Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0414/24 **Recommendation: APPROVE**

Site: 21A Grove Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 9DQ

Proposal: Conversion of existing two flats back to single dwelling house with alterations to existing front door, side door and rear doors (21A and 21B Grove Road)

Date of site visit: 18/04/2024

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings
The site is located on the western side of Grove Road. The site contains a two-storey (with loft accommodation) semi-detached building in use as two flats.

The site is not within a conservation area and does not contain a listed building or structure. There are no trees protected by tree preservation orders that would be affected.

Proposal
The proposal is to convert the building back into a single dwellinghouse. External alterations include new bifold doors on the rear elevation, a new door on the side and a replacement door within the existing porch to match the original door.

Relevant Planning History:

10/0676/FULL: Installation of white PVCu replacement windows and doors together with enlargement of kitchen window in rear elevation, brick up kitchen door and provision of new front door to enclose porch.

Consultations:
West Sussex Country Council

Access
The proposal seeks to convert the existing 2 flats (1 x 1bed and 1 x 2bed) into a single residential dwelling. The property is served with an existing vehicular crossover (VCO) which has been in place for some time, there are no major changes proposed to the existing VCO however there appears the removal of a small portion of the applicants wall to facilitate improved access arrangements.
The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has reviewed data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period of the last five years. There have been no recorded injury accidents at the existing access with the public highway, onto Grove Road. There is no evidence to suggest that the access is operating unsafely, or that the proposal would exacerbate an existing safety concern.

Parking
The current parking layout allows for a single vehicle to park off road, this is currently assigned to the one bed flat. From consulting with the WSCC Parking Demand Calculator, it has been outlined that 3 parking spaces would be expected to serve the property in its current format as 2 flats.

The PDC also outlines that 3 parking spaces would be sufficient to serve the proposed dwelling. Based on this consideration, the demand would be unlikely to change as a result of the proposal. It is proposed that alterations will be made to the frontage, to provide additional hardstanding which will allow for a second parking provision. From measuring off the plans provided, there would be sufficient space within the frontage to accommodate for this and any overspill parking would likely be made up via on street parking provisions or from using more sustainable methods of transport as would currently be the case. The Local Planning Authority may wish to consider a condition sealing secure and covered cycle storage to serve the proposed dwelling to offer sustainable alternatives to the use of the car.

Conclusion

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 115), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal. If the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant planning consent the following condition would be advised:

Car parking space (details approved)
No part of the development shall be first occupied until the car parking has been constructed in accordance with the approved site plan. These spaces shall thereafter be retained at all times for their designated purpose.

Reason: To provide car-parking space for the use

Cycle parking
No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To provide alternative travel options to the use of the car in accordance with current sustainable transport policies.

Officer's response: There is sufficient space within the property for secure cycle parking. A compliance condition will be attached requiring that cycle parking is installed prior to occupation.

<u>Southern water:</u>
Foul and Surface Water Drainage

Southern Water requires a formal application for any new connection to the public foul sewer to be made by the applicant or developer.
To make an application visit Southern Water's Get Connected service: developerservices.southernwater.co.uk and please read our New Connections Charging Arrangements documents which are available on our website via the following link: southernwater.co.uk/developing-building/connection-charging-arrangements
The Council's technical staff and the relevant authority for land drainage consent should comment on the adequacy of the proposals to discharge surface water to the local watercourse.
It is possible that a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site. Therefore, should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site.

WSP (drainage comments)
Following a review of the submitted information, we have no objection on surface water grounds. Due to the site, size, location, and type of development we would recommend the approval of the application.

Environmental Health Public Health: No adverse comments

Environmental Health Private Sector Housing: No objection

Representations:
None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM1, DM5, DM15, DM18, DM20
National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)

Planning Assessment

Principle of development
There is No record of conversion but 2010 permission indicates the building was in two flats so the use of the building as two flats is likely lawful through passage of time.

Policy DM1 seeks to resist the loss of existing homes. The proposal would result in one less residential unit. The policy states that "Planning applications that result in the loss of residential accommodation will not be permitted unless one or more of the following exceptions apply". Of the outlined criteria the one most relevant is … "vi) applications for the conversion of flats or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) back to family sized homes will be considered on their merits taking account of other considerations including, for example, amenity considerations and evidence regarding the need for family homes".

It is noted that both existing units appear to meet the Technical Housing Standards therefore part iii) of the policy regarding improvements to meet minimum housing standards does not apply.

As set out in Worthing's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the trend for new dwellings has been for smaller units which "contributes to above average levels of overcrowding and constraints growth in family households". It is noted that there is a need for a mix of units and that 10-20% of market units should have four or more bedrooms.

In light of this, whilst there would technically be a net loss of 1 dwelling, there would be a net increase in the family housing stock, as the proposal would provide a good sized four or five bedroom family house, returning the property to its original use. This would be achieved through removing an internal wall resulting in a straightforward conversion helping to restore its original character. Therefore, on balance, the benefits in terms of reinstating a good sized family home and to the character of the area outweigh the loss, and the proposal is therefore acceptable in principle.

Visual Amenity

External changes are limited to alterations to the doors on the front, side and rear elevations. The removal of the UPVC front porch door is considered an improvement as it returns the building to its original state. The change to the side door is minor in nature and won't have an adverse appearance on the building or wider streetscene. The provision of doors to replace rear windows is also considered to be acceptable in design terms as they are won't be visible from the street and are of a size and design which complements the existing house.

Standard of accommodation

The proposal will reinstate a four or five bedroom home. The rooms are an acceptable size and the floorspace of the dwelling meets space standards.

Impact on neighbouring residents

The conversion back to one dwellinghouse is not considered to have an impact on neighbouring amenity as the increase in bedrooms is not considered likely to result in an intensification of the site which would be materially different to two units.

The doors to the rear are at ground floor and face directly into the garden. They are largely in the place of an existing opening therefore there is not considered to be any adverse impact in terms of increased overlooking.

Transport and highways

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Cycle parking will be required to be installed in the rear garden prior to occupation to encourage the use of more sustainable means or travel.

Drainage
The proposal does not result in a change in the vulnerability of the use on site and there is no increase in permeable area. The development is therefore acceptable in relation to policy DM20 which relates to flooding.

CIL
The development is not liable for CIL as no additional floorspace is being created.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Matching materials unless as specified on the approved plans
4. Car parking
5. Cycle parking

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Southern Water advice
New address
Garden room to require planning permission

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Louise Prew Date: 24/04/2024

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 24 April 2024