

Application No:	3/21/20/081
Parish	Minehead
Application Type	Full Planning Permission
Case Officer:	Jackie Lloyd
Grid Ref	Easting: 296830 Northing: 146239
Applicant	Mr M Dorrill
Proposal	Change of use from B1(a) (now Use Class E) to C3(a) in order to form 1no. dwelling
Location	Market House, The Parade, Minehead, TA24 5NB

Recommendation

Recommended decision: Grant

Recommended Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Y17056-2D-5X REV A Topographic Survey
Site Location Plan IPL20_339.22_001
Proposed layout IPL20_339.22_002
Proposed front elevation IPL20_339.22_003
Proposed rear elevation IPL20_339.22_004

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 The rooflights shall be conservation style fitted with flashing kits.

Reason : To protect the character of the listed building, conservation area and having regard to the provisions of Policies NH1 and NH2 of the West Somerset Local Plan 2016-2032

Informative notes to applicant

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way with the applicant and entered into pre-application discussions to enable the grant of planning permission.

Proposal

Change of use from office (previous Town hall) to one residential dwelling

The changes are:

The change of use of office spaces on all levels, forming a single dwelling;

- The addition of acoustic stud wall to party wall locations on levels 1 and 2 only
- The removal of one interior lightweight wall forming Bedroom 1
- The removal of interior lightweight walls providing one Bathroom
- The blocking of one interior glazed light over the staircase

The addition of conservation roof lights above level 4

Site Description

The Market House is a Grade II Listed Building fronting onto The Parade. It dates to 1902 and comprises three storeys. The main staircase is divided and there is an intermediate floor, which effectively creates a fourth storey providing WC accommodation. The building was formerly occupied by Minehead Town Council who relocated to new premises in 2017 and the property has been vacant since.

The Site lies in a prominent position within the Minehead Wellington Square Conservation Area. A Grade II Listed Building is attached to The Market House (*National Westminster Bank* at No. 9 The Parade). The ground floor comprises retail shops. The site is accessed from the ground floor via steps.

Pedestrian access is across a pavement from The Parade, whilst the premises has vehicle access from Market House lane to the North where there is standing/waiting and parking for vehicles operating the retail parts.

Relevant Planning History

Extensive history but relevant :

Pre-app PRE/21/20/009 Change of use to 2 flats : *The proposal to form two or three flats within the building excluding the shops should be resisted. Although the*

building is vacant, the impact of subdivision of the barrel vaulted room would be detrimental as it would destroy the quality of the space. The barrel vaulted room would form an impressive living dining room in a single unit and the building would convert much better to a single domestic unit or office accommodation.

Consultation Responses

Minehead Town Council - Can see no material planning reason to refuse but would like to see discussion regarding parking space in rear car park

Environment Agency - No response

SCC - Ecologist - No response

Highways Development Control - Standing advice

Wessex Water Authority - No objections

Habitats Regulations Assessment

The site falls outside the catchment flowing into the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar,

Representations Received

Conservation Officer:

Further to my previous comments stated in the heritage statement. I have no objections to the conversion of the upper floors of the Market House to a single unit of accommodation. The hall is of significance to the building externally and internally through it being a principal assembly room with a barrel ceiling and an important internal space. I concur with the conservation societies comments regarding the kitchen being better placed in another room in order to maintain the space however, a flat of this size would be more sustainable with two bedrooms; the kitchen could be relocated by future occupants and is reversible and an open plan living/kitchen diner would still maintain the open space of the room.

I would recommend that the conservation roof lights are fitted with flashing kits in order to sit low into the roof instead of sitting on top of the roof slates. There should be no mechanical ventilation or roof terminating SVP's on the front elevation.

I do not consider the proposals will adversely affect the setting of the listed Nat West Bank, Offices to the Corner of the Parade, The Haven, Southways and Market House Cottage.

I consider it will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Minehead Conservation Society

Minehead Town Hall, built in 1902, was sold by the Town Council without any public consultation. Therefore it is vital that this prominent LB in a CA is given the respect it

deserves. This means the preservation of its interior as well as its exterior as befits a LB. It is important to know that when the old Market House was to be replaced a competition was held to find the best possible design for a new Town Hall, which was won by W. J. Tamlyn , a prominent local architect, therefore this building has even greater significance for the community.

MCS has always believed that if this Grade II public building was to be granted change of use the only possible residential conversion of the former Council Offices would be for a single unit but one that would fully respect its interior. Therefore we oppose the proposal to site the kitchen inside the barrel vaulted former Council Chamber. This room is the gem internally and should not be subjected to the heat and steam generated by cooking within it, which could cause safety/fire hazards and discolouration of its fabric, not to mention smell. We realize that it is easy to back the kitchen on to the bathroom but what is the easiest option for a rental property is often not the best solution to protect the interior of a prestigious heritage building.

The former office across the passage from the chamber proposed as a bedroom would make an excellent kitchen and in our opinion make the property far more desirable. There would still be a double bedroom on the upper floor accessed by an existing staircase which could have an en-suite shower and toilet area. This and the suggested kitchen area could presumably be linked up with the water supply in the adjoining cafe. The proposed bathroom could be a cloakroom with storage space /cupboards or a toilet and shower room. It is not for us to design the internal layout but we believe

that the architect should be asked to go back to the drawing board as there are obvious better alternatives to the one submitted and which would preserve the best internal feature as purely living space. The most important planning issue is the proper preservation of the important features of this heritage building both internally and externally.

Importance of a stained glass window which is an original feature of the building that was covered by a stud wall when the reception area was first formed. This must be preserved if exposed by the removal of the said wall and not allowed to be removed or sold. We retain a copy of that letter. Presumably if that area is to simply be a bin / bike store there will be no need for it to be exposed. But it is essential that any future purchaser is aware of its existence and importance.

We would ask that as part of any planning consent the developer be required to reinstate the former balcony surrounding the clock tower. It looks naked without it and out of proportion. This is a golden opportunity to restore Minehead's most prominent building to its former glory. This has been done on previous occasions when our society has asked for the restoration of a missing heritage asset to be included as part of any planning consent.

We have asked the officer dealing with this application to ensure that the question of the maintenance and winding of the Town Hall clock is adequately addressed prior to any decision being made on this application. This clock tower is hugely important to the street scene and to have it kept in working order contributes enormously to an overall sense that the town is a vibrant, well-cared for centre that values its historic Listed Building and Conservation Area assets.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for the West Somerset planning area comprises the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032, retained saved policies of the West Somerset District Local Plan (2006) Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015) and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below.

West Somerset Local Plan to 2032

EC5	Safeguarding existing employment uses
MD1	Minehead Development
NH1	Historic Environment
NH13	Securing high standards of design
SC1	Hierarchy of settlements
T/8	Residential Car Parking
TR2	Reducing reliance on the private car
NH2	Management of Heritage Assets
BD/3	Conversions, Alterations and, Extensions
SD1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Retained saved policies of the West Somerset Local Plan (2006)

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Determining issues and considerations

Following a negative pre-app for the conversion to 2 flats (which involved sub-division of the chamber), this application is for conversion to one dwelling.

Change of use:

Policy SC1 would be supportive of residential development. However Policy MD1 also aims to support and strengthen the settlement's role as the main service and employment centre in West Somerset, particularly in terms of the diversity and quality of its historic and natural environment, services and facilities. In terms of the loss of the office space, the premises are currently vacant and have been so with no commercial interest for a period exceeding 12 months, the premises are marketed by local agents and nationally.

Effect on the Listed Building:

Applications for planning permission affecting a listed building or its setting must be determined in accordance with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that "In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority...shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The application will have no detrimental effect .

Applications for development in a conservation area must be considered with regard to the general duty in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

The building is a key listed building within Minehead and a principle building within the Wellington Square Conservation Area due to its use as a Market House and location within the conservation area. On the ground floor there are two occupied shops and the entrance hall, open hall with barrel vaulted ceiling and office rooms are currently vacant. The significance of the building is impressive externally with its style of architecture but internally the barrel vaulted ceiling, double doors and balcony for proclamations and staircase are important features.

With regard to the proximity of designated heritage assets to the Site, the following listed buildings are in close proximity:

National West Minster Bank grade II- adjoining to the east

Offices to the corner of Parade and Bancks Street grade II opposite

The Haven, Southways and Market House Cottage grade II – to the north

There will be no detrimental effect on the setting of these Listed Buildings

The hall is of significance to the building externally and internally through it being a principal assembly room with a barrel ceiling and an important internal space.

The agent has agreed that the conservation style roof lights will be fitted with flashing kits in order to sit low into the roof instead of sitting on top of the roof slates. No mechanical ventilation or roof terminating SVP's on the front elevation are proposed.

Proposed external changes comprise largely the addition of conservation rooflights in the north-facing roof which will not be visible from any key viewpoints within the Conservation Area. The agent has confirmed that these will be fitted with flashing kits so as to be set level with roof slates.

I consider the proposal will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, the building being subject to negligible change.

Proposed internal alterations include the removal of elements of interior walling, all of which are lightweight later additions with no beneficial heritage related qualities. In addition, the installation of a new bathroom in the former toilet space is proposed alongside a kitchen inserted into the large former meeting hall. Whilst the Conservation Society has objected to this, it is considered that this is reversible and an open plan living/kitchen diner would still maintain the open space of the room.

The agent has confirmed that there are no plans to introduce any new roof or wall terminals on the front elevation of the property, all would be provided on the rear (service) elevation.

The proposed alterations represent the minimum impact achievable in respect of the conversion of the building for residential use. They involve no impact on historic fabrics or features and their effect is assessed as neutral.

Housing standards

The existing office premises have no amenity space and there is no interior pedestrian link between the office parts and the northern exterior areas however, the ground floor currently comprises office accommodation and stair access circulation immediately inside the entrance door set. this area will provide for secure space retained for the purpose of domestic cycles and refuse storage to serve the proposed single dwelling.

Given the above comments of the conservation officer, a conversion of the building to one unit without major subdivision would retain the character of the listed building and provide acceptable living standards for future occupiers.

Car Parking

Pedestrian access is across a pavement from The Parade, whilst the premises has vehicle access from Market House lane to the North where there is standing/waiting

and parking for vehicles operating the retail parts of the building. Whilst the proposal would require 2 parking spaces where none are proposed, given the location within the town centre which has good transport links and other sustainable modes of transport, it is considered that a shortfall in parking would be acceptable.

Flood risk and drainage

The site lies within Flood Risk Zone 3 and an FRA has been submitted. The change of use from B1(a) to C3(a) is minor development retaining existing ground floor spaces to provide amenity areas and upper floor areas would provide accommodation. The development proposals are classified as More Vulnerable development, which is an appropriate use within Flood Zone 3.

The proposal has a ground floor level of 16.85m AOD meaning that the site sits above the highest tidal flood level AOD. The applicant is demonstrating upper floor levels within the existing accommodation, and a corresponding change of use to the More Vulnerable risk category. Flood resilience measures including an accessible upper storey for safe refuge is provided. Ground floor levels are set no lower than existing, and additionally essential services such as electrical switches/sockets are elevated above the ground level according to the minimum standards of Building Regulations.

Other issues

With regard to the town hall clock, whilst not a planning issue the agent has confirmed that it will be a condition of the proposed domestic rental lease, that the clock mechanism is wound by the tenant regularly, and also that access is afforded with advance due notice, for appointed specialists to maintain the equipment.

The conservation society have also asked that the developer reinstate the balcony around the clock tower. However, the application for a change of use is not considered to warrant requirement of the applicant to fulfill this suggestion.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.



