expires 12/1

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0545/08 **Recommendation - Application Permitted**

Site: **3 John Street Shoreham-by-Sea West Sussex BN43 5DL**

Proposal: **Conversion of groundfloor office to self-contained studio flat (retaining flat above) with alterations to ground and first-floor fenestration (revised scheme)**

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 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.

Planning permission was granted in April 2008 for the conversion of the commercial unit to a self contained studio flat and an extension at second floor level to create a two bedroom self contained maisonette (ADC/0035/08). This current application seeks only to convert the ground floor to form a self contained studio flat and to retain the existing first floor flat. A roof extension is no longer included.

New windows will replace the existing shopfront and first floor openings, which are unattractive at present, with upvc 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 includes secure bin and cycle storage on the ground floor.

Consultations and Representations

Consultations/Comments

Adur District Council – The Environmental Health Officer has objected to the application due to the lack of defensible space at the entrance to the property that opens directly onto the road. He is also concerned as to whether there

will be sufficient natural lighting provided for the ground floor flat from the two small windows shown. (NB the plans are almost identical to that previously approved under ADC/0035/08 and, consequently, these comments are not considered to be sustainable in planning terms)

Third Parties

ADCAG – No objection. This is an improvement

Shoreham Society – Object to the application as the size and character of the studio flat is potentially a low standard of accommodation and a retrograde step which will not enhance the housing stock except in terms of numbers. The site would better host a single unit. The elevations are crude and, if possible, worse than what exists. Some effort should be made to recognise that the site is within a Conservation Area.

1 letter received from the occupier of 5 John Street supporting the application subject to the front doors being in timber. Comments that the development offers the opportunity to extend the footpath from No.5 to the High Street.

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

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.

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.

The development involves the loss of a commercial unit on the ground floor but the applicants' agent has previously 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 (reflected in the previous consent being granted earlier in 2008).

Visual amenity

The works to render the building and to replace the windows is considered to improve the appearance of the building and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The materials are indicated on the drawings as being UPVC windows and doors but it is considered that softwood painted white should be used instead, as was previously agreed with the applicant and secured by condition on ADC/0035/08. Timber is a more appropriate material in the Conservation Area.

Residential amenity

The proposal will not have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties. 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 first floor flat is identical to existing and there are no justifiable planning grounds to object despite being smaller than the Council's standards for 1 bed flats. The studio flat on the ground floor has a slightly different access arrangement and internal layout to that previously approved but the overall floor area is almost identical. Consequently, while there have been objections to the standard of accommodation to be provided, it has already been approved at this property, albeit in a slightly different form. It is therefore considered that the present objections are unsustainable and the proposal is acceptable.

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 was satisfied that the property is in a sustainable town centre location and had no objection to the previous proposal subject to the provision of secure cycle parking facilities. These are shown to be 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 and Design and Access Statement, the external materials for the development hereby approved shall consist of 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

Case Officer..... Date.....17/12/08

Planning Services Manager..... Date....22/12/08

Chair of Development Control Committee..... Date....5/01/08