

**APPLICATION REFERRED FROM THE WEEKLY LIST****WEEKLY LIST NO. 1402 – 10 NOVEMBER 2017****17/00928/COU****11 WEST STREET, ROCHFORD****CONVERT KINGS HEAD PUBLIC HOUSE TO 11 NO.  
MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY BED SITTING UNITS AND 3 NO.  
SELF CONTAINED SHOP UNITS**

This application was deferred at the meeting of 23 November 2017 to allow the applicant to provide supporting information and clarity with regard to the viability of the proposed shop units.

Since the preparation of the officer report the following letter has been received from the applicant:-

**Letter from the Applicant**

Further to the Committee meeting on 23 November 2017 where our application for the Kings Head, West Street, Rochford got deferred, as owners of the building we felt it appropriate to give you, the Members, some additional supporting information for our application.

My name is Paul Bar and along with my business partner, Daren Paradise, we are directors of a company called ParaBar Developments who have acquired the Kings Head.

We also own and have recently renovated 22 South Street Rochford, which is also a listed building in Rochford, with the assistance and advice of Heritage.

22 South Street has been fully operational for several months, after going through extensive restoration in keeping with its original design. It is now fully let and occupied since June 2017, to our knowledge there have not been any incidents where the police have been called to the premises, a reported crime or groups of gangs hanging around, as was the case when it was vacant.

The neighbour of 22 South Street is Mr John White of whom most of you may know. He has been a resident in Rochford for a considerable time. Before we started the renovation process Mr White had numerous incidents with a young local gang that were attracted to the empty building and subsequently caused damage to his property.

Mr White will confirm that we continually communicated with him whilst the restoration process was being carried out and also when he had unfortunate incidents. We took the decision to install 24 hour on site security at the premises and carry out roof repairs to Mr White's property.

Mr White is more than willing to discuss his experience of the restoration process and our developing relationship if you would like to speak with him and has produced a statement.

Mr White is more than happy with the current use of 22 South Street and has not had the need to contact us regarding its occupiers.

#### Commercial Viability

There was a point raised at the last meeting regarding the viability of commercial space for the scheme being 2/3 shop units.

We have been discussing the scheme with Dedman Gray, a prominent commercial agent within the District.

Mr Gerard Biagioni, Commercial Property Consultant for Dedman Gray, is of the opinion that the commercial space fronting the market square is very desirable for small to medium sized retailers or small scale business users such as architects and accountants.

He has just rented out 25 West Street to an expanding florist on a 5 year term and has other potential clients who would be interested in 11 West Street.

#### Property Management

Another point was raised in regard to the upkeep and management of the property of which we would like to take up. We self manage our own properties and take care of all aspects from moving the residents in, site inspections, cleaning , fire safety checks, etc.

All sites get issued with a liaison officer dedicated to the site who will carry out a minimum of 2 weekly site visits to check on both the residents, the building and make sure any maintenance required is taken care of.

We are in constant communication with the residents and they are fully aware of the rules and regulations of residing in our properties. They sign terms at the start of the contract and are fully aware that they will be removed if they do not adhere to the rules and regulations.

We develop to the highest standards, delivering much needed accommodation to the local community and will only tolerate people who treat the premises with respect.

Another important point is that we are offering the property to the people in Rochford for their housing needs and not other Boroughs outside the District.

### Kings Head

We are both extremely passionate about property and fully understand the history associated with the Kings Head. We would like to think that the time and effort in restoring 22 South Street in replacing traditional sash windows, repointing existing brick work, replacing historic roof tiles, carpentry restoration, etc demonstrates this fact.

Shepherd Neame were the previous owners and are currently still operating as a brewery and have been since 1698. They took the decision to close the Kings Head as a public house as it wasn't commercially viable; it was a decision they also didn't take lightly and tried to make it work.

We will restore the exterior of the building to its former prominent status in the Market Square, again working alongside Heritage, also bringing much needed additional commercial usage to the Square.

### Officer Report Clarification

The site is located within the secondary retail frontage, as defined in the adopted Rochford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2015) (RAAP). Policy 3 to the RAAP encourages new development to the secondary frontage for Use Class A1 (shops) such as those proposed, and generally supports other non retail uses considered appropriate to the town centre that would not undermine the vitality of the town centre, or create clusters of uses that would undermine the vitality and retail character of the town centre.

The Kings Head is a public house falling within Use Class A4 drinking establishments and although appropriate to the town centre is not use Class A1. The proposal would increase the opportunity for retail provision by creating three new retail units where retail does not currently exist. It is not necessary therefore that the applicant demonstrates the viability of these units because retailing is encouraged by the Council's planning policy.

If no retail uses can be found, the premises might be attractive to non retailers requiring a town centre location, such as offices or cafés, provided that a cluster of the same non retail uses were not to result. This would be a matter for consideration to a further planning application for non retail use to be considered on merit at some stage in the future. Non retail use would still be largely favoured as the site is in the secondary frontage to the Rochford town centre.

In response to concerns about current shop vacancies, officers can advise that both Natwest (with permission granted earlier this year for a snack bar/café) and Barclays bank premises are currently vacant and that the "Rockamilly" retail shop at No. 25 and No. 27 West Street are closed. There is the vacant greengrocers shop at 9 North Street and the former Co-operative store to Roche Close behind Market Square that still remains vacant. Otherwise there would appear relatively healthy occupation of the commercial units within the town centre.

The Officer **RECOMMENDATION IS APPROVAL**, subject to the conditions set out in the previous report.

The previous report and recommendation is reiterated below.

## 1 DETAILS OF REFERRAL

- 1.1 This item has been referred from Weekly List No. 1402 requiring notification to the Assistant Director, Planning & Regeneration Services by 1.00 pm on Wednesday, 15 November 2017 with any applications being referred to this meeting of the Committee. Cllrs M J Steptoe and A L Williams have referred the application on the grounds that it relates to a significant and prominent Grade II listed building within the Conservation Area within Rochford Market Square and therefore warrants discussion by the Development Committee.
- 1.2 The item that was referred is attached at appendix 1 as it appeared in the Weekly List.
- 1.3 A plan showing the application site is attached at appendix 2.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To determine the application, having considered all the evidence.

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

**Appendix 1**

Application No : 17/00928/COU      Zoning : Town Centres,  
Conservation Area

Case Officer      Mr Robert Davis

Parish :      Rochford Parish Council

Ward :      Roche South

Location :      11 West Street Rochford

Proposal :      Convert Kings Head public house to 11 no multiple  
occupancy bed sitting units and 3 no self contained  
shop units

**SITE AND PROPOSAL**

1. Planning permission is sought for the conversion and change in use of public house into eleven bed sit residential units and three shop units. There is a tandem application for listed building consent - reference 17/00974/LBC. This current application follows a previous application refused planning permission under application Ref: 17/00512/COU for the following reason;
  1. The proposed loss of the ground floor commercial premises within this important town centre location would have an adverse impact on the commercial vitality of Rochford Town Centre and would be contrary to Policy 3 of the Rochford Town Centre Area Action Plan, Policies RTC1 and RTC5 of the Core Strategy 2011, and Policy DM34 of the Development Management Plan 2014
2. The building is located within the town centre of Rochford and has a frontage on the southern side of West Street looking towards the market square. It is within the Rochford Conservation area. The premises are presently vacant.
3. The Kings Head Hotel is a Grade II listed building first listed in 1959. The listing description reads as 'C18 and C19 facade of probably C17 or earlier origins. painted brick face. red plain tiled roof. Large red brick chimney stack to right. 2 storeys and attics. 3 gabled dormers. Three 2 storey angled 3-light vertically sliding sash bay windows. a dentilled band above the upper storey continued across the front. doorways to left and right of central bay, that to left with moulded surround, rectangular fanlight and shaped cornice head, to right with moulded surround, moulded and dentilled pediment, half glazed doors'.
4. The proposal would involve internal conversion works. The front and side elevations are to be retained with minor alterations to the rear elevation and access off Back Lane to improve the access into the rear of the building with a new door and provide means of escape. A doorway would also be formed into bedsit 4 using an enlarging an existing window opening. A section of external

brickwork is proposed to be rendered. The ground and first floor wooden sash windows would be retained.

5. Internally the main rooms and central staircase would be retained. Within the building each bed sit would be located within the existing room areas with the main alterations resulting in the partitioning of the ground floor bar areas. The proposal would create 11 No. bed sitting units and three shop units. The shop units would be located within the Market Square frontage. The application has been accompanied by a schedule of internal works and rear external alterations, a design and access statement and a historic building appraisal.

#### MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6. The site is within the Rochford Town Centre where the principle for conversion may be appropriate subject other material planning considerations.
7. Of particular relevance is that Rochford has a unique, historic town centre which is focused around the Market Square. The core of the town centre has a commercial character, which as noted in the Rochford Town Centre Area Action Plan 2015 (para 2.13) "has an important local function, providing a range of services".
8. The Council's local development plan policies such as Core Strategy Policy RTC1 and Development Management Plan Policy DM34 seek to protect and enhance the retail focus of the district's town centres, including Rochford, to ensure a strong mix of retail uses supported by appropriate non-retail uses such as cafes, banks, restaurants etc. to sustain their vibrancy and vitality. Furthermore Policy 6 (2) of the Rochford Town Centre Area Action Plan 2015 specifically states that "Secondary shopping frontages should be in a mix of retail and other appropriate town centre uses".
9. The proposal would provide three shop units with internal floorspaces of 20.52m<sup>2</sup>, 19m<sup>2</sup> and 16.8m<sup>2</sup>. This would allow the continued use of a significant part of the ground floor of the building in commercial use whereas the previous application provided for only one small shop unit. It is important to the town centre that the whole building frontage and display windows should be attractive with commercial interest rather than a passive residential use dominating. With this revised proposal this would now be the case. The proposal would therefore support the vitality and vibrancy of Rochford town centre which provides an important role in delivering accessible services and facilities for the local community. The Council's Economic Development officers consider that the inclusion of three self-contained commercial units would have a positive impact.
10. The proposal represents a HMO and the room sizes fall below that required for flats. It is noted that a similar development at 22 South Street, 16/01031/FUL, has been found acceptable.

11. The property is within a town centre location and does not have any parking facilities on the application site. As stated in the adopted Parking Standards Design and Good Practice document, a lower provision of vehicle parking may be appropriate in areas where there is good access to alternative forms of transport and the proposal site is considered to be in a sustainable location in Rochford Town Centre with good access to sustainable transport and other facilities. There is a bus stop outside the front of the building and the railway station is but a short walk away. The entrance to the building would be from the rear in close proximity to the Back Lane car park. The local highways authority has no objection to the development subject to the provision of appropriate cycle parking facilities and the provision and implementation of a Residential Travel and Information Pack for sustainable transport.
12. It is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with national and local planning policy and that the inclusion of three shop units overcomes the previous reason for refusal.

#### **Consultations and Representations:**

13. **ECC HISTORIC BUILDINGS/CONSERVATION AREAS**  
The applicant seeks permission to convert the former Kings Head Pub, 11 West Street in Rochford to form 11 multiple occupancy flats and three ground floor retail units. The façade of the building is of eighteenth and nineteenth century construction, which has re-fronted an earlier timber framed building. It is an important historic public house, fronting onto the market -place within the centre of Rochford. For this reason is it not only listed grade II for its architectural and historic significance, but the building is also considered to make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Rochford Conservation Area.
14. A previous application (17/00513/LBC) was considered earlier this year. This sought to convert the building into twelve units and was not considered objectionable by the previous historic buildings consultant, subject to conditions. The revised plans show several minor alterations to these previously approved plans, but none that are considered to alter the inherent acceptability of the scheme or to alter the previous conclusions drawn.
15. I therefore would not object to the revised application, which I would suggest should be granted with the same conditions as the previous approval (17/00513/LBC).
16. **RDC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
Having reviewed this application I believe the inclusion of 3 self contained commercial units would have a positive impact.
17. **Economic Impact - Rochford** is the location of choice for new, relocating and expanding businesses, and existing businesses are given opportunities to

expand and have access to excellent on-going business support. Following discussions Essex wide at County level, it has been identified that there is a real need for Incubator/Creator Space for start-up businesses and those home businesses that need to expand into an office or storage environment due to increased demand.

18. It is well documented that over 80% of businesses in Rochford have less than 5 employees and many of them are home businesses that were internet based start ups. If we do not provide adequate space for these businesses to develop and expand we will lose them to neighbouring districts that can provide this type of affordable space. We outline in Policy ED1 of the Rochford District Council Core Strategy that the Council would continue to investigate and support the implementation of start up units.

19. NEIGHBOURS - Representations have been received from the following addresses:

Malting Villas Road 70, Middle Mead 6, Mornington Avenue 36, Glenmore House Flat 12, Lingfield Drive 44, North Street 28

- Iconic listed building in centre should not be turned into bedsits
- Unsuitable use for premises in centre of market square
- Far too many housing with not enough facilities
- Will add to congestion
- Crime
- Why should we add to problems in square?
- We don't need to cram as many people as possible into this space.

### APPROVE

- 1 SC4B Time Limits Full – Standard.
- 2 The external facing materials shall match the existing parts of the building or site and/or be those materials specified on the plans and application form submitted in relation to the development hereby permitted, unless alternative materials are proposed. Where alternative materials are to be used, no development shall commence before details of those alternative external facing materials to be used in the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where other materials are agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the materials agreed shall be those used in the development hereby permitted.
- 3 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved plans listed below:

Drawing Numbers 1980/1, 1980/4, 1980/5, 1980/6 and 1980/7 date stamped 19th September 2017



**Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals:**

Allocations Plan 2014

Core Strategy 2011 - CP1, CP2

Development Management Plan 2014 - DM1

Parking Standards Design and Good Practice

National Planning Policy Framework

Rochford Town Centre Area Action Plan 2015

Rochford Conservation Area Appraisal and Action Plan 2007

The local Ward Member(s) for the above application are Cllr M J Lucas-Gill  
Cllr M J Steptoe Cllr A L Williams

17/00928/COU

## Appendix 2



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