

**Report to:** PLANNING COMMITTEE      **Date of Meeting:** 13th April 2022

**Subject:** [DC/2021/02862](#)  
[12 Wright Street Southport PR9 0TL](#)

**Proposal:** Proposed conversion from office to a residential dwelling, comprising of 2 No. bedrooms, and alterations to windows.

**Applicant:** Mr Edwin Davidson      **Agent:** Mr Alison Tudor  
Regency Developments      RAL Architects Limited

**Ward:** Dukes Ward      **Type:** Full Application

**Reason for Committee Determination:** Referred to Committee by Chief Planning Officer

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## Summary

The proposal seeks planning permission for the conversion of an existing office to a residential dwelling, comprising 2 bedrooms, along with alterations to the windows.

The main issues to consider are the principle of development, the impact on the living conditions of future occupiers and neighbouring properties, the impact on the character and appearance of the area and the impact on highway safety.

While the proposal would not comply with aspects of the Council's guidance, there are specific factors which justify this and on balance it is considered to be acceptable.

## Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

**Case Officer**      Stephen O'Reilly

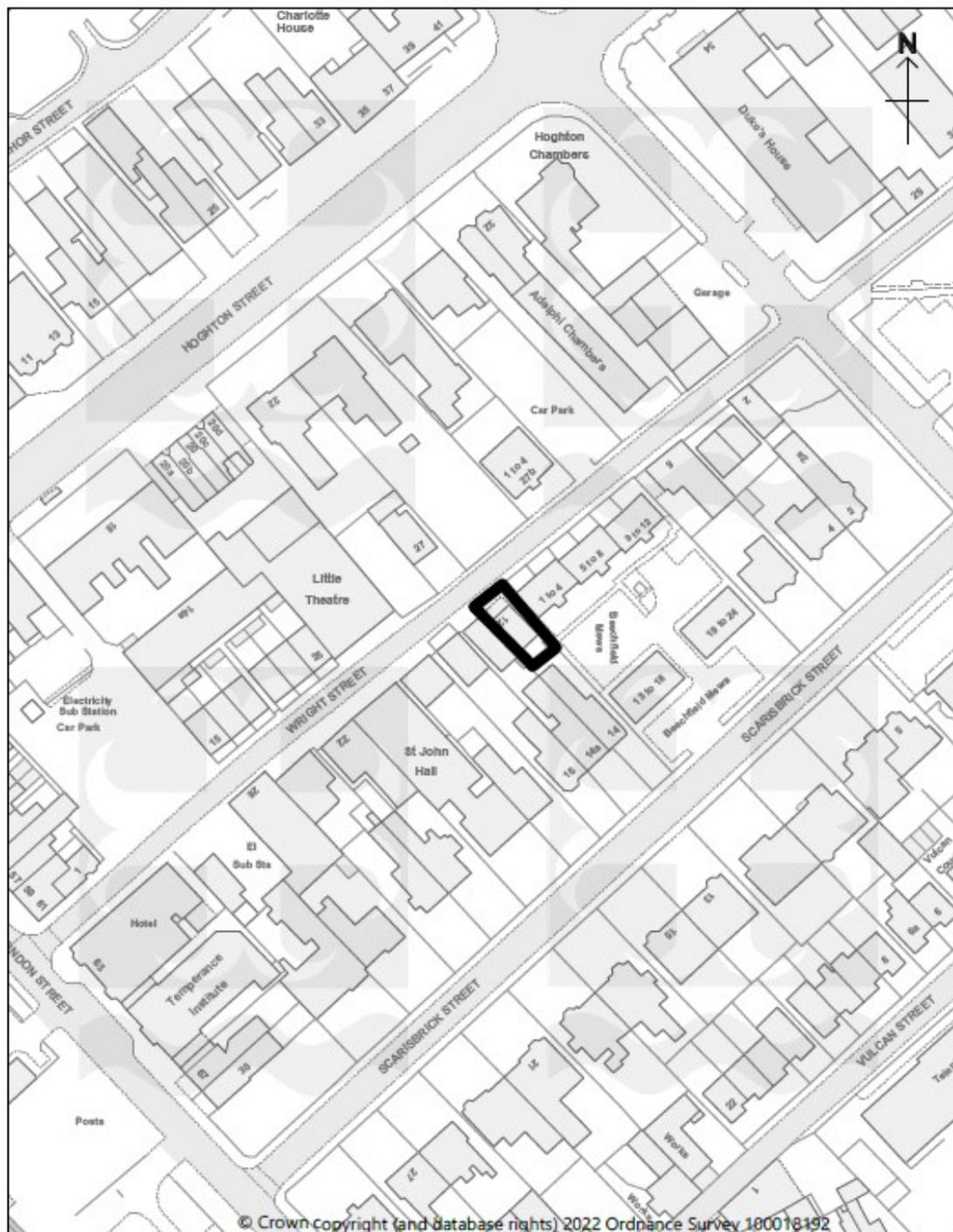
**Email**      [planning.department@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:planning.department@sefton.gov.uk)

**Telephone**      0345 140 0845

Application documents and plans are available at:

<http://pa.sefton.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=R3UMUSNWFV900>

## Site Location Plan



## The Site

The application relates to an existing two storey commercial premises on the south east side of Wright Street, Southport.

## History

Various applications, the most relevant being DC/2021/0243, which sought prior approval for the change of use of the existing office to a dwelling. This application was however refused as the works had already commenced on the proposed conversion.

## Consultations

### Natural England

No comments to make

### Conservation

No objection. Application will have no impact on the settings of nearby Grade II listed Buildings, 22 and 24 Hoghton Street.

### Network Rail London North Western (North)

No comments to make

### Highways Manager

No objections subject to conditions relating to an electric vehicle charging point, cycle parking and off site highway improvements

## Neighbour Representations

One letter has been received neither objecting to or supporting the development.

## Policy Context

The application site lies within an area designated as Southport Central Area in the Sefton Local Plan which was adopted by the Council in April 2017.

## Assessment of the Proposal

The main issues to consider are the principle of development, the impact on the living conditions of future occupiers and neighbouring properties, the impact on the character and appearance of the area and highway safety.

### Principle

The application site lies within an area identified as Southport Central Area within the Local Plan and Policy ED7 (Southport Central Area) which supports a variety of uses including conversion of upper floors to residential use. |

The conversion of the overall property goes beyond this. However, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended, recognises the conversion of office units as a permitted use (subject to prior approval), demonstrating support for town centre living. The principle of this use is therefore acceptable.

### Living Conditions

The Council's guidance for new housing development set out standards for interface distances and private amenity space.

#### Private outdoor amenity space

The Council's guidance is for 50sq m private outdoor amenity space for 2 bedroom dwellings. This scheme includes 53sq m but 17sq m is at the front and therefore not private and so this area would not normally be taken into account. A smaller amount may be acceptable if the site is constrained, or if this is characteristic of the area. Both of these apply in this situation.

It would also be possible for this conversion to take place using permitted development rights without having to provide any outdoor amenity space.

In the light of these factors, it is considered that the reduced amount is acceptable.

#### Aspect and overlooking

The distance between the rear window of the proposed second bedroom falls well short of the Council's minimum recommended distance of 21.5m, achieving only 6.9m.

However, the room has a secondary, smaller window to the side. This overlooks the front of Beechfield Mews. That is already overlooked by other properties so would not cause any greater harm. This secondary window offers good light and outlook. Given the main window does not meet the minimum standards to nearby habitable room window, it is recommended that it is obscurely glazed. This can be secured by condition. It will still allow good levels of light into the bedroom.

## **Character**

The proposal would involve minimal alterations to the appearance of the building with a front garden area enclosed by a 900mm fence. A condition can be attached to require details of this planting and to ensure it is retained.

The enclosure of the area to the front would be similar to others within Wright Street and is acceptable within the wider street scene.

## **Highway Safety**

1 off road car parking space would be provided, which falls short of the Council's guidance but it considered acceptable given the site is very accessible in this town centre location.

Cycle parking can be provided to the rear of the site as indicated on the submitted plans. An electric vehicle charging point will be required, and this can be secured by condition.

## **Planning Balance and Conclusion**

The shortfall in amenity space is considered acceptable given the circumstances of this case and that the use would normally be permitted development. The reduced distance at the rear of the second bedroom can be overcome by obscuringly glazing this window, and the secondary window provides a reasonable outlook. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable overall subject to conditions.

## **Recommendation - Approve with Conditions**

### **Time Limit for Commencement**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order that the development is commenced in a timely manner, as set out in Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

### **Approved Plans**

- 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents: G01, G02, L01.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

### **Before the Development is Occupied**

- 3) The development shall not be occupied until a detailed scheme of highway works together with a programme for their completion has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include: Alterations to the footway to reinstate part of the existing vehicle crossing as footway; Alterations to the existing H-bracket road markings fronting the property. No part of the development shall be brought into use until the required highway works have been constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that enough car parking is provided for the development and to ensure the safety of highway users.

- 4) The hereby approved dwelling shall not be occupied until space has been laid out within the curtilage of the site for one car to be parked and that space shall thereafter be kept available for the parking of vehicles in perpetuity.

Reason: To ensure that enough car parking is provided for the development and to ensure the safety of highway users.

- 5) The development shall not be occupied until facilities for the secure storage of cycles have been provided, they shall be retained in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that enough cycle parking is provided for the development in the interest of promoting non-car based modes of travel.

- 6) The development shall not be occupied until an electric vehicle charging point has been installed and is operational. The approved infrastructure shall be permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To facilitate the use of electric vehicles and to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions.

- 7) The hereby approved dwelling shall not be occupied until full fibre broadband connections to the dwelling has been installed prior to occupation and made available for use immediately on occupation of the dwelling.

Reason: To ensure adequate broadband infrastructure for new dwellings and to facilitate economic growth.

- 8) Before the development hereby permitted is first occupied, the window at first floor level to the rear, serving bedroom 2 shall be fitted with obscured glazing to a specification of no less than level 3 of the Pilkington Glass Scale and any part of the window that is less than 1.7m above the floor of the room in which it is installed shall be non-opening. The window shall be permanently retained in that condition thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the privacy of neighbouring occupiers/land users is retained at all times.

## **Informatives**

- 1) The applicant is advised that the proposal will require the formal allocation of addresses. Contact the Development and Support team on 0151 934 4195 or E-Mail [snn@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:snn@sefton.gov.uk) to apply for a street name/property number.
- 2) The applicant is advised that all works to the adopted highway must be carried out by a Council approved contractor at the applicant's expense. Please contact the Highways Development and Design Team at [HDD.Enquiries@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:HDD.Enquiries@sefton.gov.uk) for further information.