

<b>Planning Committee Report</b>	
<b>Planning Ref:</b>	PL/2025/0001377/FUL
<b>Site:</b>	Sherbourne Student Village, Vincent Street
<b>Ward:</b>	Sherbourne
<b>Proposal:</b>	Temporary change of use from purpose-built student accommodation to flexible student accommodation and serviced accommodation use
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Ayesha Saleem

## SUMMARY

The application proposes a temporary change of use from purpose-built student accommodation to flexible student accommodation and serviced accommodation use for a period of 5 years.

## KEY FACTS

<b>Reason for report to committee:</b>	The application has been referred to planning committee at the request of a Ward Councillor.
<b>Current use of site:</b>	Purpose built student accommodation
<b>Proposed use of site:</b>	Purpose built student accommodation & serviced accommodation

## RECOMMENDATION

Planning Committee are recommended to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

## REASON FOR DECISION

- The proposal is acceptable in principle.
- The proposal will not adversely impact upon highway safety.
- The proposal will not adversely impact upon the amenity of neighbours.
- The proposal accords with Policies: DS1, DS3, H10, R4, JE1, JE6, DE1, AC1, AC2, AC3 and AC4 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, together with the aims of the NPPF.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Sherbourne Student Village is accessed from Vincent Street and Hope Street; the development is made up of four blocks. Block D is the long, rectangular, five-storey block fronting Meadow Road. This Block provides 114 studio rooms, each with an en-suite bathroom and kitchenette. Communal facilities include a common room, laundry, secure cycle storage, and on-site management offices.

Block A contains 35 self-contained units, Block B contains 24 self-contained units and is the main block with communal facilities such as a gym area, co workspace, media room and meeting room. Block C contains 36 self-contained units. These blocks are set to the rear of Block D.

## APPLICATION PROPOSAL

The application proposes a temporary change of use from purpose-built student accommodation to flexible student accommodation and serviced accommodation use for a period of 5 years.

Student occupiers will be allocated rooms within Blocks A, B and C in the first instance. Non-student occupiers will be allocated rooms within Block D in the first instance. In the event that either the 'old' or 'new' blocks are fully occupied by students and non-students respectively, students will be permitted to reside within Block D and non-students within Blocks A, B and C where it is possible to maintain a degree of separation. Namely, no student will be permitted to occupy a cluster flat where a non-student is in occupation. This applies only to Blocks A, B and C given that all rooms within Block D are studio rooms.

Individual student tenancy lengths will be permitted up to a maximum of 52 weeks. No non-student occupier may occupy a room for serviced accommodation purposes for less than 3-nights and more than 90 days. In other words, the minimum stay offered to non-students will be 3 days. The maximum stay offered to non-students will be 90 days.

There is amenity spaces located within all blocks. Both students and non-students will be permitted to utilise these shared facilities. Both students and non-students will benefit from weekly cleaning of communal areas, waste collection, security, parcel collection and so on. With respect to internal amenity, it should be noted that occupants of Blocks A, B and C (which are likely to be students) will benefit from shared kitchen, living and dining areas contained within cluster flats (in addition to shared amenity). Occupiers of Block D (which are more likely to be non-students) will have access to a shared amenity space within Block D as well as shared facilities within Blocks A, B and C. Moreover, non-students will reside in the property on a short-term basis only. Therefore, non-students are less likely to utilise the communal shared internal amenity areas (but have the option to do so when staying for longer periods up to 90 days).

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

- FUL/2013/1119 Erection of a new build entrance and meeting pavilion (including external cycle storage) ancillary to existing student accommodation and creation of a new pedestrian entrance to the site- Approved 28/08/2013
- FUL/2015/1700 New 5 storey building comprising 113 student flats with communal facilities and associated car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and minor alterations to the existing student accommodation building- Approved 06/10/2015
- AD/2015/4314 Non-material amendment to planning application FUL/2015/1700 granted on 06/10/2015 for 'New 5 storey building comprising 113 no. student flats with communal facilities and associated car parking including new access off Hope Street, cycle parking, landscaping, entrance canopy and minor alterations to the existing student accommodation building' involving addition of substation within existing bin store enclosure, one additional bedroom (no external alterations), change to the main brick, change in cladding to the bin and bike stores, an additional cycle hoop and minor internal alterations- Approved 11/03/2016
- PL/2024/0001817/FUL Change of use of the existing building from use as purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis) to use as both purpose-built student accommodation and co-living accommodation on a flexible basis- Refused 18/12/2024
- PL/2025/0001082/FUL Cladding remediation works including the removal and replacement of existing combustible external wall materials, and the installation of non-combustible alternatives (Euroclass A2-s1, d0 or better), cavity barriers, insulation, membranes, and fire-stopping measures to meet current fire safety

standards and improve the building's EWS1 rating from B2 to B1. (Existing use as C1 student accommodation)- Approved 02/07/2025

- PL/2025/0001525/NMA Non-material amendment (omission of vertical routed lines to Rockpanel cladding panels) to application PL/2025/0001082/FUL granted on 02/07/2025 for cladding remediation works including the removal and replacement of existing combustible external wall materials, and the installation of non-combustible alternatives- Awaiting Determination

### **National Policy Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The NPPF increases the focus on achieving high quality design and states that it is "fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve".

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) adds further context to the NPPF, and it is intended that the two documents are read together.

### **Local Policy Guidance**

The current local policy is provided within the Coventry Local Plan 2017, which was adopted by Coventry City Council on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017. Relevant policy relating to this application is:

Policy DS1: Overall Development Needs

Policy DS3: Sustainable Development Policy

Policy H10: Student Accommodation

Policy R4: Out of Centre Proposals

Policy JE1: Overall Economy and Employment Strategy

Policy JE6: Tourism/Visitor Related Development

Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality Design

Policy AC1: Accessible Transport Network

Policy AC2: Road Network

Policy AC3: Demand Management

Policy AC4: Walking and Cycling

Policy AC5: Bus and Rapid Transit

### **Emerging Local Policy Guidance – Local Plan Review was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 9<sup>th</sup> September for examination**

Local Plan review is currently at Reg 19 consultation. Relevant emerging policy relating to this application is:

Policy DS1: Overall Development Needs

Policy DS3: Sustainable Development Policy  
Policy H10: Student Accommodation  
Policy R4: Out of Centre Proposals  
Policy JE1: Overall Economy and Employment Strategy  
Policy JE6: Tourism/Visitor Related Development  
Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality Design  
Policy AC1: Accessible Transport Network  
Policy AC2: Road Network  
Policy AC3: Demand Management  
Policy AC4: Walking and Cycling  
Policy AC5: Bus and Rapid Transit

**Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Documents (SPG/ SPD):**

SPD Delivering a More Sustainable City  
SPD Coventry Connected  
SPD Air Quality

**CONSULTATION**

No objections received from: -

- Highways
- Environmental Protection
- West Midlands Police Services

**Neighbour consultation**

Notification letters were sent out to neighbouring houses and three site notices were displayed on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

No representations have been received.

A Ward Councillor has objected and referred the application to Planning Committee on the following grounds:

- Each application should be considered on its merits. The fact that permission has been granted elsewhere to this applicant and developer is not a reason alone to grant planning permission.
- The fact that conditions cannot be attached to ensure the category of users does not expand to include very undesirable users indicates that the block should remain only for students, since it appears this is the only way to ensure students are protected. This is why dedicated student accommodation was granted in the first place. If the applicant is unwilling to retract their desire to expand the tenancy offering to those who are not students or very recently students, then they should not be granted planning permission to change the nature of the building on the grounds of safety and wellbeing of the students living there.
- The proposal could adversely affect the ability of Coventry University to attract students when prospective students discover that the safe haven of the student only accommodation can be lost, through development and potentially offered to those whose lives and values are incompatible with the higher education.
- Finally, the proposal is out of keeping with the character of the area and the objectives of the major residential redevelopment that is in progress.

Any further comments received will be reported within late representations.

## **APPRAISAL**

The main issues in determining this application are to consider the principle of development, design, residential amenity and highway safety.

### **Principle of Development**

Sherbourne Student Village is located just outside the City Centre. It is a 15-minute walk from Coventry Train Station and close to numerous bus stops. It is located in a highly sustainable edge of centre location.

Policy JE1 and Policy JE6 of the Local Plan states that the Council will support tourism/visitor related development which would contribute towards the city's role as a tourist destination. The proposed change of use whilst directed at young professionals mainly would help support tourism and visitors to the city in compliance with these policies.

Policy R4 states 'A sequential assessment will be required for all retail and other Main Town Centre use proposals outside a defined centre and should be prepared in accordance with national guidance. This should have regard to the centres hierarchy set out in policy R3 and where in-centre options are exhausted, edge of centre locations (within 300m of a centre boundary) that are well connected and accessible to the centres themselves should also be considered in advance of out of centre sites.

The application proposes a temporary change of use from purpose-built student accommodation to flexible student accommodation and serviced accommodation use for a period of 5 years.

As this is an edge of City Centre location and it is only being proposed for a temporary basis over 5 years there is no reason why this use would not be acceptable in this location and utilising an existing student village and utilising existing facilities provided for a similar use in student accommodation. The application site is within 300m of the City Centre boundary; therefore, whilst a sequential assessment is technically required there would be little harm from this temporary change of use in an edge of centre location.

There are no policies within the current or emerging Local Plan, which protect student accommodation from conversion to other uses.

Notwithstanding the above, a purpose-built student accommodation market study was commissioned to form part of the evidence base for the emerging local plan, which states recommendations for the Local Planning Authority to consider. One of recommendations to consider was pressure on occupancy which may lead to an increase in applications for change of use from PBSA. Coventry has suffered from significant injections of supply, resulting in some schemes applying for (temporary) changes of use to house non-student occupiers. The City Council should be prepared for a continuation of these applications, particularly in peripheral locations. Unless a building is strictly housing postgraduate students, it is recommended that a block housing students and non-students is "segmented" and that these groups are not accommodated together in cluster flats.

The emerging Local Plan Policy H10 (point 8) also states 'Where a change of use is proposed to part of an existing student accommodation block to another residential use, the residential use must be self-contained and segmented from the student accommodation.' This can only be given moderate weight given the status of the emerging Local Plan. However, the proposals comply with this as student occupiers will be allocated rooms within Blocks A, B and C in the first instance and non-student occupiers will be allocated rooms within Block D in the first instance. In the event that either the blocks are fully occupied by students and non-students respectively, students will be permitted to reside within Block D and non-students within Blocks A, B and C where it is possible to maintain a degree of separation. Namely, no student will be permitted to occupy a cluster flat where a non-student is in occupation. This applies only to Blocks A, B and C given that all rooms within Block D are studio rooms. Therefore, the proposal complies with emerging Policy H10.

The primary use would remain as PBSA ensuring that there is no unnecessary loss of student bedspaces where these are required and in the event that demand increases, the building could continue to be occupied by 100% students. As part of this proposal, each bedroom would remain as currently arranged and thus there would be no increase in the total number of occupants that could already occupy the buildings.

This change of use would not be for a complete switch and would only result in a portion of student accommodation which is not taken up in that calendar year and only for a temporary period of 5 years.

Students are still preferential within this accommodation and still occupying the building this temporary measure of offering up serviced accommodation alongside is deemed acceptable given the current market, therefore the proposal complies with Policies R4, H10, JE1 and JE6 of the Coventry Local Plan.

## **Design**

Policy DE1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure high quality design and development proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 135 states that "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The NPPF further states (at paragraph 139) “Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes”.

The proposals will not result in any physical changes to the building, therefore, would not have any impact upon the character and appearance of the building or area complying with Policy DE1 of the Local Plan 2017.

### **Residential Amenity**

In terms of the proposal there is a management plan which has been included which provides information on how the student accommodation and short-term leases will be managed. Although there is no evidence of conflict between these two uses from other similar applications throughout the city, the management plan has indicated as highlighted above how the varying different uses will be separated from each other to provide that segregation.

The applicant has indicated that there will be minimum and maximum stay requirements to ensure that this accommodation is not on a constant turnover which would cause disturbance and disruption for the existing users of the accommodation or providing substandard living for permanent residents.

The Operational Management Plan also outlines the following security measures:

- The building layout is designed to ensure a good level of security for occupiers, visitors and other users. All entrance doors are securable by electronic lock systems or traditional locks and keys.
- Within the proposed buildings all rooms have lockable bedroom doors and communal areas are accessible as these are shared by the occupiers.
- The building along with some public areas has CCTV camera coverage with the focus on the entrance and egress areas.
- A Security Officer is available 24/7, including during out-of-hours, on a call-out basis should an on-site presence be required. The Officer has the contact details of the OM in the event of a major incident.

Taking into account it is considered that there is no detrimental impact upon residents and the proposals comply with Policy DE1 of the Local Plan.

### **Highways**

Policy AC1 'Accessible Transport Network' states that development proposals which are expected to generate additional trips on the transport network should: a) Integrate with existing transport networks including roads, public transport and walking and cycling routes to promote access by a choice of transport modes. b) Consider the transport and accessibility needs of everyone living, working or visiting the city. c) Support the delivery of new and improved high quality local transport networks which are closely integrated into the built form. d) Actively support the provision and integration of emerging and future intelligent mobility infrastructure. Policy AC2 seeks to ensure that development proposals do not have a detrimental impact upon the road network and where required suitable mitigation should be provided as part of any approval, i.e. through obligations.

Policy AC3 of the Local Plan acknowledges that the provision of car parking can influence occurrences of inappropriate on-street parking which can block access routes for emergency, refuse and delivery vehicles, block footways preventing access for pedestrians, reduce visibility at junctions and impact negatively on the street scene. Proposals for the provision of car parking associated with new development will be assessed on the basis of parking standards set out in Appendix 5. The car parking standards also include requirements for the provision of electric car charging and cycle parking infrastructure.

The Operation Management Plan states 'Given the sustainable location of the site, it is not anticipated that occupiers (either student or non-student) would seek to travel via the private car. In all marketing and booking information, it will be made clear that no car parking is available at the Site. It will also be made clear that no tenant is permitted to travel to and from the site via private car. A Clause will be included within all tenancy agreements, to be signed by all tenants, which sets out that tenants are not permitted to park either on site or on surrounding streets as a condition of tenancy. Failure to comply with this tenancy will result in a breach of contract and termination of the lease.'

According to the submitted Operational Management Plan, tenancy restrictions are proposed to prevent occupiers from bringing a private car to the site and the surrounding area. This is supported by the LHA. The Local Highway Authority is satisfied that the development proposals should not have a severe impact on public highway safety, or on the operation or capacity of the local highway network.

### **Other Matters:**

With regards to the Councillors comments regarding each application must be assessed on its own merits, officers agree with this statement. However, similar permissions have been granted to other purpose-built student accommodation this year and the Local Planning Authority must take a consistent approach in dealing with these types of application in particular when considering the current market.

With regards to conditioning a category of users, this would be unreasonable and would not meet the condition tests.

### **Equality Implications**

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:-



(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.

## CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and will not result in any significant impact upon neighbour amenity or highway safety. The reason for Coventry City Council granting planning permission is because the development is in accordance with: Policies DS1, DS3, H10, R4, JE1, JE6, DE1, AC1, AC2, AC3 and AC4 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 together with the aims of the NPPF.

## CONDITIONS/REASONS

<b>1.</b>	The change of use hereby permitted is granted for a limited period only expiring 5 years from the date of this decision, when, on or before this date, the temporary use shall cease. Thereafter the premises shall be used as student accommodation in accordance with the original outline planning permission and subsequent reserved matters and other permissions.
<b>Reason.</b>	<i>The Local Planning Authority considers that a permanent planning permission for a C1 Use may not be appropriate in this case without full consideration of all of the details of such a use against the development plan and other material considerations in accordance with Local Plan Policies and consideration of relevant and necessary planning obligations/developer contributions in accordance with Policy IM1 of the Coventry Development Plan 2017.</i>
<b>2.</b>	The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Covering Letter Operational Management Plan Site Location Plan DWG 847-P-999 Rev B Site Plan DWG 847 P 1001 Rev C Ground Floor Proposed Layout - Blocks A, B & C DWG 2003 (20) 005 Rev B First Floor Proposed Layout - Blocks A, B & C DWG 2003 (20) 006 Rev A

	<p>Second Floor Proposed Layout - Blocks A, B &amp; C DWG 2003 (20) 007 Rev A</p> <p>Third Floor Proposed Layout - Block B &amp; C DWG 2003 (20) 008 Rev A</p> <p>Ground Floor Plan - Block D DWG 847-C-1002</p> <p>First Floor Plan - Block D DWG 847-C-1101</p> <p>Second Floor Plan - Block D DWG 847-C-1102</p> <p>Third Floor Plan - Block D DWG 847-C-1103</p> <p>Fourth Floor Plan - Block D DWG 847-C-1104</p>
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<b>Reason.</b>	<i>For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning</i>
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<b>3.</b>	A person cannot occupy the rooms/studios/apartments (to be used as serviced accommodation) for more than 90 nights in a calendar year (1 January to 31 December) and stays must be via short term lets only of a minimum of 3 days.
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<b>Reason.</b>	<i>To ensure that that the use is of a character that is in line with other uses that fall within Use Class C1 and due to the lack of infrastructure in place to cater for the demands of longer-term residence, and to safeguard the amenities of the existing occupiers in accordance with Policies DE1 and IM1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017.</i>
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<b>4.</b>	The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in full accordance with the Operational Management Plan and shall not be amended in any way.
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<b>Reason.</b>	<i>To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining occupiers of the development in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016.</i>
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