

DECISION DATE 15 November 2007	APPLICATION NO. 07/01252/CU A13	PLANNING COMMITTEE: 8 October 2007
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR SHOP TO FLAT		SITE ADDRESS 20 MARINE ROAD WEST MORECAMBE LANCASHIRE LA3 1BU
APPLICANT: Mr D Helm Brock Vale Farm Sowerby Road St Michaels Preston PR3 0TT		AGENT: Ron Valovin

REASON FOR DELAY

Not applicable.

PARISH NOTIFICATION

Not applicable - Morecambe Neighbourhood Council is only consulted on major applications.

LAND USE ALLOCATION/DEPARTURE

Within the area covered by the West End Masterplan.

STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

County Council Highways - Observations awaited.

Strategic Housing - Observations awaited.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED

None.

REPORT

This application involves the conversion of a former shop unit to a flat, and would normally be determined by the Head of Planning Services. It has been referred to Committee for decision at the request of Councillor Robinson, because of the policy issues involved in relation to the objectives set out in the West End Masterplan.

The property concerned is a vacant shop unit at the junction of Marine Road West with West Street. In 1999 permission was granted for its conversion into a one bedroom flat (application 99/00779) but this was never implemented. The owner of the premises has applied to carry out the conversion scheme, using the same plans as before.

The proposal has to be considered in relation to policy H21 and Appendix 2 of the Lancaster District Local Plan, which set out criteria for assessing planning applications for self contained flats. It also has to be assessed in relation to the regeneration strategy contained in the West End Masterplan, and the restrictions on new housing in the District set out in SPG 16 on the release of land for residential development.

The flat proposed is a one bedroom one. While the living room and kitchen are somewhat irregular in shape, it meets the required internal space standards. It has access to a back yard which is of little use as a sitting out area, but is adequate for bin storage. To replace the existing shop front the applicant has submitted the same external frontage as that approved in 1999, which replicates many of the features of the adjoining building.

The block bounded by Marine Road West, West Street, Parliament Street and Alexandra Road comes within Area 7 as defined in the West End Masterplan. This is identified as one requiring a high level of intervention. However no proposals have been brought forward for its redevelopment, nor given other priorities within the West End is there any immediate prospect of any. Almost all the other shop units in the vicinity are vacant and there is little prospect of finding a tenant for this one.

The original consent predated not only the Masterplan, but also the restrictions which led to SPG 16. It is therefore reasonable to treat it as an existing commitment rather than a new one. The proposal does involve a further one bedroom unit rather than one suitable for family occupation. However, bringing the accommodation back into beneficial use, rather than leaving it vacant, should assist rather than hinder the regeneration of the area. It is therefore recommended that consent should be granted.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Two sections of the Human Rights Act are relevant: 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 be of such significance as 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.