Statement of Case for:

Site Address: 74 Underdown Road, Southwick, Brighton, West Sussex, BN42 4HL

LPA Reference: AWDM/1546/21

Applicant: Mr Simon Ritchie

Date: 6th December 2021



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The Site and Surroundings



The Site

The property comprises one of a pair of semi-detached character houses with rendered elevations under a tiled roof. They are built to an attractive double height bay fronted design to the front.

To the rear, full width first floor dormers go across the back of both properties, these have tile hung elevations and beyond this there is a two storey outrigger projection, which is part of the original construction of the property. This houses the kitchen and utility room and beyond this ground floor extensions, common to both properties, provide a dining and living area and access to the rear garden.

The property has a very long private rear garden and space for car parking to the front.

The original pattern of development to Underdown Road has been eroded over the years and there is now a considerable variation in building form, mass and styling, and this is accentuated by a varied palette of material finishes.

This variation is particularly apparent to the north side of this pair of properties where there are two more modern infill developments completely out of character with the streetscene.

The property is in an existing built-up area of the City where the Council should encourage upgrading of existing housing stock such as this proposal.

It is in an accessible and sustainable location close to all local amenities and transport links.

The Proposal

Is for the erection of a second floor roof extension over the existing two storey flat roof outrigger.

This proposed extension provides a flat roof addition, which will integrate with the existing rear dormer to make innovative use of the space above the existing two storey outrigger.

The proposal should be considered in conjunction with an identical application on No. 72 Underdown Road, so as to provide a seamless well-integrated extension design for both properties.

Reasons For Refusal

The Local Planning Authority have given the following reasons for refusal.

The proposed second floor extension due to its height, bulk, scale, design and use of materials will result in an incongruous and unsympathetic form of development which will be detrimental to the character and residential amenities of the local environment. It would set a precedent for further development which would cumulatively have a severely harmful impact thereby conflicting with Policy 15 of the Adur Local Plan.

The original pattern of development to this part of Underdown Road has been eroded over the years with more modern infill developments.

The road now has a mix of architectural styles with no particular local distinctiveness. There is also a varied mix of materials, including plain brickwork, tile hanging and render.

Also, over the years many of the properties have been extended at the rear, again in a variety of styles and materials.

The scale of the proposal within its urban context and pattern of development of adjoining sites, will have no adverse impact upon the character of the local area and not be visible from the Underdown Road streetscene.

The well-integrated design would appear as coordinated and cohesive integration with the host property, particularly when considered in conjunction with the application for No. 72 Underdown Road, which proposes an identical extension that will fit seamlessly together to moderate the effect on the apparent scale of the building, so as to appear as a cohesive and well-integrated design that will be visually attractive in terms of appearance and make a positive contribution to the standard of architecture in the area.

As shown on the Google images copied below, there is no particular uniformity of cohesion to the existing rear projections and extensions in this part of Underdown Road.





It is not considered that the proposal will have any adverse effect upon the residential amenity of adjacent properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing, loss of sunlight or daylight by virtue of this proposal.

It is noted that there have been no neighbour objections to the proposal, indicating that the neighbouring owners do not share the Council's views that this proposal would be detrimental to the character and residential amenities of the local environment.

In their Decision Notice, the Council state that the proposal would set a precedent for further development, which could cumulatively have a severely harmful impact, however, all applications should be considered on their individual merits and the Council have the powers to regulate any further development proposals in the area. None of the adjacent properties are identical in design to the pair at No's. 72 & 74 Underdown Road.

The proposal provides an innovative design solution to introduce modern architecture that will blend well with the existing property and provide a study/home office, which will add to the adaptability of the existing accommodation. It will also add to the sustainability of the property by providing a room that could be used as a home office, which would support flexible working patterns, which are vital to the nation's economic recovery post Covid.

Paragraph 130(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments optimise the potential of the

site to accommodate development and create places that safe, inclusive and accessible with a high standard for existing and future users.

In summary, we consider that the pattern of development and visual amenities of the area will not be adversely affected by the proposals.
There will be no detrimental impacts upon neighbouring properties, the local highway network or any other material planning considerations.

Local Planning Policies

The Council have stated that the proposal is contrary to Policy 15 of the Adur Local Plan 2017 and I would like to comment upon this policy as follows.

Policy 15: Quality of the Built Environment and Public Realm

This policy states as follows.

Development should be of a high architectural quality and respect and enhance the character of the site, and the prevailing character of the area, in terms of proportion, form, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, scale, materials, detailed design features and landscaping.

The proposal utilises the space above the two storey flat roofed outrigger to provide an extension that will integrate well with the existing second storey dormer. The roof height of the extension will be the same as the dormer and main house ridge height. Its form therefore would be directly integrated with the existing property and the design of the new extension would result in a significant visual improvement to the rear of the property.

Although the extension would change the appearance of the existing dwelling at the rear, the resulting scale and mass of the house will be appropriate for its siting and relationship with neighbouring properties.

There is clearly no definable form of development to the rear of the properties in this part of Underdown Road. The integrated design would appear a coordinated, cohesive

integration with the host property, which would retain its prominence and the extension would have a subservient appearance.

The size and siting of the extension means that it will have no direct adverse effect upon the amenities of adjoining properties, in terms of loss of sunlight, daylight or overlooking.

The proposal provides a well-designed and innovative solution to providing additional accommodation at the property.

It is considered that the proposal is compliant with the aims and guidelines of this policy.

National Design Guide

This states that well designed homes and buildings are unobtrusive and well-integrated into their neighbourhoods, and they should be well designed, functional, accessible and sustainable, providing internal environments and external spaces that promote health and wellbeing of their users.

It is considered that the proposal is compliant with the aims and guidelines of the National Design Guide as set out above.

National Planning Policy Framework

The Government's revised NPPF was published on the July 2021 and is now a material consideration in all planning applications.

I set out below the particular sections of the Framework that I consider appropriate to this development.

Section 2: Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of

sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 8 states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

> *a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
>
> *b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
>
> *c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

<u>Economic</u>

Economically the development will add vitality to the local community and economy.

It is considered that the construction activities associated with the development could potentially generate employment opportunities for the local community and have associated benefits for services and suppliers. In the longer term the development

could also support the local economy in terms of the use of local shops, services and facilities and potentially result in a new investment in the locality.

The new extension will provide a room suitable for home office working, which will support flexible working patterns that are vital for the nation's economic recovery.

The proposal satisfies the economic dimension of sustainable development.

Social

The site is situated in a highly sustainable and accessible location close to good transport links. Local shopping, schooling, medical and recreation facilities are all available within the immediate vicinity.

The proposal will provide good quality internal and external environments for the occupiers, which will contribute to promoting the user's health and wellbeing.

It will add well to the housing mix in the area.

The site's accessible location and the provision of a home office enhances the proposals sustainability by minimising the potential for car use.

It can be considered that the proposal satisfies the social dimension of sustainable development.

Environmental

The proposal will not adversely affect any wildlife habitats or the general biodiversity of the site. The proposal will not harm the local environment in any way.

No trees or landscape features will be affected by the proposal.

With the new extension being built to modern day Building Regulations, the overall energy efficiency of the property will be increased.

It is considered that the proposal will comply with the environmental role.

Paragraph 10 states that so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a ***presumption in favour of sustainable development*** *(paragraph 11).*

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Section 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The proposal is considered to be sustainable development in terms of transport, location, construction, the local economy and the local environment, and will contribute positively to socially inclusive communities.

Considering Development Proposals

Paragraph 110 states that in assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

The proposal will not affect the existing parking arrangements at the property, which will continue as existing.

Section 11: Making Effective Use of Land

Paragraph 119 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

The proposal makes efficient use of the space above the existing two storey outrigger to accommodate the development as proposed.

The new layout will provide a higher standard of accommodation and improve the living conditions for existing and future occupiers.

Section 12 Achieving Well-Designed Places

Paragraph 126 states that creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

In accordance with the guidelines set out in the National Design Guide it is considered that the proposal will provide high quality internal and external layouts for occupiers, supporting their health and wellbeing. The design is functional, accessible and sustainable and will integrate well into the existing urban environment and generally improve the standard of architecture in the area.

The proposal provides an innovative solution to providing additional adaptable accommodation at the property.

As set out in this statement it is considered that this can be achieved without adversely effecting neighbour residential amenities.

Paragraph 130 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- *Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.*

In compliance with the guidance set out in the National Design Guide it is considered that the proposal is a functional, accessible and sustainable development.

The well-integrated design will provide accommodation which is adaptable for present day and future living requirements. Appearance is sympathetic and well-integrated with the host property, all providing a cohesive design that will make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

Habitats and Biodiversity

Paragraph 174 states that sites should protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.

The proposal will not adversely affect any wildlife habitats or the biodiversity of the site.

The proposal will have no adverse impact upon the local environment and will provide a more energy efficient home.

These Framework Policies emphasise the importance of inclusive design which functions well for the lifetime of the development creating attractive and comfortable places to live. They also emphasise the importance of sustainable development.

The golden thread running through the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and it is considered that this is a highly sustainable development proposal.

Sustainability

The sustainability features provided by this development include the following:

- ✓ Site waste during construction will be kept to a minimum, with regular waste collections to be made from site by specialist contractors.

- ✓ The rear garden areas give scope for areas to grow food and space for home composting.

- ✓ Providing energy efficient lighting.

- ✓ The provision of a room suitable for home office working will potentially reduce the need for car use/use of public transport.

- ✓ The proposal will positively contribute to the aims of socially inclusive communities.

- ✓ All building materials sourced locally. Materials used will be those that have low embodied energy and materials that offer enhanced durability. All timber from certified sustainable sources.

- ✓ The site is in an accessible and sustainable location close to local transport links and services.

Conclusion

This statement sets out the appellant's grounds of appeal and rebuttal of the Council's reasons for refusal.

The proposal is considered to be sustainable development by achieving the three overarching objectives in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposal is considered to be sustainable development in relation to the local economy, local environment, location, transport and construction, and will make a positive contribution to socially inclusive communities.

The proposal is also considered to be compliant with the guidelines of Policy 15 of the Adur Local Plan 2017.

I would therefore respectfully ask the Inspector to allow the appeal.