



25/01440/FUL – 22 Grafton Street, Cambridge

Report to: Planning Committee

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Ward/parish: Market Ward

Proposal: Change of use of Grafton House to a large 7bed 7 person HMO (houses in multiple occupancy) and 1no 1bed studio.

Applicant: Mr Matt White

Presenting officer: Dominic Bush

Reason presented to committee: Called in by Ward Councillor / Third party representations - Recommended by Delegation Panel on the 10th June to be brought to Planning Committee

Member site visit date: N/a

Key issues: 1.Character

2.Residential amenity

3.Car & Cycle parking

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

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Table 1 Contents of report

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The application seeks permission for the change of use of Grafton House to a large 7bed 7 person HMO (houses in multiple occupancy) and 1no 1bed studio.
- 1.2 Officers recommend that the Planning Committee approve the application, subject to conditions.

Consultee	Object / No objection / No comment	Page Reference
Conservation Officer	No objection	
County Highways Development Management	No objection	
Environmental Health	No objection	

Third Party Representations (23)		
Member Representations (1)		

Table 2 Consultee summary

2. Site description and context

- 2.1 The application site as existing comprises the residential dwelling of No.22 Grafton Street. The properties lies within a primarily residential area being the end of terrace property along the northern side of Grafton Street. There are a number of commercial premises located to the east of the site that front onto East Road.
- 2.2 The property has recently been extended (23/00241/HFUL) including the addition of an ancillary annex (23/04283/HFUL) to the north of the site. There is an area of public amenity space immediately to the north of the site.
- 2.3 The site lies within the Kite controlled parking zone and the Kite conservation area, the wisteria on the external elevations of the property is also stated to be positive features of the conservation area.

3. The proposal

- 3.1 This application is proposing to change of the use of the property from a single residential dwelling to a large (Sui Generis) 7 person HMO and an additional separate single bedroom studio flat
- 3.2 Amendments have been received during the process of the application to alter the proposed bin and cycle storage arrangement.

4. Relevant site history

Reference	Description	Outcome
23/00241/HFUL	Single storey extension within rear garden.	Permitted
23/04283/HFUL	First floor extension of garage to create studio annexe	Permitted
25/01230/FUL	Change of use of Grafton House to a large 8bed 8 person HMO (houses in multiple occupancy).	Withdrawn

Table 2 Relevant site history

- 4.1 Extensions approved to the property within the above householder applications are understood to be underway and nearing completion on site at the time of writing. The proposed change of use utilises the property following these extensions.
- 4.2 The previous FUL application submitted this year was withdrawn due to concerns regarding the description of development, prior to any assessment of the scheme.

5. Policy

5.1 National policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024
National Planning Practice Guidance
National Design Guide 2019
Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) Cycle Infrastructure Design
Circular 11/95 (Conditions, Annex A)
Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
Environment Act 2021

5.2 Cambridge Local Plan (2018)

Policy 1: The presumption in favour of sustainable development
Policy 3: Spatial strategy for the location of residential development
Policy 31: Integrated water management and the water cycle
Policy 32: Flood risk
Policy 35: Protection of human health from noise and vibration
Policy 36: Air quality, odour and dust
Policy 48: Housing in multiple occupation
Policy 50: Residential space standards
Policy 51: Accessible Homes
Policy 52: Protecting garden land and the subdivision of existing dwelling plots
Policy 53: Flat conversions
Policy 55: Responding to context
Policy 56: Creating successful places
Policy 57: Designing new buildings
Policy 58: Altering and extending existing buildings
Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment
Policy 62: Local heritage assets
Policy 70: Protection of priority species and habitats
Policy 80: Supporting sustainable access to development
Policy 81: Mitigating the transport impact of development
Policy 82: Parking management

5.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Biodiversity SPD – Adopted February 2022
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD – Adopted January 2020
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted November 2016

5.4 Other guidance

Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029
Kite Conservation Area Appraisal
Biodiversity Checklist for Land Use Planners in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (2001).
Buildings of Local Interest (2005)
Cycle Parking Guide for New Residential Developments (2010)

5.5 Area Guidelines

Kite Area Conservation Area Appraisal (2014)

6. Consultations

Publicity

Neighbour letters – Y
Site Notice – Y
Press Notice – Y as within conservation area

Conservation Officer- No Objection

6.1 No objection to the proposed development on conservation grounds.

County Highways Development Management - No Objection

6.2 No objection to the proposal subject to conditions regarding:

- Closure of existing vehicular access
- Removal of footpath drains
- Ensuring no overhanging of public highway

Environmental Health- No Objection

6.3 No objection to the proposed development, subject to informatics

7. Third party representations

7.1 23 representations have been received, 1 in support and 2 in objection

7.2 Those in objection have raised the following issues:

- Principle of development
- Character, appearance and scale
- Density and overdevelopment
- Amenity for future occupiers
- Heritage impacts
- Residential amenity impact (impacts on daylight, sunlight, enclosure, privacy, noise and disturbance, light pollution)
- Car parking and parking stress
- Refuse arrangement

7.3 Those in support have given the following reasons:

- Supports the development of additional HMO accommodation

8. Member Representations

8.1 Cllr Bick and Martinelli have made a representation (objecting to) the application on the following grounds:

- Lack of monitoring for anti-social behaviour
- Potential use as short term lets
- Amenity of future occupiers
- Use of Studio flat as stand-alone accommodation

9. Assessment

9.1 From the consultation responses and representations received and from an inspection of the site and the surroundings, the key issues are:

- Principle of development
- Housing provision
- Design, layout, scale, landscaping and heritage
- Car and cycle parking
- Amenity
- Third party representations

10. Principle of Development

10.1 Policy 3 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 states that the overall development strategy is to focus the majority of new residential development in and around the urban area of Cambridge, creating strong, sustainable, cohesive and inclusive mixed-use communities. The policy is supportive in principle of new housing development that will contribute towards an identified housing need. The proposal would contribute to housing supply and thus would be compliant with policy 3.

- 10.2 Policy 52 requires proposals for the subdivision of existing residential curtilages to be of a form, height and layout appropriate to the surrounding pattern of development and character of the area whilst retaining sufficient garden space and balancing protecting the amenity and privacy of neighbours with creating high quality functional environments for future occupiers.
- 10.3 Policy 48 states that proposals for large houses of multiple occupation will be supported where the proposal: does not create an over-concentration of such a use in the local area, or cause harm to residential amenity or the surrounding area; the building or site (including any outbuildings) is suitable for use as housing in multiple occupation, with provision made, for example, for appropriate refuse and recycling storage, cycle and car parking and drying areas; and will be accessible to sustainable modes of transport, shops and other local services.
- 10.4 It is noted that a number of third parties comments have raised concern with a potential over-concentration of HMOs within the surrounding area. However, a review of the councils evidence and a site visit undertaken by the case officer there are not understood to be any existing HMO's along Grafton Street, a single unit on John Street to the South and two along Paradise Street to the North. As such, whilst it is noted that the proposal would result in a new HMO within upper Grafton Street, this would not be considered to result in an over-concentration within the local area.
- 10.5 The impact of the proposed development on neighbouring amenity is considered to be acceptable and this will be discussed in greater detail in paragraphs regarding amenity below.
- 10.6 Officers consider that adequate provision is made for the parking of cycles as well as refuse arrangement, these will be discussed in greater detail further into the report.
- 10.7 The application site is located in a highlight sustainable location within the city of Cambridge, within a short walking distance of local amenities with access to transport links into the city centre and surrounding area.
- 10.8 It is acknowledged that Policy 53 of the Local Plan refers to proposals that seek to convert single dwelling houses to self-contained units. Officers do not consider however that this policy is engaged by the proposed development that only seeks to convert part of the existing dwelling to a single new self-contained studio flat. The majority of the criteria of this policy do not align with the proposed development
- 10.9 The principle of development is acceptable and in accordance with policies 3 and 48.

11. Design, layout, scale, landscaping and heritage

- 11.1 Policies 55 and 58 seek to ensure that development responds appropriately to its context, is of a high quality, reflects or successfully contrasts with existing building forms and materials and includes appropriate landscaping and boundary treatment.
- 11.2 Para. 212 of the NPPF set out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
- 11.3 Policy 61 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) requires development to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets, their setting and the wider townscape, including views into, within and out of the conservation area. Policy 62 seeks the retention of local heritage assets and where permission is required, proposals will be permitted where they retain the significance, appearance, character or setting of a local heritage asset.
- 11.4 The application site is located within a predominantly residential being the eastern end of a row of Victorian terraced properties. Being a corner plot, the site is larger than the majority of the surrounding neighbouring properties. Whilst the property itself is not specifically identified within the Kite Conservation Area appraisal, there is a well established wisteria that wraps around the corner of the building that is noted as having a positive contribution to the areas character.
- 11.5 This application is not proposing any extensions to the form of the existing building within the application site. However, it is noted that third parties have raised concern with the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the building. Extensions have been approved under previous householder applications including the addition of a large annex to the north of the site creating an internal courtyard area. The property currently fronts onto Grafton Street with a smaller pedestrian entrance onto Adam and Eve street. The proposed development includes the provision of two additional arched doorways to provide access to the studio flat within the northern portion of the site.
- 11.6 Whilst the external layout of the site is remaining largely as existing, the internal layout is being more significantly altered to provide the HMO units and self-contained flat. Included in these changes is the provision of separate bin and bike storage areas all of which are covered. The bin store proposed for the HMO units is immediately to the left of the existing Adam & Eve Street entrance, with 7 cycle parking spaces within a separated space to the right of this entrance. The studio flats proposed cycle and bin store is proposed within its separate entrance area through the two new arched doorways.

11.7 In line with comments received from the councils conservation officer, it is not considered that the development would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. As the additional unit proposed is a flat, it would not benefit from permitted development rights and therefore restrictions of its PD rights are not necessary.

11.8 Overall, the proposed development is a high-quality design that would contribute positively to its surroundings and be appropriately landscaped. The proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2018) policies 55 and 58, 61 the NPPF and Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990

12. Biodiversity

12.1 The Environment Act 2021 and the Councils' Biodiversity SPD (2022) requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach is embedded within the strategic objectives of the Local Plan and policy 70. Policy 70 states that proposals that harm or disturb populations and habitats should secure achievable mitigation and / or compensatory measures resulting in either no net loss or a net gain of priority habitat and local populations of priority species.

12.2 The proposed development and the change of use of the building would not result in the loss of any biodiversity or habitats within the site. The proposal therefore is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

12.3 Taking the above into account, the proposal is compliant with 57, 69 and 70 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

13. Water management and flood risk

13.1 The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is not considered to be at risk of surface water flooding.

13.2 Given the low flood risk of the site and the fact that the buildings lawful use is residential, it is not considered that the proposed change of use would require any additional information in this regard.

13.3 The applicants have suitably addressed the issues of water management and flood risk, and subject to conditions the proposal is in accordance with Local Plan policies 31 and 32 and NPPF advice

14. Highway safety and transport impacts

14.1 Access to the site would be purely on-foot with no vehicular access existing or proposed. The primary entrance to the property would remain

from Grafton Street through what has historically been the front door of the property. Meanwhile there would be a side entrance for the bins and bikes of the HMO along with the two arched entrances for the studio flat also onto Adam & Eve Street.

14.2 Comments have been received from the Local Highways Authority raising no objection to the development subject to conditions requiring the existing vehicular access to be fully closed, no overhanging of the public highway, and for the current cross footway drainage channels to be removed. The condition regarding the closure of the access is considered to be reasonable and is recommended to be attached. The cross footway drainage falls outside of the application site and the applicants ownership however, it is not considered reasonable to require the removal of these by way of a condition.

14.3 Subject to conditions as applicable, the proposal accords with the objectives of policy 80 and 81 of the Local Plan and is compliant with NPPF advice.

15. Car and cycle provision

Cycle parking

15.1 The proposed development seeks permission for two separate areas of cycle parking, one for the HMO units and another for the studio flat. In terms of the quantity of cycle parking spaces, each is considered to be of an appropriate size, with 1 space per HMO unit and 1 space for the 1 bed studio flat.

15.2 The HMO cycle parking is proposed in a large covered space accessed from the Adam & Eve Street side with high & low cycle parking for each of the spaces. Whilst it is acknowledged that Sheffield stands are a preferred form of parking, it is not considered that there is sufficient space in this case, and the proposed arrangement is appropriate.

15.3 The studio flat seeks the parking of a single bike beneath the staircase accessing this unit. Whilst also not ideal, the provided sections show that this space has ample head height for easy access to this space with a single loop provided to lock any bicycle.

15.4 Whilst both arrangements are considered to be acceptable, a condition will be attached ensuring that they are provided and in place prior to occupation of the unit.

Car parking

15.5 The proposed development seeks for both the 7 person HMO and studio flat to be car free units. This, within the Controlled parking zone this complies with Policy 82 and Appendix L of the Local Plan. It is considered

that the application site is located within a highly sustainable location a short walking distance to the city centre and therefore a variety of services and amenities. Whilst comments from the Local Highways Authority are noted that future residents will not be able to obtain parking permits, it is not considered that this alters the officer's view.

- 15.6 Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with policies 36 and 81 of the Local Plan and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

16. Amenity

Neighbouring properties

- 16.1 The proposed development, given that all of the external works already benefit from permission, is not considered to result in any additional harm to neighbouring amenity through overbearing or loss of light.
- 16.2 It is acknowledged however that the internal alterations and layout changes proposed would impact how the building is used, and this may impact neighbouring amenity through loss of privacy. The main area of concern in this regard is from the proposed first floor terrace serving the studio flat. When visiting the site it was noted that currently there is only a very short wall between this space and the neighbouring property to the west, no.21a Grafton Street. It is considered however, that suitable screening of this balcony could be provided, that can be secured by way of a condition. It is considered that subject to this screening, the balcony would not result in any significant overlooking to the rear of No.21a.
- 16.3 Concerns have been raised by third parties regarding the noise impacts resulting from the proposed intensification of use of the site. The development itself would change what is an existing single residential dwelling to a 7 person HMO and an additional single studio flat. It is likely therefore, that the development would increase the number of people occupying the site. Given the permitted development allowance for the use of dwellings as HMOs for up to 6 residents without planning permission, it is not considered that the level of use proposed would be significantly increased from this fall back position.
- 16.4 There is a good-sized external courtyard area proposed within the center of the site for use by the HMO occupants along with a large internal kitchen dining room. This space remains entirely separate from that proposed for the studio flat. Given the size of both the internal and external amenity spaces proposed, it is considered that it is unlikely future occupiers would lead to any significant increase in noise disturbance above that expected through the use of the site for a single dwelling. A condition is recommended requiring submission of a HMO management plan to ensure that the HMO part of the site is suitably managed in order for any impact to be mitigated.

- 16.5 The proposal is compliant with policies 35, 50, 52, 53 and 58 of the Local Plan /policy HQ/1 of the Local Plan.

Future occupants

- 16.6 The gross internal floor space measurements for the HMO units in this application are shown in the table below:

Unit	Number of bedrooms	Number of bed spaces (persons)	Number of storeys	Policy Size requirement (m ²)	Proposed size of unit	Difference in size
1	1	1	1	7.5	12.4	+4.9
2	1	1	1	7.5	10.7	+3.2
3	1	1	1	7.5	9.5	+2
4	1	1	1	7.5	11.6	+4.1
5	1	1	1	7.5	13	+5.5
6	1	1	1	7.5	10.5	+3
7	1	1	1	7.5	12.6	+5.1

Table 3 Table showing size of residential units in comparison with the policy requirement

- 16.7 As set out in the above table, each of the proposed bedrooms provides notably more than the 7.5m² internal floor area required for a single bedroom. It is noted that the plans provided show double beds and comments from third parties have raised concerns that the units could be occupied by more than a single person. However, in line with previous HMO applications and permissions, a condition limiting the number of occupants is considered to be a reasonable way to overcome this concern. Therefore, such a condition will be attached to any permission granted in this instance.
- 16.8 In addition to the HMO units themselves, there is a shared kitchen/ dining room to provide communal space that measures approximately 35m² in size. This is considered to be a reasonable size for a 7 person HMO and would give future occupiers space to spend time outside of their individual units. A further external communal space is proposed within the courtyard of the property that measures approximately 21m² in area. This space in addition to the internal communal area is considered adequate in size for the number of occupants proposed. A condition is recommended to ensure that this communal space is completed and provided prior to occupation of either of the units.
- 16.9 The breakdown of the proposed Studio Flat internal area is shown within the below table.

Unit	Number of bedrooms	Number of bed	Number of storeys	Policy Size requirement (m ²)	Proposed size of unit	Difference in size
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		spaces (persons)				
1	1	2	1	37	37	0

Table 7 Table showing size of residential units in comparison with the policy requirement

- 16.10 As shown, the internal floor space for this unit meets the requirements of Policy 50 and the national described space standards. In addition to the internal area, there is a first-floor terrace that measures approximately 8m² in size. Given that the space is for a single future occupier, the external amenity space, in addition to the internal is considered to be of an adequate size.

Construction and environmental health impacts

- 16.11 The Council's Environmental Health team have assessed the application and have raised no objection to the proposal. Informatives have been suggested regarding health and safety rating and mandatory HMO licensing.

Summary

- 16.12 The proposal adequately respects the amenity of its neighbours and of future occupants and is considered that it is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2018) policies 35, 50, 51, 52, and 58.

17. Other matters

Bins

- 17.1 Policy 58 requires refuse and recycling to be successfully integrated into proposals. The proposal includes a separate bin storage area within the double garage doors for all of the units. Whilst concerns have been raised by third parties regarding the potential for clutter within the pavements outside of the property. This provision, with suitable internal storage areas is considered to be acceptable. A condition is recommended to secure the provision of the bin store in line with the submitted details.

18. Planning balance

- 18.1 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 18.2 The proposed development is not considered to adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers whilst providing an acceptable level of amenity for future occupiers of the building.

- 18.3 The proposed development is appropriate for its location and is in keeping with the character of the immediate context while providing an acceptable living environment for future occupiers. The development would also positively contribute to the supply of residential accommodation available to the public within Cambridge
- 18.4 Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the statutory requirements of section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, as well as all other material planning considerations, the proposed development is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

19. Recommendation

- 19.1 **Approve** subject to:
-The planning conditions as set out below with minor amendments to the conditions as drafted delegated to officers.

20. Planning conditions

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

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

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as listed on this decision notice, as follows:

- 125-A-00-00 REV A - Location Plan (9th April 2025)
- 125-A-11-10 REV H – Revised Proposed Plan Level 00 Ground Floor (20th May 2025)
- 125-A-11-11 REV D - Proposed Plan Level 01 (9th April 2025)
- 125-A-11-12 REV D – Proposed Roof Plan (9th April 2025)
- 125-A-17-01 REV C – Proposed Elevations (30th April 2025)

Reason: In the interests of good planning, for the avoidance of doubt and to facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3) The development, hereby permitted, shall not be occupied, or the use commenced, until a management plan has been submitted to and

approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The management plan shall include provisions relating to:

- a) management of the property and how any management issues will be addressed
- b) external display of contact information for on-site management issues and emergencies for members of the public
- c) provision for refuse, cycle and car parking and drying areas etc.
- d) details of guidance for tenants re acceptable standards of behaviour/use of the premises.

The development shall thereafter be managed in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: In order to ensure the occupation of the site is well managed and does not give rise to significant amenity issues for nearby residents (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 35 and 47).

- 4) The proposed HMO shall have no more than Seven [7] people residing within it at any one time

Reason: A more intensive use would need to be reassessed in interests of the amenity of neighbouring properties. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 56 and 48).

- 5) The internal communal areas as shown on the approved drawings shall be provided prior to occupation of the building for the proposed use and retained for communal uses and used for no other purpose(s).

Reason: To ensure adequate internal communal space is provided for future occupants (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 48 and 50).

- 6) The bin and bike stores associated with the proposed development, shall be provided prior to first occupation in accordance with the approved plans and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure appropriate provision for the secure storage of bicycles and refuse, to encourage biodiversity and slow surface water run-off (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 31 and 82)

- 7) The existing vehicular access(dropped kerb) to 22 Grafton Street be permanently and effectively closed prior to occupation, with the kerbs raised to full height and the footway raised to suit the raised kerb height, in accordance with a scheme to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

Reason: For the safe and effective operation of the highway and in the interests of highway safety.

- 8) No part of any structure shall overhang or encroach under (footings) or upon the public highway and no doors or ground floor window shall open outwards over the public highway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 9) Prior to occupation of the flat details of the balcony screening for the 1st floor amenity area is to be provided and agreed with the Local Planning Authority and retained for the use of the flat.

Reason: To reduce the impact on over looking from the outdoor space (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 52).

Informatives

1) Housing Health & Safety Rating System

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health & Safety Rating System as a way to ensure that all residential premises provide a safe and healthy environment to any future occupiers or visitors. Each of the dwellings must be built to ensure that there are no unacceptable hazards for example ensuring adequate fire precautions are installed, habitable rooms without adequate lighting or floor area etc. Further information may be found here:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system>

2) Licensing

The Housing Act 2004 introduced Mandatory Licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across all of England. This applies to all HMOs occupied by five or more persons forming more than one household and a person managing or controlling an HMO that should be licensed commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, he fails to apply for a licence. It is, therefore, in your interest to apply for a licence promptly if the building requires one. Further information and how to apply for a Licence may be found here:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/licensing-of-houses-in-multiple-occupation>