

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: CHANGE OF USE OF 1ST FLOOR OFFICES TO FORM 5 FLATTED DWELLINGS AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS AT 155 GRAHAMS ROAD, FALKIRK FK2 7BQ FOR SKIDZ LTD – P/11/0831/FUL

Meeting: PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: 4 April 2012

Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Local Members: Ward - Falkirk North
Provost Pat Reid
Councillor David Alexander
Councillor Craig R. Martin
Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn

Community Council: Grahamston, Middlefield and Westfield

Case Officer: Stephen McClure (Planning Officer), Ext. 4702

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL / SITE LOCATION

- 1.1 The site consists of a two storey property located on Grahams Road, which currently has two retail units on the ground level and office accommodation on the first storey. The unit is surrounded by a mix of business and domestic properties. It is being proposed to convert the first storey accommodation into flatted dwellings and renovate the exterior of the unit.

2. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 This application has been called to Committee by Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn.

3. SITE HISTORY

- 3.1 Application F/92/0711 was granted permission for alterations and change of use of storage area to Class 2 offices.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The Roads Development Unit have no objection to the proposal
- 4.2 Scottish Water have not responded, although there are no known problems at this location.

- 4.3 The Environmental Protection Unit have no objection to the proposal although, given the location, specific acoustic glazing standards would be required.

5. COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- 5.1 Grahamston, Middlefield and Westfield Community Council has not submitted comments.

6. PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 In the course of the application, one letter of representation and 2 letters of objection were submitted to the Council. The salient issues are summarised below:-

- Parking is currently an issue with the building being used as an office, as people park in the residential streets behind the property.
- There is already a homeless hostel nearby, to add more tenants would add to current problems including noise and litter.
- Concerns in relation to parking and traffic impact on the existing parking provision by the proposed conversion of the building to flatted dwellings. Concern is also expressed with regards to the number of flats proposed for the site, as it is felt that there may be issues of overdevelopment of the building. This would result in poor space standards of the properties and it is therefore likely that these properties would be occupied in a transient way. This would then bring its own difficulties of management of the units.

7. DETAILED APPRAISAL

Under section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, the determination of planning applications for local and major developments shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Accordingly,

7a The Development Plan

Falkirk Council Structure Plan

- 7a.1 The proposal raises no strategic issues and was therefore assessed against the Falkirk Council Local Plan alone.

Falkirk Council Local Plan

- 7a.2 Policy EP3 - 'Existing Business and Industrial Areas with Potential for Redevelopment' states:

“(1) Within the business and industrial areas with potential for redevelopment identified on the Proposals Map, the Council will consider favourably proposals for comprehensive redevelopment for other uses which:

- *are appropriate in terms of the character of the surrounding area;*

- *are satisfactory in terms of environmental, access, traffic generation and other detailed considerations; and*
- *comply with other Local Plan policies.*

Pending any such redevelopment, use of these sites for Class 4, 5 or 6 development will continue to be supported.

- (2) *Changes of uses or redevelopment of other business/industrial land or premises within the Urban Limit which are not safeguarded under Policy EP2 may be permitted subject to amenity, environmental, access, traffic generation and other detailed considerations.*“

7a.3 The office space within the building contained in the application is not safeguarded under Policy EP2 (Land for Business and Industrial use). Therefore, it is considered that a change from its current use to residential is acceptable and that the amenity of the site would be improved. This would see the physical exterior of the building improve, as well as substantially reduce the user traffic of the building in terms of potential staff and visitors. Access to the property would be from Grahams Road, with no access other than emergency access to the rear of the building. Due to the location of the building, it is considered that on-street parking would be sufficient, especially given the number of flatted dwellings being proposed. On-street marked parking is available on Grahams Road to the front of the building. It is not considered that the proposed use would create an unacceptable level of traffic generation, with the proposed use likely to generate less than the current office use. The location on Grahams Road also gives access to public transport networks and local services, all within walking distance of the property.

7a.4 It is considered that the proposed residential use would be compatible with the current neighbouring uses as the site is bounded on two sides by residential properties, with the remaining surrounding uses forming a mixture of business use. Grahams Road is characterised by flatted properties located at the first floor level above business units, and the proposed development would be compatible in land use terms. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with Policy EP3.

7a.5 Accordingly, the proposal accords with the Development Plan.

7b Material Considerations

7b.1 The material considerations to be assessed are the public representations received and the Roads Development Unit's consultation reply.

Assessment of Public Representations/Consultation Reply

7b.2 The proposed use of the building would substantially reduce the traffic impact which the building has seen in the past, due to many office staff based in the property. The Roads Development Unit do not object to the proposal and there is currently on-street parking available to the front of the property.

7b.3 There is no suggestion that the proposed flatted dwellings are related to the nearby hostel.

7b.4 The proposed use of the building for flatted dwellings would reduce the traffic impact substantially from the current office use. The Roads Development Unit do not object to the proposal and there is marked on-street parking to the front of the building on Grahams Road.

- 7b.5 It is not considered that the proposal would see the overdevelopment of the building. The flatted properties are of similar size to many modern flatted properties, with the properties being designed ideally to accommodate 1 to 2 persons. The proposed nature of the future properties, private or rented, as well as the type of persons which may occupy the units, is not a material planning consideration in this instance.

7c Conclusion

- 7c.1 It is considered that the proposal is acceptable development and is in accordance with Policy EP3 – Existing Business and Industrial Areas with potential for Redevelopment – of the Falkirk Council Local Plan. There are no material planning considerations which would justify a refusal of planning permission.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is therefore recommended that Committee grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:-**

- (1) The development to which the permission relates must be begun within three years of the date of this permission.**
- (2) Acoustic glazing with a specification of 6/12/6 or acoustic equivalent for protecting the occupiers of the proposed dwellings from transportation noise, which ensures that internal noise levels with the windows closed do not exceed 45dB daytime and 35dB night-time when measured as LAeq.T shall be provided on the building. Permanent ventilation should also be provided in order that the windows can be kept closed without loss of ventilation. Details shall be submitted to, and approved by, the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works on-site.**
- (3) Details of the materials to be used on the external surfaces of the building, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out using the approved materials or such alternatives as may be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.**

Reason(s):-

- (1) To accord with the provisions of Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.**
- (2) To ensure that the occupants of the property are safeguarded against excessive noise intrusion.**
- (3) To safeguard the visual amenity of the area.**

Informative(s):-

- (1) For the avoidance of doubt, the plan(s) to which this decision refer(s) bear our online reference number(s) 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08 and 09.**

- (2) In the event that unexpected contamination is encountered following the commencement of development, all work on the affected part of the site shall cease. The developer shall notify the Planning Authority immediately, carry out a Contaminated Land Assessment and undertake any necessary remediation works. Development shall not recommence without the prior written approval of the Planning Authority.
- (3) Please note that the current signage at 1st floor level on the building does not currently have Advertisement Consent. This should not be replaced on the building once works to convert the offices to flatted dwellings is completed. If signage is required at this level the relevant Advertisement Consents should be submitted to the Council for assessment.

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Director of Development Services

Date: 27 March 2012

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Falkirk Council Local Plan.
2. Falkirk Council Structure Plan.
3. Letter of Representation from Mrs Catherine Weir, 47 Castings Drive, Falkirk FK2 7BN on 20 January 2012.
4. Letter of Objection from Mr and Mrs MacKenzie, 39 Castings Drive, Falkirk FK2 7BN on 1 February 2012.
5. Letter of Objection from Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn, Members Services, Municipal Buildings, West Bridge Street, Falkirk FK1 5RS on 3 February 2012.

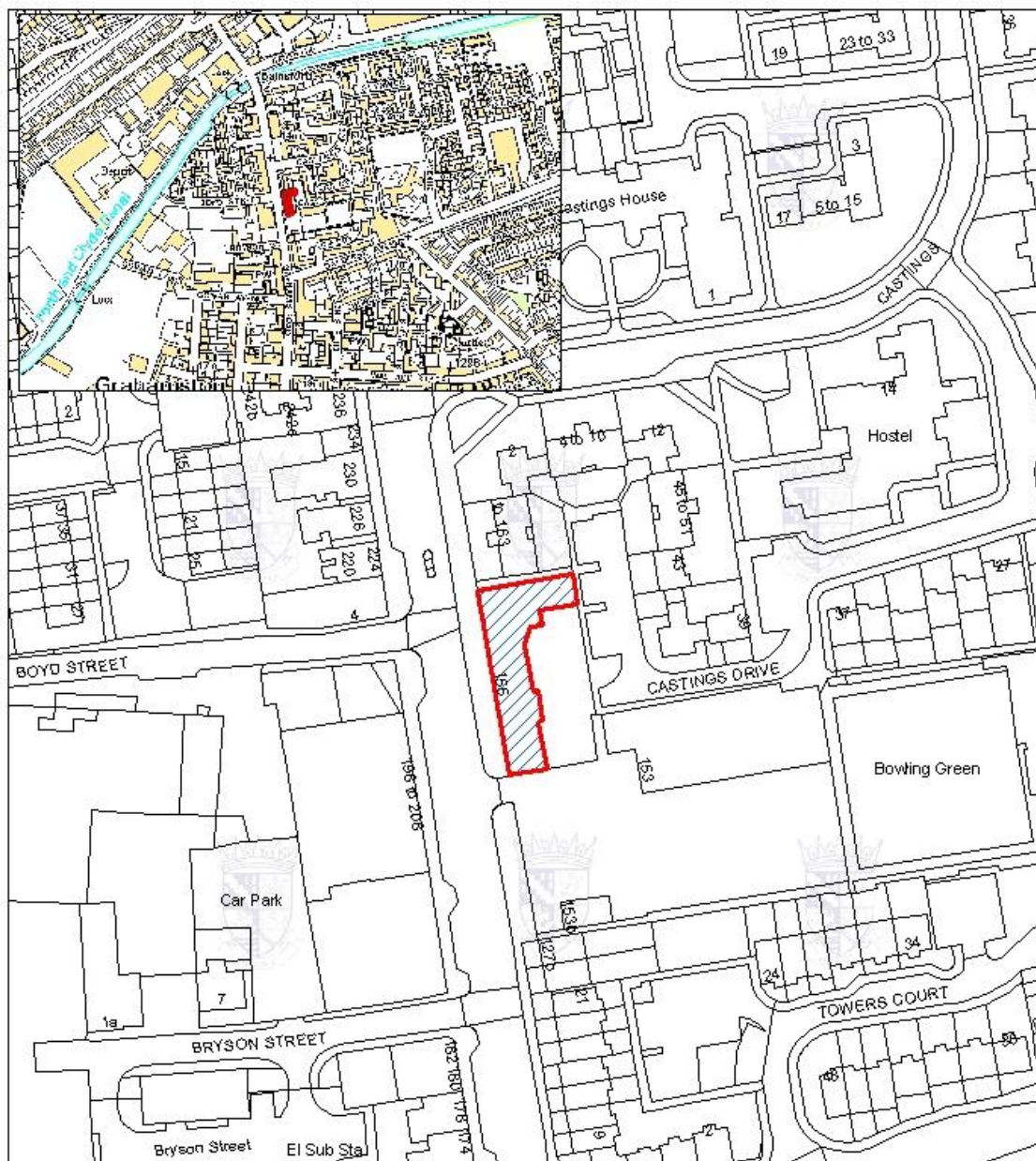
Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 504702 and ask for Stephen McClure, Planning Officer.

Planning Committee

Planning Application Location Plan

P/11/0831/FUL

This plan is for location purposes only. It should not be interpreted as an exact representation of the application site.



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