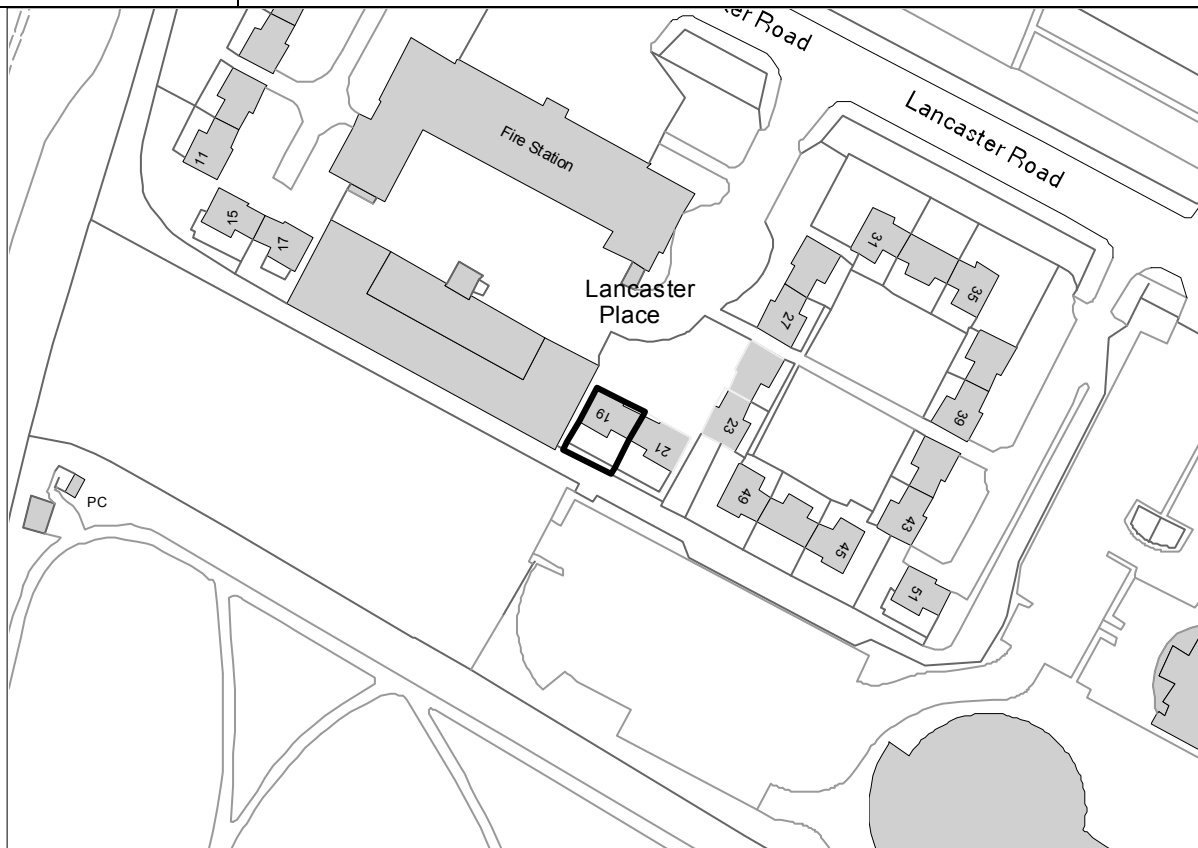


<b>Recommendation:</b>	
<b>20150609</b>	<b>19 LANCASTER PLACE</b>
Proposal:	CHANGE OF USE FROM ONE HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (CLASS C4) (5 BEDS) TO FOUR FLATS (CLASS C3); ALTERATIONS TO BUILDINGS AND SITE LAYOUT (AMENDED)
Applicant:	MR KULLAR
App type:	Change of use
Status:	
Expiry Date:	27 May 2015
TEI	WARD: Castle



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**Summary**

- joint report for this and 3 similar applications (20150610, 20150611 and 20150612) for 21, 23 and 25 Lancaster Place.
- The application is before committee as applications for similar proposals were refused at committee on 12<sup>th</sup> March.
- The publicity period expires on 28<sup>th</sup> April; however the previous applications had 8 objections on grounds of effect on character and appearance and setting of the listed buildings
- The main issue is the impact the proposals might have on the setting of the listed buildings.
- The recommendation is that the applications be determined by officers under delegated powers with the expectation of approval.

## **Introduction**

The applications relate to semi-detached properties on Lancaster Place. The relevant listings for the properties describe how they were built as part of the accommodation provided with the Leicester Fire Station. All the firemen's cottages in Lancaster Place and the fire station itself are covered by statutory listings whether individually, in pairs or in groups. Together they create the appearance of a unified complex.

There are small yards to the rear of each property and a communal garden to the rear of 23 and 25 that is shared with the other cottages that back onto it.

There is also shared communal space to the front of the properties. The communal space to the front of the properties is under the ownership of the applicant. Parts of the communal garden to the rear are also under the ownership of the applicant.

## **Background**

In 2013 listed building consents and Planning Permissions were granted (20131033, 20131034, 20131925 and 20131926) for internal and external alterations and changes of use from house to 4 flats at both 27 and 29 Lancaster Place. These consents have been implemented.

Conditional approvals (20141395, 20141583, 20141584, 20141586) were granted at committee of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015 for listed building consent for the internal and external changes to the four buildings proposed as the physical changes to the undivided listed buildings were considered acceptable.

Four applications (20141394, 20141582, 20141585 and 20141587) for the change of use of the buildings were refused on the grounds that they would significantly harm the appearance and setting of the former fireman's cottages and Leicester Fire Station.

Primarily the maintenance of the outside areas was not considered to have been satisfactorily addressed. The conclusion was that the appearance and character of the garden areas would not be satisfactorily maintained.

## **The Proposal**

The internal layouts will fundamentally remain as existing though with shower rooms and kitchens included to the two ground floor flats and to two first floor flats. One of the existing bedrooms on the first floor will be given over to kitchen use.

Some internal walls will be removed including either side of the chimney breast on both floors. A number of internal walls will be added to separate shower/WC and kitchen facilities from the main bedrooms. The internal alterations will allow for two flats to each floor with separate kitchens and wc/shower rooms.

The external alterations include the replacement of windows to front and rear elevations and four extraction vents to the rear elevations. The replacement windows

will be timber and with the same detailing as the existing windows. However, they will be double glazed.

The current applications include consideration of the treatment of the outside areas and in this respect differ from the refused applications. The raised hard landscaped area to the front of the properties will be lowered. A staircase and ramp will be installed at the corner of the lowered area between numbers 21 and 23. Five parking spaces will be made available and a covered communal timber bin store installed at the west of the lowered area in front of number 19.

### **Policy Considerations**

Development plan policies relevant to this application are listed at the end of this report.

The NPPF describes the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance as one of the core planning principles. Paragraph 131 states that planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Paragraph 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. Paragraph 137 states that planning authorities should look for opportunities within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.

### **Consultations**

The Conservation Advisory Panel previously had concerns that the subdivision to facilitate the change of use would result in significant harm to the original floor plan, and that it would no longer be possible to discern historic layouts or circulation routes. Concerns that the increased number of units would lead to a proliferation of wheelie bins and the number of vents on the rear elevation would lead to unacceptable cluttering. There would be harm to the special architectural and historic character of the buildings and to the composition and group value of the buildings.

### **Representations**

Although the publicity period for the current applications has not yet expired 8 objections were received in relation to the previously refused applications.

The objections expressed concerns that the proposals would result in a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed buildings. Reference was made to the outside areas at the front and the rear of the properties. One objection described how the hard landscaping to the front of the property was in poor condition having a negative visual impact on the area. Most of the objections raised concerns about the visual impact that additional bins and possible litter would have.

It was also noted that additional bins may cause an obstruction to the movement of emergency vehicles from the Fire Station. Concerns were also raised about the need

for additional parking and the impact this would have on the use of the area at the front of the properties.

The buildings were described as unique properties and regret was expressed at the interior of these properties being altered. A number of objections felt that there were enough student properties in the area and that the loss of family dwellings should not be permitted.

## **Considerations**

### Policy Context

Saved policy H07 states that permission will be granted for the conversion of existing buildings to self-contained flats provided the proposal is satisfactory in respect of a number of factors. These include the location of the property and the nature of the nearby uses, the creation of a satisfactory living environment, the provision of bin storage and car and/or cycle parking, the provision of a communal garden or open space, the effect of the development on the general character of the surrounding area and the potential changes to the appearance of the building and its setting.

Core Strategy policy CS18 supports the sensitive reuse of high quality historic buildings and spaces to create attractive spaces and places including the enhancement of the setting of designated heritage assets. This policy approach is also reflected in Core Strategy policy CS03.

### Principle of change of use

The previous applications were refused on the grounds that the proposals would significantly harm the appearance and setting of the former fireman's cottages and Leicester Fire Station.

All four properties are in use as a house in multiple occupation and retain the fundamental characteristics of a single household, for example a shared kitchen, WC and bathroom. The change of use to four separate self-contained flats will result in four separate planning units quite independent of each other except for the shared external access and shared private amenity area.

### Effect on character of the area and setting of listed buildings

The proposed change of use to four separate planning units independent of each other has potential to lead to ambiguity over which parts of the outside areas relate to which units. As such the outside areas both to the front and rear could fall into neglect. Departures from the single household nature of the properties would lead to further ambiguity over responsibility for the upkeep of the area, i.e. storage of bins and parking.

The outside areas are fundamental to the setting of the fireman's cottages as a unified complex and any neglect of these areas would have a detrimental impact on the significance of the cottages as heritage assets. The change of use of the

buildings from single planning units to four independent units has the potential to result in neglect of these areas.

The lowering of a large part of the raised area provides space for parking and communal bin storage. I consider that a separate and covered bin storage area and marked parking spaces will present a tidier appearance to the shared area at the front of the properties. The new staircase and ramp will allow for access to the raised areas and to all four properties.

Whilst the submitted plans present an arrangement that involves the loss of a tree and has a hard appearance detrimental to the setting of the listed building I consider that, in order to preserve the heritage significance of the setting of the listed buildings, a condition could be attached that requires a landscaping scheme to be submitted to and agreed by the local planning authority. This scheme would include some soft landscaping including a treatment for the parking space which is softer in appearance to the proposed.

The plans have been annotated to state that the gardens to the rear of the properties (including to 27 and 29 Lancaster Place) and external elevations of the properties themselves will be maintained to an acceptable standard. The plans state that details are to be confirmed with the local planning authority. I consider that with satisfactory details agreed the proposal could maintain and to a degree enhance the setting of the listed buildings.

I recommend THAT THE DECISION ON THIS APPLICATION BE DELEGATED TO OFFICERS on the basis of the above assessment subject to confirmation of commitment to landscaping and management and taking into account any further representations received.

#### **Policies relating to this recommendation**

- 2006\_AM02 Planning permission will only be granted where the needs of cyclists have been incorporated into the design and new or improved cycling routes should link directly and safely to key destinations.
- 2006\_AM12 Levels of car parking for residential development will be determined in accordance with the standards in Appendix 01.
- 2006\_H07 Criteria for the development of new flats and the conversion of existing buildings to self-contained flats.
- 2006\_PS10 Criteria will be used to assess planning applications which concern the amenity of existing or proposed residents.
- 2014\_CS03 The Council will require high quality, well designed developments that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the local natural and built environment. The policy sets out design objectives for urban form, connections and access, public spaces, the historic environment, and 'Building for Life'.
- 2014\_CS18 The Council will protect and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment including the character and setting of designated and other heritage assets.