



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL SOUTH & WEST

Date: 31st January 2013

Subject: **PLANNING APPLICATION 12/04775/FU – Change of use and alterations of offices, retail unit and 1 flat to form 8 flats**

at: **70 Armley Lodge Rd, Armley, Leeds LS12 2AT**

APPLICANT

Mr James Hitchcock

DATE VALID

20th November 2012

TARGET DATE

15th January 2013

Electoral Wards Affected:

Armley

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Ward Members consulted
(Referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT planning permission, subject to the following conditions

1. 3 year time limit
2. Development completed in accordance with approved plans
3. Submission of plans showing a 2.4m x 43m visibility splay
4. Boundary treatment limited to 1.0m in height
5. Details of one secure cycle parking space per unit
6. Samples of walling and surfacing materials to amenity space
7. DOTH Reason for Approval:

In reaching a decision the case officer dealing with the application has worked with the applicant/agent in a positive way to produce an acceptable scheme in accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy framework.

In granting permission for this development the City Council has taken into account all material planning considerations including those arising from the comments of any statutory and other consultees, public representations about the application and Government Guidance and Policy as detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework and (as specified below) the content and policies within Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and The Development Plan consisting of The Yorkshire and Humber Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy 2008 (RSS) and the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDPR) and the emerging Publication Draft Core Strategy Nov 2012 (DCS) .

GP5, BD6, T2, T24

SPG 'Neighbourhoods for Living'
SPG 'Development of Self-Contained Flats'

On balance, the City Council considers the development would not give rise to any unacceptable consequences for the environment, community or other public interests of acknowledged importance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application for the conversion of a former Co-operative building (now used as shops, offices and a flat) to eight self-contained flats is considered acceptable in terms of its principle and its impact on highway safety and residential and visual amenity. It is brought before the South and West Plans Panel at the request of Councillor Alison Lowe due to concerns regarding the lack of off-street parking.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Permission is sought for the conversion of the existing former Co-operative building to eight self-contained, one and two-bedroom flats, utilising all four levels of the structure.
- 2.2 At ground floor level, the existing accommodation (a large vacant shop unit, flanked by two offices) will be converted into three one-bedroom flats, each with a combined living and dining area with kitchenette, bedroom and shower room. A fourth flat will utilise the ground floor as a living and kitchen area with bedroom and shower room to the basement. The remainder of the basement will be retained as general storage space and accessed from the existing door to the rear.
- 2.3 At first and second floor level there will be four further 'duplex' flats, three of which will be accessed via a new corridor utilising the existing stairwell and access from the front of the building and a fourth which will be accessed from the rear of the building. The flats will again each comprise an open-plan living area to the lower level and a shower room accessed from this. A flight of stairs will lead up to bedrooms in the attic, which will be lit by Velux type roof lights.
- 2.4 Externally the building will be repaired and renovated. The hard surfaced forecourt area will be enclosed by a 1.0m brick wall topped by 0.8m metal railings between 1.0m piers to provide an enclosed amenity area to the front of each of the ground floor units. The enclosed rear yard area will be retained as a communal area. To the frontage, the shopfront to the left-hand side will be repaired and signage removed, the central section will be rebuilt in a more appropriate brick and using stone heads and

sills, and a partially bricked-up full-height window to the right-hand side will be reinstated.

- 2.5 At the rear, the pattern of fenestration to the central section will be amended with a window being bricked up and replaced with two, slightly lower windows with stone heads and sills. Security grilles to the ground floor windows will be removed, whilst a loading door with hoist arm to the first floor will be retained and fitted with a Juliet balcony for safety. The existing brick lean-to will also be retained, with the front part used for bin storage whilst the rear will remain as a garage.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 The application refers to a large red-brick Victorian building which it is understood was built by the local Co-operative Society in 1898. This use has long since ceased and until recently the building was subdivided into a number of small business uses including a workshop, retail unit, offices and a self-contained flat. These too have now either ceased or are winding down.
- 3.2 The building comprises a long, two-storey brick structure with basement and pitched roof. It has stone copings to each gable end and an ornate central section with stone / brick pediment comprising an inverted arch with ball finials. A date stone reads 1898. To the ground floor, the left-hand side shop unit retains and original ornate stone and timber frontage, whilst the central section has been infilled with brick and roller shutters and only the signboard survives.
- 3.3 By contrast the rear elevation is more utilitarian, with large areas of austere brick, an irregular pattern of fenestration and a first floor loading door with projecting hoist arm. Fenestration to both sides is a mixture of surviving original sash windows and some modern UPVC replacements. There is a tarmac forecourt to the front and a yard to the rear which is enclosed by brick walls.
- 3.4 Internally the ground floor is laid out as two shops and the ground floor of an existing residence. The first floor is partitioned into a number of rooms, accessed by a separate stairwell. Currently the basement is used for ancillary storage, whilst only the far right-hand side of the attic is incorporated into the self-contained apartment, with the remainder being void.
- 3.5 The building is located in a typical example of densely packed streets of red-brick Victorian terraced houses. Most of these are garden-fronted back-to-back properties but there are also some through terraced homes to the Nunningtons and Arley Grove to the north of the site. To the south the former St. Hugh's Church has been converted to 17 apartments.
- 3.6 Parking is almost exclusively on-street, with very few of the houses having access to in-curtilage parking.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 There have been no applications relating to the former Co-operative building besides an unimplemented determination by British Telecom for two telephone kiosks outside it in 1993 (ref: 24/41/93/DT).

- 4.2 Permission was granted for the adjacent St. Hugh's Church to be converted first to a community centre in September 1974 (H24/54/74/) and then to flats, with a permission for 14 units (24/34/04/FU) being superseded by a second application for 17 units (24/532/04/FU) in September 2004. This scheme was ultimately implemented.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

- 5.1 It has not been necessary to enter into any negotiations with or to request revisions from the agent for this scheme.

6.0 PUBLIC/ LOCAL RESPONSE:

- 6.1 A General site notice was posted on 30th November 2012. No local representations were received, however an objection on the grounds of increased pressure for on-street parking was received from Councillor Alison Lowe. As a result of a request contained within the representation, the application has been brought before the South and West Plans Panel for determination.

7.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Highways: Request conditions relating to cycle storage, visibility splays, and hanging of gates. No objections to the change of use as there are at least two parking spaces available in the existing garage and enclosed land, and adequate on-street capacity. Given the number of existing uses, which include two shops, offices, a workshop and residence, the proposal does not represent a significant intensification.

Mains Drainage: The use of the building's existing surface and foul drainage systems are acceptable and any amendments covered by Building Regulations.

Neighbourhoods and Housing: have no concerns about the application in respect of residential amenity.

8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

Local Planning Policies:

- 8.1 The Publication Draft of the Core Strategy was issued for public consultation on 28th February 2012 and the consultation period closed on 12th April 2012. The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district. On 14th November 2012 Full Council resolved to approve the Publication Draft Core Strategy and the sustainability report for the purpose of submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Full Council also resolved on 14th November 2012 that a further period for representation be provided on pre-submission changes and any further representations received be submitted to the Secretary of State at the time the Publication Draft Core Strategy is submitted for independent examination.

As the Council have resolved to move the Publication Draft Core Strategy to the next stage of independent examination some weight can now be attached to the document and its contents recognising that the weight to be attached may be limited by outstanding representations which have been made which will be considered at the future examination.

8.2 In the interim period a number of the policies contained in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (“UDP”) have been ‘saved’. The Leeds UDP Review was adopted in 2006. The most relevant Policies in the adopted Leeds Unitary Development Plan are listed below: -

- UDP policy GP5 seeks to ensure all detailed planning considerations are resolved as part of the application process including the protection of local residents amenities.
- UDP policy BD6 seeks to ensure that all extensions and alterations to existing buildings respect the materials and design of the existing building and its context.
- UDP policy N25 seeks to ensure that boundaries of sites should be designed in a positive manner and be appropriate to the character of the area.
- UDP policy T2 seeks to ensure that new development should be served adequately by existing or programmed highways and by public transport, make adequate provision for cycle use and parking, and be within walking distance of local facilities.
- UDP Policy T24 seeks to ensure parking provision reflects the guidelines set out in UDP Appendix 9.

Relevant Supplementary Guidance:

8.3 Supplementary Planning Documents provides a more detailed explanation of how strategic policies of the Unitary Development Plan and Core Strategy can be practically implemented. The following SPDs are relevant and have been included in the Local Development Scheme, with the intention to retain these documents as 'guidance' for local planning purposes.

- Development of Self Contained Flats
- Neighbourhoods for Living

Government Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:

In addition to the Development Plan documents, the Coalition Government’s National Planning Policy Framework replaced more than 40 Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes in March 2012. Relevant sections include chapters 6 (housing) and 12 (historic environment).

9.0 MAIN ISSUES:

9.1 Having considered this application and representations, the main issues for consideration are thus:

1. Principle of change of use
2. Impact on visual amenity
3. Residential amenity
4. Highway Safety

5. Conclusion

10.0 APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

- 10.1 It is understood that the building was originally constructed in 1898 by the Leeds Industrial Co-Operative Society and used for storage and retail. Following the cessation of this use around the mid-20th Century it was then converted to a mixed use format comprising a residential unit, storage, office accommodation and a workshop for a manufacturer of metal items.
- 10.2 Most of these uses have now also ceased or will do so imminently and information has been supplied with the application indicating that the retail elements have been marketed for more than 12 months but have not attracted a tenant, most likely due to the backstreet location isolated from other commercial uses. It is therefore accepted that re-use for commercial purposes may not therefore be viable.
- 10.3 However the premises are located within a densely-populated area of traditional Victorian terraced redbrick properties, within 5-10 minutes walking distance of a number of high-frequency bus routes on Stanningley Road (including the 16, 72 and 4 routes, which run every 10 minutes), to employment uses on Armley Road and Canal Road, to leisure facilities at Cardigan Fields and to the Armley Town Street S2 Centre with its associated shops and facilities.
- 10.4 It is therefore considered to be a highly sustainable location, particularly suited to the car-free low-income households who are most likely to occupy the development. On balance therefore it is considered that the proposals for residential conversion are acceptable in principle.

Visual Amenity

- 10.5 The building is a prominent and attractive historic structure in a locality dominated by rather more austere mass housing. However it is not listed or located within a Conservation Area. Although it has suffered some less than sympathetic alterations including the replacement of the central shopfront with brick, addition of roller shutters and replacement of many original timber sashes with UPVC, the stone detailing, original timber shopfront and fascias and general proportions of the building survive. The applicant proposes to renovate the structure by retaining and repairing the surviving timber, rebuilding the central brick section with stone heads and sills and reinstating the full-height windows to the right-hand side of the façade.
- 10.6 The existing forecourt will be subdivided with attractive matching walling providing defensible space appropriate to the context of the area, which is dominated by small yard-fronted houses. It is considered that the proposals will not detract from the character of the premises and are appropriate to its surroundings, and as such are considered acceptable.

Amenity Considerations

- 10.7 Similarly there are no objections to the impact of the conversion on the basis of the amenity of existing or prospective residents. The sensitive elevations are the rear

(eastern) and side (northern) due to their proximity to terraced properties in Arley Grove and Aviary Road. There are to be no main windows to the rear and only one first floor living room window (using an existing opening) to the side. As such the risk of overlooking of surrounding houses is considered to be negligible. Similarly, as there are no extensions proposed there will be no overdominance associated with the development.

- 10.8 The building is typical of its period in terms of internal space and the conversion retains these generous proportions.
- 10.9 Four of the units will be provided with semi-defensible areas of hard surfaced amenity space to the front. This is in character with the local context, where yards and gardens, (if present and in common with much of Leeds) are generally located to the front of properties. However many surrounding houses lack amenity space altogether, opening straight onto the street or separated from it by a narrow strip suitable only for bin storage. Given this fact and the proximity of the site to extensive areas of public open space at Armley Park and adjacent to the Armley Mills Industrial Museum, it is not considered that it would be appropriate to insist upon private or communal amenity space for all the proposed flats.

Parking / Highways

- 10.10 The application has been objected to by local Ward Member Councillor Alison Lowe and brought to Panel at her request. The basis of the objection is that the proposal is a more intensive, high-density use of the building which will lead to on-street parking and associated congestion, obstruction and harm to highway safety due to the lack of provision within the curtilage. The effects of this will be exacerbated by high speeds and will be a particular problem within the vicinity of the shops where a bend reduces visibility.
- 10.11 Two comments have been received from the Highways officer, comprising a standard initial consultation followed by a more detailed response to concerns raised by Councillor Lowe and detailed above. The initial comment, dated December 10th, is supportive of the scheme subject to conditions to provide details of a) a visibility splay with boundary treatment no more than 1m in height at the junction of Aviary Road and Armley Lodge Road, and b) secure cycle parking within the curtilage to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. It is highlighted that the collection of uses which previously occupied the site would have generated some parking which could not be accommodated on site and that with adequate capacity available on-street, an objection would be difficult to justify.
- 10.12 The second comment elaborates on this by explaining that the existing office would require 5 spaces under current guidelines and the shop a further 3, and that the principle of on-street parking at this site was long-established. Furthermore, the last available data from 2001 showed that car ownership amongst occupiers of rented one and two-bedroom flats in Armley was extremely low (19% and 27% respectively). In addition to the two spaces provided within the curtilage, there are four on-street spaces along the Armley Lodge Rd frontage (previously adjacent to the forecourt) and four more on Arley Grove. Moreover, forward visibility around the bend mentioned in the objection is 54m which is suitable for this standard of road.
- 10.13 The Highways Officer recommends that the configuration of the flats be altered in order to allow surveillance of vehicles parked on Arley Grove from the rear of the building. However this would potentially introduce overlooking of adjacent houses to the detriment of residential amenity.

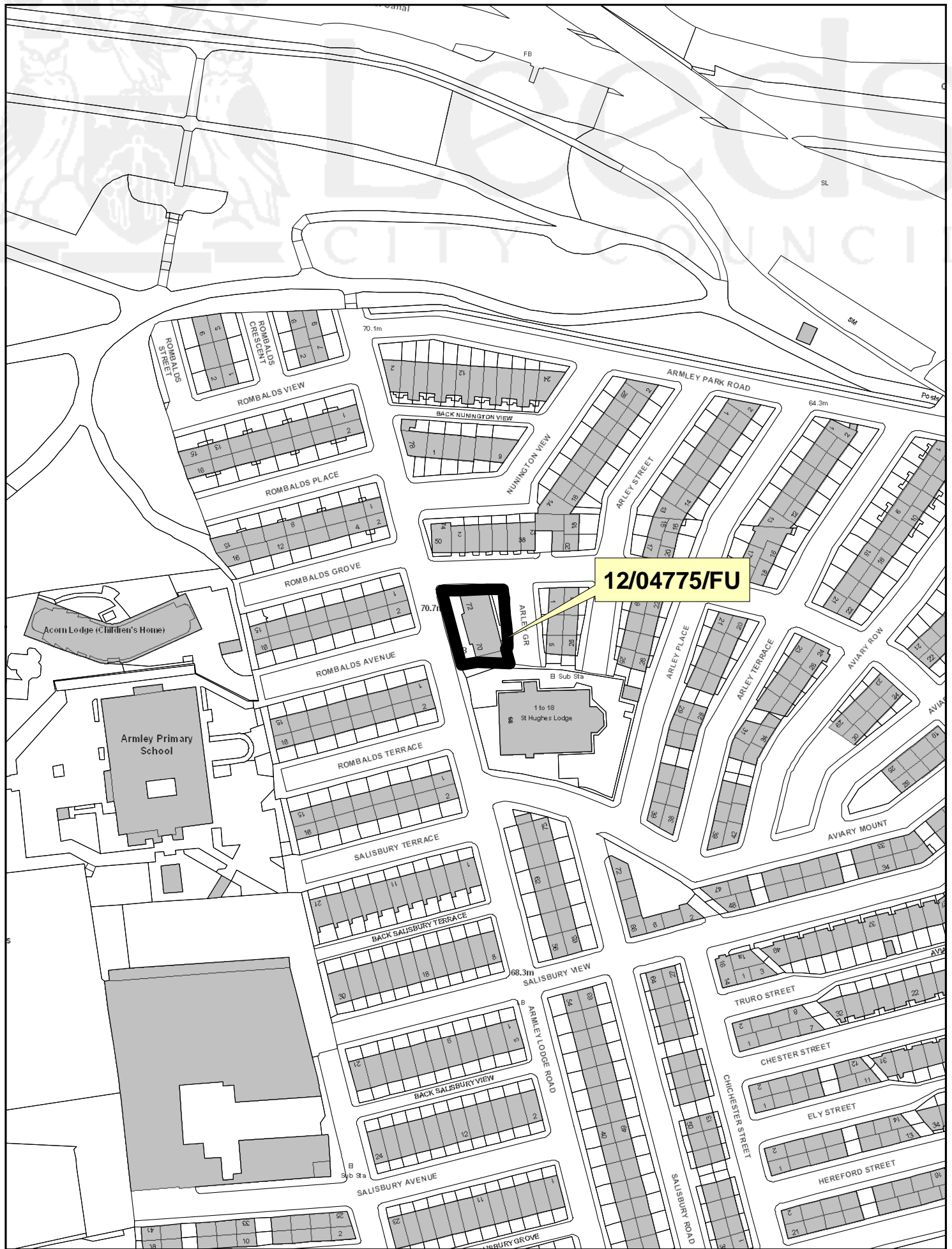
- 10.14 Similarly the relocation of the access to the upper flats to the rear elevation would prevent the re-use of the existing access door and stairwell. However there is space within the rear yard to accommodate secure cycle storage in the form of a shed or lockers, and a condition requiring details of this has been conditioned.
- 10.16 On balance, it is considered that due to a combination of its sustainable location, existing uses, low car ownership rates amongst the target demographic, availability of in curtilage and on-street car parking spaces, and promotion of alternative means of transport, the proposal will not introduce or exacerbate issues of highway safety or parking demand on the surrounding road network.

11.0 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 To conclude, it is considered that the proposals for the conversion and re-use of this building will safeguard its continued existence as an attractive landmark within the local area, whilst providing eight units of low-cost rented accommodation within an established residential area. Whilst the levels of off-street parking are below UDP guidelines it is considered that the intensity will not be significantly higher than the current mix of uses and that no harm to highway safety will arise as a result. The proposal is for these reasons recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

Background Papers

Application File 12/04775/FU



12/04775/FU

SOUTH AND WEST PLANS PANEL