

<b>DECISION DATE</b> 3 October 2007	<b>APPLICATION NO.</b> 07/01125/CU A11	<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE:</b> 8 October 2007
<b>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED</b>  <b>CHANGE OF USE FROM VACANT HOTEL TO 4 TWO BED FLATS</b>		<b>SITE ADDRESS</b>  <b>MARLBOROUGH HOTEL 89 - 90 MARINE ROAD WEST MORECAMBE LANCASHIRE</b>
<b>APPLICANT:</b>  Redbrick Renovations Ltd 19 Croftlands Gardens Bolton Le Sands Carnforth LA5 8FB		<b>AGENT:</b>  Building Plan Services

#### **REASON FOR DELAY**

Referred to Committee at the request of a Councillor.

#### **PARISH NOTIFICATION**

Not applicable.

#### **LAND USE ALLOCATION/DEPARTURE**

Within the area covered by the West End Masterplan. The site is also within the West End Conservation Area.

#### **STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS**

**County Council Highways** - No objections from a highway point of view.

**Strategic Housing** - A flat conversion is likely to be the most satisfactory use for this particular building. Detailed observations to follow.

**City Council Direct Services** - No comments to make on this proposal.

#### **OTHER OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED**

None, at the time this report was drafted.

#### **REPORT**

This application is one that would normally be determined by the Head of Planning Services under delegated powers. It has been referred to Committee at the request of Councillor Robinson. He points out that the site is an exceptionally prominent one, and is concerned that the space available for bin storage is very limited.

The former Marlborough Hotel occupies four floors above a shop, at the corner of Marine Road West and West End Road. It occupies a key position in the West End Conservation Area, as it incorporates one of the "pepperpot" turrets either side of the road junction. It is currently vacant, but it was last used without planning permission as a hostel. It is in need of substantial renovation inside but externally it appears to be in fair condition.

The proposal involves the conversion of the accommodation into four two bedroom flats, one on each floor. The conversion scheme involves major internal reconstruction including the removal of some of the internal stairs, which will require changes in the floor levels, and the provision of a lift. A ground floor room which has in the past been used as a store is shown as a communal laundry and drying area.

The proposal has to be assessed in relation to Policy H21 of the Lancaster District Local Plan, which requires that flat conversions should meet the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the Plan. In addition Policy E36 states that planning permission to change the use of a building which makes a positive contribution to a Conservation Area will not be granted if it fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area. The development also has to be considered in relation to the West End Masterplan, which sets out the Council's strategy for the regeneration of the area.

The four flats created will have generous sized rooms and will easily meet the space standards set out in Appendix 2 of the Lancaster District Local Plan. From a Conservation viewpoint, it is clearly desirable that the building should be brought back into beneficial use. Some of the original windows have been replaced with UPVC ones, which is to be regretted and it is important that any further new windows should be in keeping with the character of the building.

The West End Masterplan seeks to encourage family sized accommodation. However it is difficult to see this very large building, consisting of four floors of accommodation above a shop with a minimal back yard, being of use for this purpose. Its greatest asset is the outlook over Morecambe Bay and the scheme put forward makes the best use of it, with each unit having a living area incorporating the bay windows on the corner.

As Councillor Robinson points out the back yard available for the use of residents is a very small one. The applicant's agent has been asked to provide an additional drawing indicating its exact dimensions. It is likely that the ground floor store room will be needed as an area for recycling boxes more than as a laundry.

Notwithstanding this, the proposal put forward appears to represent the best way of bringing this important building back into beneficial use. It is recommended that details of the arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse should be addressed by means of a condition.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

This application has to be considered in relation to two sections of the Human Rights Act: Article 8 (privacy/family life), and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). There are no issues arising from the proposal which appear to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That **PERMISSION BE GRANTED** subject to conditions as follows:

1. Standard three year condition.
2. Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
3. Details of all replacement windows to be agreed.
4. Details of the arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse to be agreed.