Expires 26/3

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0036/09 **Recommendation - Application Permitted**

Site: **Kingdom Hall Wembley Gardens Lancing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Redevelopment with 6 one-bedroom dwellings with 3 parking spaces (accessed from east side of Wembley Gardens) (outline with access details)**

The Application

The site forms part of an extensive area of 'backland' development located between the rear of houses on the east side of Wembley Avenue and the west side of Annweir Avenue. It is served by an unadopted lane (named Wembley Gardens after the erection of flats at its southern end) which runs in a loop with the 'island' of development in the centre. The present application site comprises an L-shaped single-storey building used by the Jehovah's Witnesses as a meeting hall, together with associated car parking, in total covering an area of 0.05 hectares. The site is approximately 22m wide and 24m deep at its widest point.

The adjoining site to the north contains a timber building which was formerly occupied as a repertory hall but which is now vacant. Further north is the former Ardmore Nursery School which was granted planning permission to be redeveloped with 9 houses at the end of last year (ADC/0489/08).

The adjacent site to the south is used by the Kingston Bible Trust and further south is the former athletic club building which has been redeveloped with 6 one-bedroom terraced houses (L/147/03). This followed a previous application on that site for 6 one-bedroom flats which was refused on access grounds but subsequently allowed on appeal (L/191/01).

Outline permission exists on the present site for its redevelopment with 3No. one-bedroom and 3No. studio flats with 6 No. parking spaces (L/118/05). The permission included the access details, showing access from the lane to the east of the site via Wembley Avenue to the south. Indicative drawings showed a single storey building with rooms within the roofspace.

This application seeks to renew this consent but has amended the type of accommodation to be provided to 6No. one bedroom dwellings, rather than flats, with 3No. parking spaces. As before, the accommodation is within a single storey building within rooms in the roof void. Access is as previously approved.

Consultations and Representations

Consultations/Comments

West Sussex County Council – The Transport Planning Officer has no highway objection. Concerns were previously raised as to the inadequate access arrangements for Wembley Gardens from Wembley Ave. The access at the northern end is of reasonable width with good visibility, however the access at the southern end, is narrow, does not allow for 2 cars to pass and is also a PROW, and therefore conflicts may arise between vehicles and pedestrians. However, these concerns have been considered at appeal on other applications for development in Wembley Gardens and the appeal has been allowed by the Inspector.

The existing use for the site is as a meeting place for Jehovah's Witnesses and has been used for religious worship since 1959. There are currently 10 parking spaces on the site.

The parking spaces are located to the north of the site and will result in vehicles reversing into the highway and consideration should be given for a turning area. However, given the level of traffic in Wembley Gardens, reversing movements in this location would be unlikely to result in any highway safety problems.

The level of parking of 0.5 spaces per dwelling is below WSCC recommended parking standards and given the proximity of the site to the town centre, public transport and other local amenities, is acceptable to the highway authority. No TAD contribution is required after taking account of the existing use on the site.

Adur District Council – The Waste Strategy Manager has stated that this is a very difficult site to collect from. Adjacent roads should be properly resurfaced if bins are to be collected from the site.

The Environmental Health Officer has stated that a contaminated land assessment is required

County Fire Officer – Advises that the proposed development may need to include the provision of 1 fire hydrant connected to adequate supplies of water for fire fighting. It should also include suitable access for fire brigade vehicles and equipment.

Environment Agency – No objection

Southern Water – No objection to the connection of foul discharge to the existing sewer in view of the small scale of the development. Surface water should not be discharged to the sewer and the means of surface water disposal should be the subject of a planning condition.

Lancing Parish Council - No objections as the principle has been established

Third Parties – 4 letters of objection received from the occupiers of 53, 55, 59 and 73 Wembley Avenue –

- Inadequate parking
- Inadequate access road which is narrow and poorly surfaced
- Additional traffic
- Overdevelopment
- General noise and disturbance during construction
- Loss of privacy

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005) (saved policies): LOC1, NE1, NE11, CH1, ERA1, DEV1, DEV3-5
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993–2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AP4, AH2, ACS5 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003 and ADC 2004)
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 'Housing' (DCLG 2006)
PPG13 'Transport' (DLTR 2001)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is not identified for any particular use or development in the Local Plan. In principle, the proposed redevelopment for residential purposes accords with both Structure and Local Plan policies because it is within the built up area of Lancing. In order to meet the housing requirements of the Structure Plan, it is necessary that a significant proportion of new residential development takes place by way of unidentified sites such as this.

The above policies encourage redevelopment and infilling to help meet the demand for dwellinghouses suitable for small families, single persons, the elderly, and to make best use of urban land. This is encompassed in Structure Plan policy LOC1 but it is on the proviso that 'the impact on the character of the area and the environment, resources and assets of the County is acceptable".

Policy DEV1, entitled high quality development, states that development should not be permitted unless the construction, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are of high quality taking into account the need to, amongst other things, integrate with and where possible enhance adjoining land uses and minimise conflicts between land uses and activities; have regard to context including site characteristics, townscape/streetscape views into and out of the site and building styles/materials; give high priority to pedestrians and reduce dominance of cars; create a high quality socially-inclusive adaptable environment; protect and enhance biodiversity; ensure energy efficiency; and meet the needs of service providers.

Policy DEV4 states (amongst other things) that development should not be permitted unless the travel needs it generates are met; it achieves safe and convenient access by choice of means of travel; it encourages and enables an increase in walking and cycling; and the number and impact of motorised journeys is minimised. 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.

The relevant Local Plan policy AH2, related to housing development by way of infilling and redevelopment, expects development to be designed so that its appearance, character and scale create a pleasant place in which to live, is in keeping with and enhances the existing local environment with particular attention to the architectural form, height, materials, density and layout; respect for the natural features of the site, including trees, no unneighbourly effect on existing dwellings by loss of privacy, light, outlook or open amenity space; adequate access and parking arrangements and accordance with adopted standards (in this case the Council's DC Standard No. 2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats' 1996.)

Local Plan policy ACS5 states that the loss of an existing community facility will not be permitted.

Government policy in PPS3, in order to achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, improve affordability and create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities, generally encourages the maximisation of the use of previously developed land for housing development at higher densities (avoiding developments at less than 30 dwellings per hectare) and without rigid application of parking and amenity space standards. However, it is also states that "Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted" (para 13).

It states "Careful attention to design is particularly important where the chosen local strategy involves intensification of the existing urban fabric. More intensive development is not always appropriate. However, when well designed and built in the right location, it can enhance the character and quality of an area. Successful intensification need not mean high rise

development or low quality accommodation. "The density of existing development should not dictate that of new housing by stifling change or requiring replication of existing style or form. If done well, imaginative design and layout of new development can lead to a more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the local environment" (para 50).

Principle of development

The site lies within the built up area and is not identified for any particular use or development in the Local Plan. The proposal is for redevelopment of a 'brownfield' site as provided for in Structure and Local Plan policies and the site enjoys a previous planning consent for residential redevelopment.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character and there have been recent examples of the redevelopment of other 'island' sites in Wembley Gardens. There is no objection therefore to the principle of redevelopment of this site for housing purposes and it should be noted that outline permission has already been granted on this site for 6 flats.

Density, character and appearance

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character made up mainly of two-storey terraced houses. The proposed houses would be in a terraced form in a single, staggered block but would be single storey with a hipped roof. The submitted Design and Access Statement indicates that the building would have an eaves height of 2.2m and a ridge height of 7.2m. The rooms in the roof would be served by rooflights rather than dormers.

The houses are to be finished with brick elevations and tiled roofs to harmonise with the surrounding dwellings.

The dwellings are to be positioned towards the western edge of the site and oriented east-west with west facing amenity space. Vehicular access is from the east and 3 parking spaces are shown on the eastern boundary adjacent to a landscaped area and in front of a bin and cycle store.

The development represents a net density of approximately 120 dwellings per hectare which is well above the range of 30-50dph identified in PPG3. By comparison, it is higher than the development at Florence Cottages (100dph), the flats No's 1-10 Wembley Gardens (110dph), the recent approved development at Ardmore School (70dph) and the existing houses in Wembley and Annweir Avenues (approx 50dph).

Residential amenity

The proposed houses are not considered to have a harmful impact on the existing surrounding residential properties in Wembley Avenue, Annweir Avenue or Crabtree Lane. The buildings would be over 30m from the rear of the existing houses which is in excess of the Council's minimum standard of 22m distance between principal windows. With a height of 7.2m to the ridge

(compared with 8m for Florence Cottages), they would not be overbearing and there would not be unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight for the existing houses. The recently approved houses on the Ardmore site had a ridge height of 7.1m.

Communal bin and cycle storage is to be provided in front of the houses on the eastern side of the site. The site is accessed from a narrow and partly unsurfaced access road. The Council's Waste Strategy Manager has advised that the site is unsuitable for a refuse collection from the site without the road being resurfaced and it is likely therefore that future occupiers will be required to place their bins on Annweir Avenue on collection days. A similar arrangement exists for the occupiers of Florence Cottages. While the issue of resurfacing was raised with the applicant's agent (as has been agreed for the Ardmore site), there was no agreement to carry out such works. This is not considered to be a sufficient reason to withhold the granting of planning permission for the development.

It does not appear from the submitted indicative layout that any of the dwellings has a private garden. However, the application is outline only and does not include consideration of design or layout. It would quite straightforward to amend the layout at the reserved matters stage to provide more rear amenity space.

The Council does not have any amenity space standards for one-bedroom houses, although for flats, there is a standard of 20sqm. It is considered that the amount of private garden space will be adequate, particularly as there is the potential for more space than with the previous approved scheme.

Access and parking

The site is served by a narrow access lane which cannot easily accommodate two passing cars. It is also largely unmade on the western side but on the eastern side there is a tarmac surface from the south which stops just short of the site entrance. The appeal decision in 2001 for 6 flats (now Florence Cottages) concluded that there would not be a significant increase in traffic movements or unacceptable detriment to highway safety as a result of the development. This followed a permission granted by Committee for flats 1-10 Wembley Gardens at the southern end many years earlier. Permission has formerly been granted for flats on the Kingdom Hall site and at Ardmore Nursery School and this current proposal falls to be considered in a similar light.

Only 3 parking spaces are to be provided. The County Highways Officer has no objection to the proposal in view of the site's sustainable location. No TAD contribution is required in spite of there being a previous requirement for a contribution for this site. It appears that in 2005 the existing use of the site was not taken into account when calculating the likely contribution and this has been now been rectified.

With regard to fire brigade access, there was previously no objection to the redevelopment of this site from the County Fire Officer. The current comments refer to the need for there to be suitable access and a fire hydrant on site. Access was considered to be achievable at the time of the previous application and any other necessary fire measures would be put in place under other legislation, i.e. the Building Regulations.

Recommendation

The proposed development is within the built-up area and would help meet the need for additional housing without detracting from existing local urban environment. It can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the residential amenities of nearby properties and without detraction from highway safety. It would consequently not conflict with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AG3, AB25-27, AH2, AH5) and the West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (LOC1, NE1, CH1, ERA1, DEV1, DEV3-5)

Subject to:-

1. C1A (amended) delete "access"
2. C1Bi
3. C8Gii
4. C12Aii (amended) roof; building
5. C14H AH2, DEV1
6. C18N (amended) "proposed surface water drainage"
7. C18Ri

Case Officer..P. Barnett..... Date...10/3/09

Planning Services Manager..[signature] Date....10/3/09

Chair of DC Committee..C.A. Mills Date.....