

**KEY INFORMATION****Ward** Tay Bridges**Proposal**

Change of use from residential to office accommodation

**Address**4 Argyle Place  
Thomson Street  
Dundee DD1 4LD**Applicant**Mrs Betty Howieson  
Dundee Women's Aid  
61 Reform Street  
Dundee DD1 1SP**Agent****Registered** 12 Aug 2003**Case Officer** Eve Jones

The Change of Use from residential to Office is **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS**. Report by Director of Planning and Transportation

**RECOMMENDATION**

The application is contrary to the relevant policy in the Dundee Local Plan but complies with the Finalised Local Plan Review. There are strong material considerations in support of the change of use for a limited period.

**Recommendation:**  
**APPROVE** subject to conditions.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- Planning permission is sought for the change of use of an existing women's refuge on the first and second floors of this traditional stone building. Permission is sought for a period of three years. The offices will accommodate 12 staff, many of whom work in the community.
- The accommodation in the current refuge no longer meets present day standards and a new refuge is currently being constructed in the north east of the city. Dundee Women's Aid intends to consolidate its office requirements following completion of the new refuge.
- Adjacent premises in Thomson Street currently accommodate 4 workers and act as a base for resource and support workers. It is intended that these staff will be accommodated in this proposed office.
- The relevant office policy in the Dundee Local Plan does not support the location of such uses in residential areas unless such a location can be justified. However the Finalised Local Plan Review supports services and facilities in residential areas provided the impact on the environmental quality enjoyed by residents is minimised.
- There is restricted on street parking space in this area. The proposed use is a day time use when parking pressure is reduced and some workers already work in this street. Other staff operate within the community and will be based at this office. On balance it is considered that the use is acceptable for a limited period to allow future consolidation of the office requirements of this organisation.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Change of use from residential to office accommodation. The change of use is sought for a period of three years. The premises will provide accommodation for 12 staff. The office will not be open to the public.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The premises are the first and second floors of a substantial stone property on the west side of Thomson Street. The ground floor of the property is remaining in use as an existing refuge. The accommodation comprises four rooms on each floor including a large kitchen. There is a small garden to the front and a large garden to the rear. There is no off street car parking. Thomson Street at this point has large villas on the west side, like this property many are divided into flats. On the east side there are terraced flatted properties to the north with terraced houses to the south. The street is narrow with on street parking on the east side. There are traffic calming features in this street.

## POLICY BACKGROUND

### Dundee and Angus Structure Plan 2001-2016

There are no policies relevant to the determination of this application.

### Dundee Local Plan 1998

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy EU26 Office Uses - Exceptions. Outwith the areas identified as business, industrial, office, mixed use or district centres, office use will not be permitted with the following relevant exceptions: A) where the use clearly serves the immediate local population and no alternative site can be identified in a district or local centre or B) where the building is of significant value and conversion to another use is inappropriate.

Policy BE11 Development in Conservation Areas. All development should complement and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

### Dundee Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan 1995

There are no policies relevant to the determination of this application

### Finalised Dundee Local Plan Review

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy 1: Vibrant and Sustainable Communities. The policy supports the development of an appropriate range of services and facilities close to and within housing areas to promote vibrant communities. New development should accord with other policies in the Plan and seek to minimise any affect on the environmental quality enjoyed by local residents by reason of inter alia parking and traffic movement issues.

Policy 61: Development in Conservation Areas. All development should complement and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

### Scottish Planning Policies, Planning Advice Notes and Circulars

There are no statements of Government policy relevant to the determination of this application

### Non Statutory Statements of Council Policy

There are no non statutory Council policies relevant to the determination of this application

## LOCAL AGENDA 21

The proposal complies with Key Theme 4: Local needs are met locally and Key Theme 1: Resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised.

## SITE HISTORY

There is no previous site history.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The application was the subject of statutory neighbour notification and the application was also advertised in the local press as a potential departure

from the Development Plan. No objections were received.

## CONSULTATIONS

There were no comments from consultees.

## OBSERVATIONS

In accordance with the provisions of Section 25 of the Act the Committee is required to consider

- whether the proposals are consistent with the provisions of the development plan; and if not
- whether an exception to the provisions of the development plan is justified by other material considerations

## The Development Plan

The provisions of the development plan relevant to the determination of this application are specified in the Policy background section above

Policy EU26 in the Dundee Local Plan are primarily directed towards expansion and protection of sites for office use within the identified Central Area Office Sector. The policies also aimed to ensure that office sites were not developed in residential areas unless the use clearly serves the immediate local population and no alternative site can be identified in an acceptable location. This office, which will accommodate 12 staff, will service the ground floor refuge but will also act as a base for support workers in the local community and elsewhere in the City. The proposed use does not wholly comply with this part of the policy.

Change of use may also be acceptable where the building is of significant value and conversion to another use is inappropriate. This does not apply in this case as the site could easily be converted back to mainstream residential use.

Policy BE11 states that all development should complement and enhance the character of the Conservation Area. The development as proposed is unlikely to have any impact on the character of the area.

It is concluded from the foregoing that the proposal does not comply with the provisions of the development plan.

## Other Material Considerations

The relevant policies in the Finalised Local Plan Review 2003 constitute a very strong material consideration as they reflect the current views of the Council. There are no specific office policies and the relevant policy is Policy 1: Vibrant and Sustainable Communities. This supports the development of an appropriate range of services and facilities close to and within housing areas to promote vibrant communities. New development should accord with other policies in the Plan and seek to minimise any affect on the environmental quality enjoyed by local residents by reason of inter alia parking and traffic movement issues. In this case, the impact of the development is considered to be the issue of parking and traffic movement. In this part of the City, few properties have off street parking and on street parking is restricted. This is particularly true in the evening when residents return from work although there is a high level of parking throughout the day.

Policy 61: Development in Conservation Areas. All development should complement and enhance the character of the Conservation Area. As detailed above, the proposal has no significant impact on the character of the area.

Supporting Justification. Dundee Women's Aid has submitted additional information in support of this application. The accommodation in the existing refuge which is the subject of this application no longer meets present day standards and a new refuge is currently under construction in the north east of the city. At present the organisation has its main office in Reform Street with an office at 22 Thomson Street, opposite this site. The site at 22 Thomson Street has 4 staff and is also used as a base for existing resource workers. The staff to be accommodated in the proposed office includes these 4 staff and the resource and support workers who currently work at various locations around the city. Workers will also support the existing refuge on the ground floor which is to remain in its current use. Dundee Women's Aid have indicated that they intend to purchase office space in the future rather than continue with the policy of rental. However at

present, resources are totally concentrated on the construction of the new refuge and the identification and funding of new office premises to serve as a base for all staff would be follow its completion. Planning permission is therefore sought for a temporary period for this office use for three years to enable this programme to be followed.

The principle of such developments within a residential area is supported by the Finalised Local Plan Review provided the impact on the environmental quality enjoyed by local residents is minimised.

As 4 of the staff already work in Thomson Street and most of the support workers spend time in the community and at the other refuge site, the likely impact of such a development on the existing parking situation is considered to be less than a conventional office. Given the current changing circumstances and the future intention to consolidate all office accommodation in a single location, the proposed change of use for a limited period of three years is considered to be acceptable. It is concluded from the foregoing that sufficient weight can be accorded to the material considerations such as to justify the grant of planning permission contrary to the provisions of the development plan. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted with conditions.

## Design

There are no design issues.

## CONCLUSION

On balance it is considered that planning permission for a limited time can be recommended subject to conditions in order to allow this organisation to consolidate its office requirements in the future

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

- 1 The use hereby approved shall cease not later than 31 December 2006.
- 2 The permission shall not enure for the benefit of the land but

shall operate for the benefit of Dundee Women's Aid only.

- 3 The proposed office shall be used only for an office as defined by Class 4 of the 1997 Use Classes (Scotland) Order as amended and shall not provide services to visiting members of the public.

## Reason

- 1 Permanent retention of the office use of the property would be inappropriate as the site is within an area where parking is limited and the use would be likely to have a detrimental impact on the amenities enjoyed by neighbours. The temporary period will allow the applicant to seek permanent, satisfactory accommodation.
- 2 Having regard to the relevant policies in the Dundee Local Plan and the Finalised Local Plan Review planning permission for this use would not normally be acceptable in this particular location in view of the lack of parking in the vicinity. Planning permission has been granted in this instance, for a temporary period, to allow this applicant to seek permanent, satisfactory accommodation.
- 3 the premises are closely adjoined by residential properties and it is considered necessary to strictly control the nature and intensity of the use of the premises in the interests of the amenities of the area