expired 25/3

Application Number: ADC/0035/08 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: 3 John Street, Shoreham-by-Sea

Proposal: Conversion of ground floor office to self-contained studio flat and addition of second floor (with mansard roof) to form maisonette on first and second floors.

The Application

3 John Street comprises a vacant commercial unit at ground floor with a one bed flat at first floor. It is a flat roofed, brick building which sits at the end of a row of similar buildings within the Conservation Area, the nearest of which is a fish and chip takeaway. The site is positioned along the side of Woolworths and there is a loading area adjacent to the site to the north. The Woolworths building rises behind the site with a taller tower element (serving a lift shaft?) immediately to the north, recessed behind the loading area. Further north, there is a terrace of residential properties which were built in 2002. These are 2 and a half storeys in height with the roofspace accommodation served by small lead roofed dormers. There are 2 and 3 storey houses on the opposite side of the road.

The proposal is to convert the commercial unit to a self contained studio flat and to extend at second floor level to create a two bedroom self contained maisonette. The extension would be set slightly back from the edge of the building behind a low parapet wall. A mansard roof would be formed served by three lead roofed dormers which would reflect the size of the new windows at ground and first floor. These new windows will replace the existing shopfront and first floor openings, which are unattractive at present, with timber sliding sash windows. The front elevation of the building is presently brickwork but this is to be rendered, to reflect other properties opposite.

No off street parking is proposed but none exists at present. The application has been amended since its initial submission to include secure bin and cycle storage on the ground floor.

Consultations and Representations

County Transport Planning Services - The property is situated in a sustainable location. The property is within walking distance of a range of services and public transport, hence there is no reliance as such on the use of the private car. This application therefore is in compliance with PPG13 and policy Dev4 of the West Sussex Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 in encouraging the use of sustainable transport. 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 Parties - ADCAG – No objection

1 letter received from occupier of 5 John Street - supports application as it will positively enhance the appearance of the conservation area; the retail unit has little positive effect on the area; new residential accommodation will inject vitality; opportunity exists to extend pavement on west side of John Street; materials should be natural slate and timber to match adjacent properties.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, NE1, NE2, CH1, CH4, ERA1, DEV1, DEV4, DEV5
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993 – 2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AB4, AH2, AH5 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance comprising Development Control Standard No.4 'Flat conversions'
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 'Housing' (DCLG 2006)
PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment'

Planning Assessment

Policies

Structure Plan policies give significant weight to making the best use of land through higher density development provided that the impact on the character of the area and environment is acceptable (LOC1, ERA1, CH1) and subject to policy DEV1 which requires high quality development. Policy DEV4 states (amongst other things) that development should not be permitted unless the travel needs it generates are met. DEV5 states that "Development should not be permitted unless the level of parking is compatible with the need to avoid environmental or safety problems and the need is to encourage walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport where this is or can be a realistic alternative". Within conservation areas the aim is to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, as set out in policy CH4.

Local Plan policy AH2 relates to new residential development (by way of infilling and redevelopment) and states that new dwellings should be designed so that their appearance, character and scale create a pleasant place in which to live and are in keeping with and enhance the existing local environment with particular attention being paid to architectural form, height, materials, density, layout of buildings and hard surfaced areas.

Government policy guidance in PPS3 encourages best use of urban land for housing development, particularly affordable housing and a mixture of types to create a balanced community, at higher densities (avoiding developments at less than 30 dwellings per hectare) and without rigid application of parking and amenity space standards. However, it also seeks to improve the quality and attractiveness of residential areas and urges imaginative designs and layouts which make more efficient and sustainable use of land without compromising the quality of the environment.

The development involves the loss of a commercial unit on the ground floor but the applicants' agent has confirmed that it has been available to let for some time without success due to its secondary position off the main High Street. There is no objection therefore to its loss for residential purposes.

Visual amenity

The proposed roof extension is well designed and will improve the appearance of the building, thereby positively enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. The materials for the extension were originally to be artificial slates and UPVC windows but it has been confirmed by the applicant's agent that natural slate and softwood windows painted white are to be used instead.

Residential amenity

The proposal will not have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties. The roof extension is set back from the roof edge and is sufficiently far from the nearest residential property to the north (4m to 5 John Street) to not cause any significant loss of light. The houses opposite will have additional windows facing them from a distance of 7.5m, which is slightly narrower than the usual front to front distance. However, it is not considered that these extra windows will unacceptably worsen the existing situation for those residents opposite.

The internal layout of the flats is acceptable and meets the guidelines in the Council's DC standards. The ground floor flat is a studio with a bedsitting room which is at least 30sqm in area. This space is served by two windows which face John Street to enable the room to receive adequate natural light. While the windows are close to the road and there is some concern over privacy for future occupants, it is considered that, on balance, the proposal makes good use of the property and provides an improved standard of accommodation from that previously proposed and refused in 2004 (SU/224/03).

No external amenity space is to be provided but, as there is no outside space available and the existing flat has no amenity space, it is not considered that a refusal on this ground alone is warranted.

Access and Parking

No off street parking is proposed and none is currently provided. The Highway Authority is satisfied that the property is in a sustainable town centre location and has no objection to the proposal subject to the provision of secure cycle parking facilities. These have now been provided within a store room on the ground floor, accessed by a separate entrance on to John Street which was originally going to be the entrance to the ground floor flat. Both flats will now be accessed from the southernmost entrance. This situation is acceptable.

The comments of a neighbour with regard to the possibility of extending the footway at this location are noted but it is not considered that a minor development of this nature warrants such works.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason

2PPi

Subject to

1. C1Ci
2. Notwithstanding the materials schedule shown on the submitted drawings, the external materials for the development hereby approved shall consist of natural roof slates and timber windows and doors, in accordance with samples to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
   Reason – To preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area having regard to policy AB4 of the Adur District Local Plan and policy CH4 of the West Sussex Structure Plan
3. C14Aii 2nd April 2008. Reason – No ADLP policy. DEV5 of the West Sussex Structure Plan

Case Officer P.Barnett.....

Date 7/4/08

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