



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 December 2025

by N Unwin BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/D2320/W/25/3374246

60 Pall Mall, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 2LE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Dean Parata against the decision of Chorley Borough Council.
 - The application ref is 25/00144/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed change of use from A1 (Retail) to C4 (House in Multiple Occupation - HMO) at Ground and First Floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the supply of business premises.

Reasons

3. The appeal site forms a two-storey property adjoining the highway. The ground floor of the property was last in use as a hairdressers. The appeal site is located within a Local Centre, as defined by Policy EP7 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 (2015) (Local Plan) which does not permit non-retail uses within District and Local Centres unless it can be shown that there is no demand for retail or commercial use. It goes on to require the demonstration of the lack of demand through the submission of an active 12-month marketing process showing that the property has been offered for sale on the open market at a realistic price and that no reasonable offers have been refused.
4. The appellant contends that the property was actively marketed for commercial use for seven months, ceasing when the appellant made an offer to purchase the property. They go on to say that marketing was conducted across two separate agents with visible site boards and online exposure, generating no viable commercial interest and that the property has been vacant throughout the planning process. The seven months is significantly below the 12 months required by Policy EP7 of the Local Plan. Further, there is little before me demonstrating the period of time the appeal site has been vacant for or evidence of the alleged marketing of the commercial unit. As such, the appellant has failed to demonstrate that there is no demand for retail or commercial use of the appeal site.
5. I noted a number of vacant buildings surrounding the appeal site, however I do not know how long these have been vacant and whether they are currently being marketed. As such, their presence carries limited weight in the determination of this appeal.

6. Whilst I acknowledge the narrow nature of the appeal property and the economic factors effecting small independent retail and service businesses, these do not in themselves preclude the appeal property from being used as a retail or commercial premises.
7. The appellant raises the notable number of similar businesses within the area, considering it a saturation of the local market. However, their presence demonstrates that there is a demand for such businesses within the area.
8. For the above reasons, the appeal development would result in the loss of a business premises. The proposal would therefore conflict with the relevant provisions of Policy EP7 of the Local Plan which resists non-retail uses within District and Local Centres unless it can be shown that there is no demand for retail or commercial use.

Other Matters

9. Whilst I accept that the proposal would result in the loss of a single commercial unit, this would not outweigh the conflict with Policy EP7 of the Local Plan.
10. The residents of the proposed HMO would contribute to the local economy and create pedestrian footfall. However, both are true of the existing commercial unit when in use and therefore this carries limited weight.
11. The proposal would contribute an additional dwelling to the existing housing stock within a highly sustainable location, supported by the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst I acknowledge the contribution small and medium sized sites can make to meeting the housing requirement of an area, given the small scale of the site and the creation of a single HMO, this benefit carries limited weight.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Unwin

INSPECTOR