Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1623/24 Recommendation – Approve

Site: St Peters Place, Western Road, Sompting

Proposal: Proposed additional storey of residential accommodation to existing building to create 5no. 2-bedroom flats. Provision of additional car parking spaces, cycle store, bin store and landscaping.

Date of site visit: 14 January 2025

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The site comprises a three storey T-shaped block of flats known as St Peter's Place on the east side of Western Road. It lies close to the bridge over the railway line, which runs to the north, and is adjacent to the Lancing Business Park to the east. Immediately north of the site is an area of garaging and commercial uses. There are dwellings to the south and west. The existing building has a shallow pitched roof.

It is proposed to construct an additional floor (4th storey) on the whole building to create 5no. 2 bedroom flats (resulting in a total of 20 flats). The new extension would be flat roofed but has been designed to mimic the existing facade and window arrangement. Render, brick and white fenestration is proposed to match existing, with new contemporary detailing including metal parapet coping, recessed brick panels and soldier courses.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/1202/21 - Demolition of existing garages and construction of a 2 storey commercial building (Use Class E(g)) comprising 6no. units with associated car parking, visitor parking , cycle spaces and landscaping and bin store. Retention of existing flat block to the south and provision of additional car parking spaces for existing flats as previously approved under AWDM/0300/20 - approved

AWDM/0300/20 - Full Planning Application for the demolition of existing garages and the erection of 18no. 1-bedroom apartments (including 30% affordable) within a 3-storey building with associated car parking and landscaping and PV panels on flat roof. Retention of existing flat block to the south and provision of additional car parking spaces for existing flats - approved

AWDM/0276/13 - Remove tile hanging from southern elevation of southern block and from western elevation of northern block and replace with white render - approved

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The **Highways Authority 1st response**: The access arrangements from St Peter's Place (a cul-de-sac) are to remain as existing – 2 access points; 'in' and 'out'. An additional 4 vehicular parking spaces are to be provided, an increase from 11 to 15, along with improvements to the cycle parking provision.
The current level of parking of 11 spaces per 15 dwellings is below the standard required. An additional 5 dwellings will create an additional demand for which 4 additional spaces have been provided. Whilst the proposal will result in a marginal increase in the overall provision, it remains below recommendations. Is any information available on the current parking demand for the site? Has consideration been given to the possibility of additional parking?
It is unlikely the Highway Authority would object to the proposal given the small increase, however additional information regarding current parking demand is required

2nd response: No objection subject to conditions. Satisfied that the parking provision has been considered by the applicant and sustainable travel has been prioritised i.e. cycle parking spaces over any additional car parking spaces. It is also accepted that the PBZ4 (0.9 spaces per dwelling) is more representative of the conditions within the location of the site. Lancing and East Worthing railway stations are located within a 9 minute cycle ride of the site. The site is also close to the 700 Coastrider bus route.
The proposed standard of 0.73 spaces per dwelling is only marginally below the existing provision of 0.75 spaces per dwelling. There are also options for overspill parking on- street in the immediate area

Adur and Worthing Councils: Public Health: No objections subject to CMP and hours of work conditions

WSP Drainage: No objection on surface water grounds subject to conditions

Sompting Parish Council: The Council has no objection in principle, but is concerned that this should not set a precedent for 4 storey development in Sompting and this is just site specific. We would also suggest that an order of restricted times of work be placed in the contract.

Brighton City Airport: No safeguarding objection. Crane advice informative.

Representations

5 objections received from the occupiers of 47 and 48 Western Road, a unit at Lancing Business Park, and an address in Worthing:

- I'm not directly against the proposal and welcome improvements in the area that benefit our general housing needs, however I have concerns about the dust that will be generated in this development.
- I'm directly opposite the proposed area running a food production site. My largest concern is my exterior refrigeration condenser as excessive dust and related contaminants in the air will result in them not cooling correctly or running efficiently as the filter becomes blocked.

- I would like to know how this will be managed and what can be done if the site does cause issues to my business as a result of my concerns.
- Adding more flats means more cars to an already congested road. There is not enough parking for the residents in the block as it stands with regular occurrence of cars parked on the pavement leaving no room for pedestrians or wheelchair users. The street is already over congested, noisy and busy with articulated lorries and trucks accessing the industrial estate.
- Additional height to the building will block light and the residents will be overlooking our front bedroom.
- This development would have a significant negative impact on the area and quality of life for residents
- Increased congestion and traffic: The additional flats would lead to more vehicles on already busy roads, creating further delays and safety concerns for pedestrians and drivers alike.
- Reduced parking availability: The influx of new residents and visitors would exacerbate the current parking shortage, causing further strain on local streets.
- Increased noise levels: Construction work and the added population would increase noise pollution in what is currently a relatively peaceful neighbourhood.
- Blocked light and privacy: The proposed height of the building would overshadow nearby homes, blocking natural light and intruding on the privacy of existing residents.
- More residential units close to B2 industrial estate. Soundproofing will be required.

Letter received from Lancing Business Park BID, not objecting, but asking that access is maintained to Commerce Way units and that building materials and vehicles do not obstruct access. Adequate car parking for residents should be provided. Dust management measures must be in place and noise reduced.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 2, 15, 18, 19, 20, 22, 28, 34, 36
'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Management Standard No.1 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'; No.2 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'
Sustainable Energy SPD (August 2019)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).
National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)
Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (DCLG 2015)

Planning Assessment

Principle

In December 2024, the Government published an updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024). This reintroduced requirements for local planning authorities to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, regardless of the age of the adopted plan.

The Adur Local Plan was adopted on 14th December 2017. Policy 3: Housing Provision makes provision for a minimum of 3,718 net additional homes in the period 2011 to 2032, equivalent to 177 dwellings per annum. As Adur District adopted its Local Plan more than 5 years ago the Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement uses a housing requirement based on the local housing need that is calculated by the standard methodology set out in the PPG. This is currently 558 dwellings per annum for Adur.

In 2018, the Housing Delivery Test was introduced against which housing delivery is measured. If housing delivery is below 85% of the housing requirement over the previous three years, a 20% buffer must be applied. The Housing Delivery Test 2023 (covering the monitoring periods 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23), published December 2024, indicates that Adur delivered 81% of its requirement. As a consequence, the presumption in favour of sustainable development no longer applies; an Action Plan will be prepared (to be published by the end of June 2025), and in calculating the five-year housing land supply, a 20% buffer must be added. It must be noted that the HDT position has improved with the previous test result (December 2023) being 72%.

The most recent 5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YRHLS) (2024-2029) position for Adur as at 01/04/2024 demonstrates that a total of 2,139 homes are deliverable within this period, equating to 3.2 years of housing land supply against the housing requirement figure (as set by the Standard Methodology figure) of 558 dwellings per annum plus a 20% buffer = 670 dwellings per annum.

Given that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 Year Housing Land Supply of deliverable housing sites, this means that for decision taking, paragraph 11 d) of the NPPF applies which states:

‘where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.’

The impacts are assessed below.

The site lies within the built up area and is not allocated for any particular use or development. In such areas, development is generally acceptable in principle, subject to development management considerations. The relevant issues in this case are the effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential

occupiers, the effect on the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings and any parking implications.

Visual amenity

Permission was previously granted for a three storey, flat-roofed building immediately to the north (AWDM/0300/20), although that permission has now lapsed. However, the provision of a flat roof in this location was accepted then and it is not considered that a flat roof on St Peter's Place will appear out of character. The building was originally flat-roofed until the late 1980s.

The addition of an extra floor will increase the overall height of the building by approximately 1m (there will be a greater increase where the hip of the roof is being raised to a vertical wall) but such an increase will not be excessive as it will be replacing the existing pitched roof.

The top floor is not being set back but in this case it is not considered that a set back is necessary. The continuation of the form, design and appearance of the building with the new floor is considered to work well and the overall increase in scale and height is not therefore considered to be of undue concern in this case.

Plant is shown on the roof which will sit above the parapet and which may be visible in longer views. However, the plant is shown to be positioned towards the centre of the roof, set back from the edge, which will help to minimise its visual intrusiveness.

Residential amenity

In terms of the impact on existing residential properties, the building is approximately 28m to the east of bungalows in Western Road and 22m north of the bungalow at the entrance to St Peter's Place (48 Western Road). Those properties to the west are separated by a busy road and the separation distance is considered to be acceptable in terms of privacy and outlook, particularly as the new flats will face towards the public frontage of those properties. The bungalow to the south is closer but the flats will face the frontage of the bungalow which is already exposed to traffic entering St Peter's Place and the industrial estate. The bungalow is also angled away from St Peter's Place, minimising the impact on its light and privacy. The flats are to the north so there will be no loss of sunlight and the angle of the bungalows to the North West will allow afternoon and evening light to continue to reach them.

New windows will face towards the front of the bungalows as referred to above, serving bedrooms and living areas. However, at the height and angle involved, it is not considered to result in significantly worse overlooking than that which currently occurs from the existing building.

For the proposed residents the flats meet or exceed the national standard of 61sqm for a 2 bed 3 person flat. No external amenity area is to be provided but this is the same for the existing flats and is not considered to be a

sufficient reason to refuse the application. Access to open space is available nearby at Brooklands Park and the beach.

The site abuts an industrial estate and the flats are shown to have smaller windows on the east elevation facing the estate than on the west side. The main living rooms are on the west side. Upgraded acoustic glazing can be provided and it is considered that this should be secured by condition so that the amenity and living environment of future residents is acceptable.

The issue of dust from construction affecting nearby businesses (and residents) can be controlled by way of a Construction Management Plan.

Highways and parking

There are currently 11 parking spaces serving the existing 15 flats. This equates to a ratio of 0.73 spaces per flat. The proposal would see an additional 4 parking spaces provided for the 5 new flats, resulting in a ratio of 0.75 spaces per unit. 20 secure cycle parking spaces are to be provided in a new store.

WSCC Highways asked for more justification for the parking figures and the applicant's transport consultant responded as follows:

"*The comments note that we are providing a number of spaces 'below the standard required'. Para 5.2 of the published guidance notes 'in general, the choice of Parking Behaviour Zone (PBZ) should correspond to the location of the development. However, if the location is not regarded as typical of the PBZ; for example, sites near transport hubs, then consideration can be given to using a different PBZ that more closely relates to the location of the development'. The published guidance therefore acknowledges that there can be some flexibility in their application rather than applying a 'standard'.*

The Transport Report noted that the published guidance could produce an excessive supply of car parking spaces as the site was, in my view, more reflective of the adjacent PBZ. At paras 6.3 to 6.5 we show that PBZ 1, where the site is located, is predominantly rural. The application site is at the far south in this PBZ 1, and adjacent to PBZ 4. PBZ 1 suggests a parking provision of 1.5 per dwelling, whereas PBZ 4 has a provision of 0.9. Quite a considerable variation. We then tested the likely parking demand by reviewing the current provision, which was 11 spaces for the 15 flats. With this ratio of 0.73 spaces per dwelling there is no evidence that there is a parking problem on local roads. There may be occasions when the parking demand fluctuates from this ratio, for example visitors may add to the demand. However, the location of the site does not lend itself to injudicious parking on local streets. Indeed we have been working on various proposals at this site since November 2018, just over six years now and have never observed any form of parking on local streets that would give me a concern. My personal observations of the site over this six year period are that there is usually some spare capacity within the allocated parking areas. This would suggest that the ratio of 0.73 spaces per dwelling was adequate to meet the demand.

As per the final sentence in the middle paragraph of the LHA comments we have considered more parking but took the view that the provision for sustainable modes of transport was more important. With some sympathetic designing of the site we have been able to include a full complement of cycle parking spaces, where there is currently none, and retained some respectable green space. You'll recall that I did not think that the small risk of one or two cars intermittently needing to find somewhere else to park justified the removal for the cycling facilities.

I think that we have struck a sensible balance between the provision of car parking, which slightly increases the ratio of spaces to dwellings to 0.75, and the provision of access to sustainable transport options in the form of top quality cycle parking."

The site is considered to be sustainably located and is reasonably close to railway stations as well as bus routes. Following the receipt of the justification above, WSCC Highways are satisfied that the level of parking provision is acceptable and there are no highway grounds to refuse the application.

BNG and Landscaping

The proposal is not exempt from BNG as there is a reduction in the amount of green space around the building in order to provide a revised car parking layout.

The habitats within the site are modified grassland, introduced shrub, individual trees and developed land. The landscaping scheme proposes planting 6no. trees on site plus new hedging, but in order to achieve a net gain of 10%, additional units will need to be purchased through an offsite provider and this can be controlled by condition. The metric shows that 0.0710 habitat units are required to meet the target.

The reduction in the grassed areas around the building is not considered to have a significant amenity impact. The improvement of the parking layout will benefit residents (a vehicle was observed at the time of the site visit being parked on part of the grassed area) while the new landscaping will help to maintain a soft edge to the building.

Further biodiversity enhancements are proposed in the form of green roofs for the bike and bin stores.

Energy and Sustainability

ASHPs and PV panels are to be accommodated on the roof. Details will be secured by condition.

Flood Risk/Drainage

The Council's drainage consultant has no objection to the proposal on surface water grounds, subject to the submission of a detailed scheme prior to commencement.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard 3 year time limit
3. CMP to include dust management
4. Hours of work
5. Acoustic protection and ventilation
6. Surface water drainage details to be agreed
7. Surface water drainage maintenance to be agreed
8. Details of PV and ASHP
9. Landscaping details
10. Development shall not commence unless and until a Biodiversity Net Gain Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
11. Parking
12. Cycle store

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

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Crane advice
3. Street naming and numbering
4. BNG

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 16 April 2025

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 22/04/2025