170	LOUNGE EXTENSION AND LOBBY	Granted	05 April 1978	

Parish/Town Council Observations

Parish/Town Council	Observations
Saint Annes On The Sea Town Council	<p><u>Comments dated 22 December 2021</u></p> <p><i>We have no Objection to the Change of Use proposal or extensions but do have clear reservations regarding the proposed external materials and front balcony.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. The property is in Ashton Gardens Conservation Area, although no mention of this is made in the Heritage Statement.</i> <i>2. Consideration to the external symmetry within its setting, must be considered. (Including the proposed balcony to the front).</i> <i>3. The proposed 1st floor balcony will directly overlook the Rose Gardens and park areas, up to the Grade 2 Listed War Memorial to the side elevation.</i> <i>4. As is stated in the Heritage Statement,</i> <p><i>The surrounding houses and others in this area of St. Anne's are known as Porritt houses. They are constructed on their main elevations (front and side) in a beige brick with red brick decorative stringer coursing. The elevation corners are finished in stone quoins, the window headers and cills are in stone. The roofs are finished in slates with a grey clay ridge tile.</i></p>

	<p><i>This of course, brings us to consider if the proposed 1st floor balcony and external, vertical, wooden cedar cladding are appropriate in this setting.</i></p> <p><i>For the above reasons, we cannot agree with the concluding paragraph of the Heritage Statement -</i></p> <p><i>'The idea is to give this property an up-to-date contemporary look and design. We feel that with the above proposals the application property will NOT look substantially different to how it currently looks. With that in mind we hope that you will look favourably on the application with a view to approve'.</i></p> <p><i>The application pays no regard to Neighbourhood Plan Development Guide and therefore the proposed external materials and front balcony conflict with Policy DH1. 'Heritage Development proposals must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings and their settings, must have regard to adopted Conservation Area. Character Appraisals and must respect the special interest of non-designated heritage assets, including buildings on the local list. The removal of historic features will be resisted. Development proposals must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the historic parks and gardens identified on the Policies Map'.</i></p> <p><i>As a note of historical and relevant significance this group of properties was built by Oliver Porritt (the grandson of William who built the Porritt houses on Clifton Drive) as part of a circular estate that was left unfinished due to the market situation before WW1. The proposed alteration to the front elevation of the property by adding a balcony and modern fascia cladding would destroy the unified appearance of the whole group. These period houses are very much a part of the Ashton Gardens vista.</i></p> <p><u>Comments dated 22 February 2022</u></p> <p><i>The TC's previous Objections regarding the external cladding have now been met, as the proposed external render is now an improvement to the original proposal. However, the Town Council's objections to a balcony overlooking this historical park and War Memorial remain, as not considered to be appropriate in this setting.</i></p> <p><i>Original Objections in this regard only, remain.</i></p>
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Statutory Consultees and Observations of Other Interested Parties

There are no observations to report.

Neighbour Observations

Neighbours notified:	25 November 2021
Amended plans notified:	24 January 2022
Site Notice Date:	29 November 2021

Press Notice Date: 9 December 2021
Number of Responses Total number of comments 0

Relevant Planning Policy & Government Guidance

Paragraph 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that development proposals are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This requirement is reinforced in paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (the 'FLP') was formally adopted by the Council at its meeting on Monday 22 October 2018 as the statutory, adopted development plan for the Borough. The Council submitted a Partial Review of the FLP to the Secretary of State for Examination on 21 October 2020. The Partial Review does not delete or add new policies to the FLP and is, instead, concerned principally with matters relating to re-calculating housing need and amending the wording of policies within the FLP to bring these in alignment with the 2021 version of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Inspector's report on the examination of the Partial Review of the FLP was received on 21 October 2021 and confirms that plan is sound. Following the conclusion of the Partial Review, the Council formally adopted the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (incorporating Partial Review) – referred to hereafter as the 'FLPPR' – at its meeting on Monday 6 December 2021 as the statutory development plan for the Borough in accordance with s23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Therefore, the FLPPR should guide decision taking for the purposes of paragraph 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (incorporating Partial Review):

CNA - Conservation area site
DLF1 - Development Locations for Fylde
S1 - The Proposed Settlement Hierarchy
GD1 - Settlement Boundaries
GD7 - Achieving Good Design in Development
ENV5 - Historic Environment
SPD1 - Extending Your Home - November 2007
STANP - St Annes on the Sea Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Impact Assessment

This development does not fall within Schedule 1 or 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Comment and Analysis

Principle of Change of use

The application site is located within the settlement as identified under Policy GD1 of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (Incorporating Partial Review). The site is located within the town centre of St Annes, therefore according to policy S1 the application is located within a key service area and as such is an appropriate location for residential development.

The proposal involves a reduction in the overall residential units at the site from 2 to 1 which is a negative factor in the planning balance given the importance of maintaining a housing supply, but the loss is minimal and has to be weighed against other planning factors. The surrounding area is made up of residential properties with a number of dwellings available of varied sizes, and the reduction in residential units within the area by 1 will not significantly harm the overall availability of dwellings within the area.

As such, the overall principle of creating a single dwelling at the building is considered to be appropriate for the town centre location of the development. This satisfies Policy GD1 of the FLPPR and also accords with the aims of GP1 and HOU1 of the St Annes Neighbourhood Plan to promote residential development on previously developed land within the settlement areas.

Design and Appearance

FLPPR policy GD7 requires that development proposals demonstrate a high standard of design, taking account of the character and appearance of the local area, in accordance with 16 guiding principles (a - p). In particular, criteria d), h) and i) of the policy identify the following requirements:

- Ensuring the siting, layout, massing, scale, design, materials, architectural character, proportion, building to plot ratio and landscaping of the proposed development, relate well to the surrounding context.
- Being sympathetic to surrounding land uses and occupiers, and avoiding demonstrable harm to the visual amenities of the local area.
- Taking the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area through high quality new design that responds to its context and using sustainable natural resources where appropriate.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF sets out six general principles of good design (a – f)) that developments should follow and paragraph 134 indicates that “development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies”.

STANP policy DH1 states that "all development must be of a high quality of design and must be appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the town and its neighbourhoods." Additionally, the policy requires that "development should create pleasant places to live and work and take into account surrounding scale, density, layout and car parking, as well as achieving high visual standards."

The application involves a number of changes to the overall design and appearance of the dwelling. The existing property has a staircase to the south-west (rear) elevation to provide access to the first floor unit. The existing building has been completed in light blue render to the first floor and brick to the ground floor. The windows are completed in UPVC and the roof completed in slate. Taking the key elements of the external changes in turn:

Extensions

The application involves a number of extensions at the building. The extensions to the ground floor of the property will infill the area to the south-west (rear) which faces on to Back Clifton Drive North. The extension fills in an area that is created by the removal of the first floor flat access stairs to form a slight extension to the lounge of the property and respects the side and rear building line of the building. As such it has a negligible impact on the host building or wider area.

The first floor extension to the same elevation which will sit above the ground floor extension will also be set within the same building line of the main dwelling and will infill the stairs and landing area

currently positioned externally. The extensions will be completed in matching render to the rest of the property and will retain the same roof as currently seen. Therefore the overall design of the extensions will be sympathetic to the host dwelling and allow the property to have an improved visual appearance within the streetscene without the external staircase and landing area.

There is an existing single storey extension located to the northern side elevation of the property which has been completed in brick with a mono-pitched sloped roof away from the main dwelling. The proposal looks to extend above this existing extension at first floor which will project approx. 2.4m outwards away from the side elevation of the dwelling and have an overall depth of approx. 4.7m. This provides an extension to an existing bedroom. The roof will be gabled, with a matching eaves height to the host dwelling and a ridge height which will sit approx. 0.5m lower than the ridge of the main dwelling.

The proposed first floor extension will have a sympathetic roof profile which follows the guidelines set out within the SPD for extending your home. The overall appearance of the extension will improve the overall visual appearance of the dwelling, with a balanced extension which is looking to be completed in part brick part render, which matches the existing appearance of the property.

Balcony to front elevation

The proposed balcony will be located to the north-eastern (front elevation) and will face on to Ashton Gardens. The balcony itself will project approx. 2m away from the front wall of the dwelling and will have a width of approx. 5.5m. The balcony will have a 1m high black steel rails around the edge.

The Town Council express objection about the principle of this balcony and also it seems about the detailing.

With regards the principle it is the case that balconies are a common feature on dwellings and flats in the area, and whilst many of the more historical ones are integrated not the construction of the building by using recesses and areas over ground floor accommodation, that is not the case with all. This balcony is supported by a post in each corner so is not traditional in its appearance, but sits on a property that is also more contemporary. This design approach is therefore considered to not be unsuitable and allows the design to be more discrete. The use of vertical metal columns below the handrail will complement the retained boundary treatment currently seen at the property and seen widely within the surrounding area.

Although the use of a balcony is considered to be contemporary in appearance, the sympathetic design of the handrails and overall minor projection of the floorspace creates a balcony which does not over dominant the building in the views from the surrounding area and will allow the appearance of the dwelling and the character of the surrounding area to remain unharmed.

External rendering

The proposal involves the re-rendering of the top half of the building, with full render to the south western (rear) elevation. The existing property has brick to the ground floor, and a light blue render to the first floor. The light blue render will be removed and replaced with white render and the ground floor brick will be retained.

The addition of white render to the property will improve the overall appearance and retain much of the character already visible at the dwelling. There is a brick dental course currently carried around the top part of the ground floor brick work, this is to be retained therefore allowing the overall character and appearance of the dwelling to be retained.

Alterations to window openings

The existing windows at the property are in UPVC and are of varying opening styles, the majority of windows which can be seen from the footpath have an appearance of a sliding sash, however the window designs themselves do not look to be of heritage grade.

The proposal is to replace all window openings at the property in slimline framed UPVC. The proposed windows will not have the glazing bar located across which the current windows show, however due to the lack of character and historic value of the windows this is not a critical factor and the benefits of introducing consistency to the windows in the replacements will benefit the overall appearance of the dwelling.

The extension works create two larger windows within the ground and first floor of the building on the northern side of the dwelling. These windows will be symmetrical in appearance and positioned away from the public footpath surrounding the dwelling, therefore will not be visible and as such will not compromise the overall visual appearance of the dwelling.

Policy Summary

The design implications of new development are to be assessed against Policy GD7 of the FLPPR and, in St Annes, against Policy DH1 of the St Annes Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed alterations all reflect the character of the existing building in their scale and use of materials, and they accord with the requirements of Policy GD7 as set out at the beginning of this section of the report. It is also the officer's view that they reflect the requirements of Policy DH1 as the extension, alteration and balcony achieve an appropriately high visual standard for the building.

Heritage Implications

The building is not listed, but is within the Porritt Houses Conservation Area which is a designated heritage asset. It is also adjacent to Ashton Gardens which is a registered Historic Park and Garden. This means that the following guidance is relevant:

Policy Guidance

FLPPR policy ENV5 states that development proposals should conserve, protect and, where appropriate, enhance the character, appearance, significance and historic value of Fylde's designated and undesignated heritage assets.

Policy DH1 of the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the legal position for development in conservation areas by highlighting the need to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. It also refers to the need to apply the same tests to Historic Parks and Gardens.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF indicates that "when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF indicates that "local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."

The subsection to policy ENV5 relating to Conservation Areas indicates that “proposals within or affecting the setting of any of the ten designated conservation areas in Fylde [listed in the policy] or within any additional conservation areas designated during the lifetime of the Local Plan, should conserve or enhance those elements that make a positive contribution to their special character and appearance and setting. Proposals that better reveal the significance of these areas will also be supported.” The subsection goes on to state that “there will be a presumption in favour of the retention of buildings and / or features which make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of a conservation area” before setting out six criteria (a – f) that proposals within the conservation area should satisfy.

Application Assessment

Whilst the building is within the conservation area, it is untypical if much of the buildings within that area. It is of a different scale, location on the plot, design, and materials. This is reflective of the age of its construction which is much later than the Porritt House buildings which form the basis for the designation of the conservation area.

The works that are set out as part of this application are limited in their scope and will not have significant impacts on the appearance of the building, or the contribution it makes to the conservation area or the historic park and garden. Accordingly it will preserve the character of these heritage assets and satisfy the requirements of the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan, and national guidance on such matters.

It is noted that the Town Council take a different view with specific regard to the inclusion of a balcony within the scheme and the relationship of this to Ashton Gardens and to the war memorial within those gardens which is individually listed. The building is immediately alongside the boundary of the Park and so this feature will be visible from a range of viewpoints within the Park. It is separated by around 80m from the war memorial and so it is possible that views will also be available between them, although there are a number of mature trees between which will effectively filter views and so ensure that the setting of the war memorial and the Park as a whole are limited. It is with that in mind that officers are of the view that the balcony does not create any heritage harm that could present a justification to refuse the application as being contrary to the stated policies.

Other matters

Neighbour Amenity

The proposal involves minor increases in the scale of the building and some new windows to upper floors and so has the potential to impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. This is also a common concern where balconies are introduced.

However in this case the property is well separated from neighbours, and the new windows are all into existing elevations that feature habitable windows and so they do not change the relationships. Indeed, the change of the upper floor from a flat to the bedrooms with a dwelling is likely to reduce the actual level of overlooking. The balcony is on the side facing the park only and so does not create any overlooking concerns of dwellings or their private gardens in that location.

Access and Parking

The access arrangements are unchanged from the existing arrangement, and the garage that lies on Back St Georges Square will remain available to provide for the reasonable parking needs of the property. These are likely to be similar to those of the existing flats, and with the town centre location of the property this single space is adequate.

Conclusions

The application relates to the change of use of a building from two independent flats to one single dwelling, as well as external alterations, extensions, and the creation of a balcony to the front of the dwelling. The application is considered to improve the overall visual appearance of the property and as such retain the important heritage asset of the conservation area, historic park and garden, and the Grade II listed War Memorial. As such, the application is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. This permission relates to the following plans:

- Location Plan Scale 1:1250
- Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations -Drawing no. HP 2907D PL / 21 / 07.1 Rev D

Except as provided for by other conditions to this permission, the development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved drawings.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans in the interests of proper planning in accordance with the policies contained within the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 and National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Unless alternative details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the external surfaces of the development shall be constructed in accordance with the materials detailed on the approved plans listed in condition 2 of this permission.

Reason: To ensure the use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the host building and surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with the requirements of Fylde Local Plan to 2032 policy GD7 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative(s)

1. Statement under Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015:

The Local Planning Authority worked positively and proactively with the applicant to identify solutions during the application process in order to ensure that the proposal comprises sustainable development and improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area in accordance with the development plan. These amendments have been incorporated into the scheme and/or secured by planning condition. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirement in Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Location Plan for 21/1026

