Expiry Date - 14/06/2011

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS ASSESSMENT SHEET

Application No: 11/0215/FULL	Recommendation – Refuse Application
Site	44 Christchurch Road Worthing West Sussex BN11 1JA
Proposal:	Conversion and alterations of existing house to create 4 flats. Demolition of existing garage.

Date of Site Visit: 3rd June 2011

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional Neighbours Notified (List Addresses): N

Site and Surroundings & Details of Proposal

No. 44 Christchurch Road is a 2-storey semi-detached single dwelling with an attached garage on its south side and a single-storey flat-roofed extension to the rear part. It lies in the northern part of the town centre, within a residential area consisting of a mix of flats and single dwellings in detached and semi-detached properties, originating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Permission is sought to convert the property into four flats comprising two flats on the ground floor and two flats on the first floor, arranged as 3 x 1-bedroom flats and 1 x 2-bedroom flat utilising the existing floor space in the property.
To implement the proposal, the existing garage at the side of the property would be demolished to provide side access to the rear garden and to form a small patio for Unit 1 on the ground floor. A pair of patio doors and windows would be formed at ground floor level on the rear elevation serving Unit 2, and two new windows would be formed at first floor level on the rear elevation, replacing an existing window, serving Unit 3. These would be completed in PVCu sections and detailing to match the existing windows. A non-original canopy over the front door of the property would be removed.

Applicant's Design and Access Statement

1. *Description of site and proposal*

The application site is located on the east side of Christchurch Road, Worthing and comprises a two-storey semi-detached house. At ground floor, there is a single-storey extension to the rear part of the property and a single storey garage set to the front.

The application proposes to convert the property into 4 flats within the existing floor space, plus minor alterations at the rear and to front porch. The flats would be laid out as follows:

Shared main entrance door leading to ground floor front Unit 1: living room/kitchen, 1 x double bedroom, shower room, small patio to the side;
Ground floor rear Unit 2: separate entrance to the side, 2 x double bedrooms, living room/kitchen, bathroom, and access to the rear garden;
First floor rear Unit 3: 1 x double bedroom, living room/kitchen, bathroom;
First floor front Unit 4: 1 x double bedroom, lounge with separate kitchen, bathroom.

2. *Planning Policies*

Local Plan policies relevant to the proposal are **BE1** Building Design, **TR9** – Parking, **H13** – Conversions; **H18** – Protection of amenity. Relevant LDF policies **Policy 8** – Getting the right mix of homes, **Policy 16** – Built Environment and Design, **Policy 19** – Sustainable Travel.

Design - See section 7 below

Housing

The application will result in 3 additional dwellings, 4 in total, 1 x 2 bed and 3 x 1 bed. The ground floor 2 bed unit has 2 double bedrooms and sole access to the rear garden and will thus be suitable for a family dwelling.

The site is very close to Worthing town centre, the preferred location for higher density housing development.

Amenity

There will be no impact on the amenity of the residents of adjoining properties.

Parking

There is space on the site for one off-street parking space, using the area in front of the removed garage and the existing crossover. The site falls within the central controlled parking zone and there are currently 7 residents on the waiting list for parking permits in the area (confirmed with the Parking Shop in early March 2011). New residents awaiting permits can purchase parking vouchers.

3. *Use*

No change – residential

4. *Amount*

As noted above, the application proposes 4 residential units in total

5. *Layout*

The garage will be removed to facilitate side access to the rear garden and to allow the unit 1 to have a small side patio. Internally, the space available has been used efficiently to create 4 generously proportioned flats.

6. *Scale*

Not applicable

7. *Landscaping*

The area to the side of the property will be laid to permeable paviours. Timber fences and gates will be erected to demarcate the patio area at the side.

8. *Appearance*

The only alterations will be new patio doors and windows in the existing window openings at the ground floor rear, blocking up of one window opening at first floor rear and two new window openings. All will match existing upvc windows.

The existing, non-original canopy over the front door will be removed to reveal the original plaster mouldings

Overall, the alterations will improve the appearance of this building by the removal of unattractive non-original features (garage, canopy) and sympathetic alterations.

9. *Vehicular and transport access*

The site is in a central and highly sustainable location, very close to public transport networks and within walking distance of Worthing town centre. The A259 and A27 are within easy reach.

10. *Inclusive access*

The two ground floor flats would be accessible for people with mobility difficulties.

11. *Conclusion*

This application will result in a small but nonetheless valuable contribution to the town's housing stock, in a highly sustainable location and retains a family unit at ground floor. The proposed alterations will improve the appearance of the property and will have a positive impact on the street scene.

Therefore, in the absence of any material considerations that indicate otherwise, the application should be ***approved*** in accordance with S39 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Relevant Consultation Responses

Planning Policy

Main policies (Submission Core Strategy)
Policy 7 Meeting Housing Need
Policy 8 Getting the right mix of homes
Policy 9 Existing Housing stock
Policy 16 Built Environment and Design

The proposal is for the conversion of a single dwelling to 4 flats, comprising 3 x 1-bedroom flats and 1 x 2-bedroom flat. Policies 8 and 9 in the Worthing Core Strategy address the shortage of family homes in Worthing based on evidence set out in the Strategic Market Housing Assessment. The main objective of Policy 8 Housing Mix is to redress the imbalance in the housing mix that has dominated recent new development, namely smaller flats and the need for more family accommodation.

Policy 9 existing housing stock seeks to ensure the retention of the existing housing stock and the policy's objective is to retain existing family housing. However, consideration would be given to the loss of existing housing stock if it results in a net increase in family housing stock.

There will be an addition to the housing stock as a result of the proposed conversion thus complying with Policy 7, but this would not comply with Policy 9 of the Core Strategy, as there is no increase in family housing. The evidence set out in the Core Strategy and the Strategic Housing Land Assessment makes it clear that Worthing has enough housing sites from identified sites that are available, suitable and achievable now which will meet the town's housing requirements up to 2026. There is therefore no overt pressure on the Council to grant planning permissions in order to meet its housing targets.

Representations

None

Human Rights:

Article 8 (Right to Respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application. It is accepted that the proposal, if refused, would have some impact on the applicant's Rights. However, it is considered that the harm caused by the development outweighs these and that in the public interest the application should be refused. Accordingly it is considered that this decision complies with the Human Rights Act 1998, with regard to Article 8 and Article 1

Planning Assessment

The application site is located within the built up area wherein there is no objection in principle to the provision of new dwellings subject to them integrating satisfactorily with the established character of the area, not resulting in any detriment to neighbours amenity and achieving compliance with all other relevant policies.

In this instance, the application proposes the conversion of an existing semi-detached single dwelling into four flats, with alterations to implement the use.

The Worthing Core Strategy specifies that the Borough already has a high proportion of flats (approximately 40% of housing stock) which is well above the national average. There is a general requirement for smaller sized family accommodation, such as that at 44 Christchurch Road, as this is a smaller sized family dwelling. The Borough is meeting its housing land allocation and is protected to meet this allocation over the next several years. There is therefore no requirement to provide additional small dwellings in the form of flats. The objective of Policy 9 is therefore to retain existing family housing in the Borough.

As such the loss of this family dwelling is contrary to Policy 9 of the Core Strategy.

Having regard to the characteristics of the property and the very limited outdoor amenity space/garden that it has, the proposed development would result in the loss of small size dwelling suitable for family accommodation which there is a high demand for and a limited supply of within the Borough which already includes a high proportion of small flats. The use of the building as four flats would result in the loss of this accommodation and result in the provision of additional flat based accommodation which is already over-represented within the Borough. The proposal is therefore contrary to the aims and terms of Policy 9 of the Worthing Core Strategy 2011, and is unacceptable.

Refusal is recommended, on the above grounds.

In other regards no objections are raised. The new windows at first floor level on the rear elevation would not significantly alter the appearance of the building from Hertford Road to the east, nor would they result in loss of privacy to any neighbouring property to an unacceptable degree. The works necessary to provide access to the side and rear of the property and the removal of the garage and canopy, as well as the new windows and patio doors are sympathetic changes which comply with Policy 16 of the Core Strategy, subject to matching materials and finishes being used in their construction. Issues such as access, noise, refuse disposal and the design details could be addressed by way of conditions were the application recommended for approval.

No parking provision is available to serve the proposal, due to the constraints of the site. The proposal requires four car parking spaces to be provided to accord with parking standards, which cannot be met. However, given the characteristics of the area where most properties have no off-street parking facilities but where many flats already exist, it is

considered that in relation to Policy TR9 of the Local Plan, so long as covered cycle parking provision is made within the site at a rate of one cycle space per flat (requiring a minimum of four cycle parking bays, space for which is available within the site) there would not be sufficient parking grounds for refusal for the proposal.

Notwithstanding this, the proposal is contrary to Policy 9 of the Core Strategy and is unacceptable.

Recommendation

Refuse for the following reason(s)

1. Having regard to the characteristics of the property and the very limited outdoor amenity space/garden that it has, the proposed development would result in the loss of a small size dwelling suitable for family accommodation which there is a high demand for and a limited supply of within the Borough, which already includes a high proportion of small flats. The use of the building as four flats would result in the loss of this accommodation and result in the provision of additional flat based accommodation which is already over-represented within the Borough, contrary to the aims and terms of Policy 9 of the Worthing Core Strategy 2011.

Reasons for Recommendation: N/A

Is recommendation contrary to letter (s) of representation? (No/~~Yes~~/NA

DELEGATED

Case Officer
Sign..... [redacted] .....Date.....9/8/11.....

Authorising Officer
Sign..... [redacted] .....Date.....23/8/11.....