Expiry Date - 07/03/2024

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1744/23 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: 50 Rugby Road Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Conversion of two flats back to one residential dwelling house.

Date of site visit: 24.04.2024

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a semi-detached property located on the north side of Rugby Road within an established residential suburb of West Worthing. The property is currently in use a 2no 1-bedroom flats, one each on the ground and first-floor. The dwelling is set back from the highway behind a soft-planted front garden enclosed by low boundary walls/fencing. A driveway to the East side of the dwelling leads to a detached garage building set back into a reasonable-sized rear garden.

Proposal

Permission is sought to revert the property to a single 3-bedroom dwelling house.

Relevant Planning History:

WB/0437/62 Alterations to convert single dwelling into 2 S/C flats. Permitted 19.06.1962.

Consultations:

WSCC: The Local Highway Authority has no objection, commenting:-

"The proposal does not alter the existing access or parking arrangements. The WSCC Parking Demand Calculator expects a minimum of 2 parking spaces would be required for a single dwelling of this size and location. Overspill parking could be accommodated on the street in this location which would likely be the case for any overspill parking associate with the 2 existing flats, given that the WSCC Calculator expects that the flats are likely to generate a parking demand of 2 spaces currently.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that the proposal would have a 'severe' impact on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not

contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (para 115), and there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal."

Southern Water:

Southern Water has provided a plan showing the position of an existing foul sewer within the site and has commented setting out the measures necessary to protect it from construction work.

A formal application for any new connection to the public sewer should be made by the developer.

The Council's Building Control section should be asked to comment on the adequacy of soakaways to dispose of surface water from the development.

WSP: No objection.

Adur and Worthing Councils:

Private Sector Housing: No objection.

Public Health: No objection in principle the following condition is recommended:-

Works of construction or demolition, including the use of plant and machinery, necessary for implementation of this consent shall be limited to the following times.

Monday - Friday 08:00 - 18:00 Hours
Saturday 09:00 - 13:00 Hours
Sundays and Bank Holidays no work permitted

Any temporary exception to these working hours shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority at least five days in advance of works commencing. The contractor shall notify the local residents in writing at least three days before any such works.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of the area.

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036 (WBC 2023): Policies:
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
SS1 (Spatial Strategy)
DM1 (Housing Mix)
DM2 (Housing Density)
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM15 (Sustainable Transport and Active Travel)

National Planning Policy Framework (DLUHC 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPD 'Space Standards' (WBC 2012)
CIL Charging Schedule (Aug 2021)

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

The Worthing Local Plan was adopted on 28th March 2023. Policy SS1 sets out the Housing supply over the period 2020-2036 and gives a total figure of 3672 (an annual target of 230 dwellings per annum).

Paragraph 76 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities are not required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing for decision-making purposes where:

a) The adopted plan is less than 5 years old; and
b) That adopted plan identified at least a five year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time that its examination concluded.

Paragraph 77 goes on to state that where there has been a significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, the supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer of 20% (moved forward from later in the Plan period).

The most recent housing trajectory and 5 year housing land supply for Worthing can be found in the Annual Monitoring Report 2022-23. Table 9 indicates the Five Year Supply measured against the adopted WLP annual target of 230 dwellings plus a 20% buffer, and demonstrates a 7 year supply of deliverable sites.

To maintain the supply of housing paragraph 79 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to monitor progress in building out sites with planning permission. Where the Housing Delivery test indicates delivery has fallen below 75% of the local planning authorities housing requirement over the previous three years, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, in addition to the requirement for an Action plan and 20% buffer.

The latest Housing Delivery Test was published in December 2023 and Worthing Borough Council scored 33%. Therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies as the delivery of housing was less than 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years.

The site is within a highly sustainable location with good access to public transport (buses and West Worthing rail station) and within walking distance of a range of local facilities including nearby Goring Road District Shopping Centre.

The proposal would result in the net loss of a dwelling unit. WLP Policy DM1(e) states that planning applications that result in the loss of residential accommodation will not be permitted unless one or more of a number of listed exceptions apply. The conversion of flats back to family sized homes will be considered on their merits taking account of other considerations including amenity considerations and the need for family homes.

The submitted Design and Access Statement states the Applicant bought the property (i.e. both flats) initially so that they could live upstairs in a SC flat and the mother could live downstairs in a SC unit. The front and rear gardens are shared, although there is no direct access from the first-floor flat.

The most recent SHMA was undertaken in 2020 and identifies a need for all different sizes of homes in the market and social housing sectors for Worthing. However the need for 3-bedroom family housing is 35-40% compared to 5-15% for 1-bedroom flats.

Visual Amenity

The only external change would be infilling the existing kitchen door opening on the GF East side elevation, and would have no adverse impacts for visual amenity providing the work is carried out using brickwork to match the existing.

Residential Amenity – Future Occupiers

The proposed single dwelling would have a GIA of 112sqm and 2no double and one single bedroom, exceeding the Government's minimum standard of 93sqm for a 3-bedroom, 5-person dwelling.

The rear garden is a mixture of lawn and patio/concrete surfacing roughly 85sqm in area which meets the minimum external space standard of 85sqm for a small semi (3 bed max).

Residential Amenity - Neighbours

There would be no harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. The removal of the first-floor living room (which adjoins the party wall) would likely result in an improvement for the attached neighbour.

The condition recommended by the EHO with protect the attached neighbour from noise during the conversion works.

Access and Highways

The LHA comments refer to 1no existing onsite parking space, although there is also an additional space on the drive behind the gates.

There are no highway safety concerns relating to this proposal.

It is accepted the existing garage building is likely to be too small to accommodate a modern sized vehicle, but could be used for cycle storage.

Sustainable Development

The proposal involves the re-use of existing building stock which is inherently sustainable.

CIL

No additional floor area is created by the proposed development and therefore no CIL is payable.

Conclusion

The reversion of this property to a single dwelling would be consistent with the character of this and nearby roads which predominantly consist of semi-detached and detached mid-20C family housing. The property is well-placed within easy walking distance of a local primary school, and other local services and facilities in nearby Goring Road District Shopping Centre. A good standard of family housing would be provided for the future occupiers whereas the standard of the existing flat accommodation is unknown. As the flats were created in the early 1960s it is doubtful the conversion works would meet modern day insulation standards (particularly with regard to sound attenuation between the flat units).

Notwithstanding the proposal results in the net loss of a dwelling unit, it is considered this is outweighed by the creation of a 3-bedroom family dwelling which would also meet an identified need, and be consistent with the established suburban character of this locality.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Matching materials
4. Hours of construction

Informative

Pro-Active No Amendment.

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 25.04.2024

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 25 April 2024