expires 4/7

Application Number: ADC/0250/08 **Recommendation – REFUSE**

Site: 6 Fishersgate Terrace, Southwick

Proposal: Conversion of single storey detached dwelling to form 2no. 1-bed flats

The Application

6 Fishersgate Terrace is a detached single storey dwelling located on the south side of the A259. It sits between a two storey Public House to the east and a similar single storey building to the west which contains a further two residential units, all of which were once listed buildings but which are no longer. The site is on the edge of a steep drop to the harbour below where there are a number of commercial units at the foot of the drop.

It is proposed to convert the dwelling into two 1-bed flats, each containing an open plan lounge/kitchen. A new partition wall would be constructed internally and the rear outdoor amenity space would be divided between each unit. No off street parking is currently available and none is proposed.

Consultations and Representations

County Transport Planning Services – No objections. The proposed conversion of the property is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in traffic movements. Although the proposal may result in some additional on-street parking in roads in the vicinity of the property, this is considered unlikely to result in any highway safety issues.

In terms of transport, the property is situated in a sustainable location, near to Southwick town centre. Cycle parking should be included, if not already available. This must be secure, covered and be capable of storing at least one cycle per bedroom of the converted building.

Third Party Representations – 3 letters of objection received from the occupiers of 4 Fishersgate Terrace and 4-5 Nicholsons Wharf raising the following points:- retaining wall is structurally unsound and dangerous and poses a risk to those people working in units at foot of wall; it should be stabilised prior to any conversion works being carried out.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

West Sussex Structure Plan: LOC1, NE1, CH1, ERA1, DEV1, DEV4-5
Adur District Local Plan: AG1, AH5, AH9 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising:-
Development Control Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats' and No.4 'Flat Conversions'
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 'Housing' (DCLG 2006)

Planning Assessment

Policies

Structure Plan policies seek to protect and, where possible, enhance the character and distinctiveness of areas, requiring high standards of design, layout and construction (DEV1). The provision of more dwelling units would help meet the housing requirements of the Structure Plan (NE1) and for small households (Local Plan policy AH5).

Policy AH9 of the Local Plan states that the conversion of dwellinghouses into smaller self-contained units will be permitted providing that: access and car parking provision is acceptable; the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking or noise transmission through party walls; and the type of property concerned and the standard of accommodation to be provided accord to the adopted standards. It also states that the conversion of small family homes will not be permitted.

Development Control Standard No.4 'Flat Conversions' defines small family homes as being less than 100sqm internal floor area or 3 or less bedrooms. It states that the conversion of small family homes will not normally be permitted and that the effect on the character of the area (e.g. through loss of front garden to forecourt parking) will be an important consideration. It states that conversion of semi-detached or terraced dwellings is not favoured because of potential noise disturbance (e.g. from a proposed kitchen or living room adjoining a neighbouring bedroom). If this cannot be minimised by appropriate 'stacking' and side-by-side' layouts, the onus will be on the applicant to prove that adequate sound insulation measures can be provided. It also states that conversions should result in an acceptable amount of amenity space for each flat (minimum of 20sqm per flat).

PPS3 contains no specific guidance on flat conversions except for the general statement that "conversions of existing housing can provide an important source of new housing" (para 31). It advises LPAs to "take account of the need to deliver low cost market housing as part of the housing mix" (para 26). This is against the background of the overall objectives of delivering high quality, well-designed housing; a mix of housing, including tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households; sufficient quantity and improved choice; and locations close to jobs and facilities.

Character and Principle

The property has an internal floor area of approximately 64sqm and would not normally be considered suitable for conversion into flats as it is below the 100sqm specified in the Council's DC Standards for flat conversions. Its internal layout would also result in the bedroom of flat 2 being adjacent to the lounge of flat 1, which although covered by the Building Regulations is an

unsatisfactory situation which would be likely to result in some noise disturbance between the units.

Amenity Space

Policy AH9 requires flat conversions to meet adopted standards of accommodation, namely those set out in DC Standard No.4 'Flat Conversions'. Flat 1, at 35sqm, is below the minimum requirement for such accommodation (45sqm), as is flat 2 at 29sqm. Individual room sizes for flat 2 also fail to meet the minimum standards.

The building has limited outdoor space at the rear. This area is to be divided, resulting in an amenity space of less than 10sqm per property. This is half the required space as set out in the Council's Standards.

Consequently, it is considered that both flats will have an unacceptable standard of living accommodation and amenity space.

Parking and Access

No off street parking is available. However, the site is within a sustainable location and very close to a bus stop. Consequently, there is no objection to this application on the grounds of lack of car parking. However, the Highway Authority require secure, covered cycle parking to be provided for each flat and it is unlikely that sufficient space exists to meet this requirement.

Other Issues

Refuse storage would be provided at the rear or side of the building. This is considered to be acceptable.

Comments on the structural stability of the retaining wall are noted. This is a matter that would be covered by the Building Regulations. However, no major structural alterations are proposed to implement the conversion.

Recommendation

REFUSE for the following reason:-

1. H16R. Delete "and a potential car parking problem...the site"

Case Officer .....

Date 11/6/08