Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1296/12 Recommendation – Approve

Site: First Floor 7 Brunswick Road Shoreham-By-Sea West Sussex

Proposal: Conversion of first-floor from offices (class B1) and ancillary storage (class A1) to self-contained 1-bedroom flat and creation of studio flat within new second-floor mansard roof plus first-floor verandah at rear. (7-9 Brunswick Road)

Date of site visit:

Neighbours checked: Y/N

Additional neighbour notifications: Y/N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a flat-roofed, 1930's, 2-storey building located within Shoreham Conservation Area. The ground-floor is currently in use as a retail shop and sandwich bar. The first-floor has a self-contained entrance and is currently vacant, having last been used for offices and storage. There is no external curtilage.

Permission is sought to convert the existing first-floor into a 1-bedroom flat together with the creation of a 1-bedroom flat on the second-floor within a new mansard roof. A verandah with lean-to pitched roof is proposed at the rear at first-floor, involving alterations to a single-storey flat-roofed element of the existing building. The flats would be accessed from the existing entrance on Brunswick Road. The proposed verandah would be a 'common area' for use by the occupiers of the flats as bin and bike storage.

Relevant site history

Planning permission was refused under AWDM/0063/12 for the conversion of the existing first-floor into 2 studio flats with first-floor rear extension on the grounds:-

The proposed conversion of the upper floors from ancillary storage and offices into two studio flats would result in a substandard level of accommodation and would be overdevelopment of the site, to the detriment of the character of the area and the residential amenities of future occupiers. The proposal is therefore contrary to saved policy AH9 of the Adur District Local Plan and Good Practice Guidance Note 'Internal Space Standards for New Homes'.

The current application arises as a result of discussions with officers following the above refusal.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The Highway Authority comments as follows:-

"West Sussex County Council was consulted previously on Highway Matters for this location under planning application AWDM/0063/12. This application sought the change of use and extension to create three dwellings. While no objections were raised from the highways perspective the application was refused by the LPA regarding overdevelopment of the site. This application now seeks change of use and extension to create two dwellings.

This application is considered less intensive than that previously proposed and therefore no concerns would be raised form the Highways Authority. I would ask that WSCC comments regarding AWDM/0063/12 dated 18/04/2012 are once again used when determining this application. It should be noted that the advised cycle parking provision would now be 2 cycles (1 per flat). The actual details of the cycle parking facilities should be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

From the information supplied there would be no highway safety concerns raised to this proposal.

If the LPA are minded to grant planning consent a condition securing cycle parking should be included."

It has subsequently been confirmed that no TAD contribution is sought.

Adur & Worthing Councils: The Contaminated Land Officer has recommended a pre-cautionary condition relating to possible contamination.

Conservation Advisory Group: Approve

Representations: No representations have been received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AH2, AS1, AE5, AE5, AB4 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising:
Development Control Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'
Good Practice Guidance Note 'Internal Space Standards for New Homes'
South East Plan (GOSE 2009): CC1, CC6, BE1
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site is subject to saved Local Plan policies AS1, AE5 and AE6. Policy AS1 allows for shopping and food and drink uses within the town centre and states that development involving the loss of existing shopping provision will not be permitted if the proposal is likely to detract from the character and

vitality of the area. Policies AE5 and AE6 are permissive in allowing for office uses (Classes A2 and B1) but do not seek to resist the loss of existing office uses.

South East Plan policy RE3 states that accessible and well-located commercial sites should be retained where there is a good prospect of employment. However, this policy carries little weight following the Secretary of State's stated intention that to abolish the RSS. Draft Policy 24 of the emerging Local Plan states that the loss of land last used for business purposes will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the premises is genuinely redundant and unlikely to be re-used in the plan period for commercial purposes. It states that consideration should be given to the length of time the property has remained vacant, the demand for the size and type of employment premises in the area, other employment-generating uses or retention of a proportion of employment space. The applicant states, within the Design and Access Statement, that the first-floor has been vacant for 2 years.

Saved Local Plan policy AH2 allows for new residential development by way of infilling or redevelopment within the built-up area, providing the site is not allocated for any other purpose. Policy AH5 supports the provision of a supply of dwelling units for smaller households such as single persons, small families and the elderly.

The NPPF states that in drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites.

The loss of the existing employment uses did not form part of the reason for refusing the earlier scheme (AWDM/0063/12 refers), and having regard to the limited weight attached to both the approved South East Plan and emerging draft Local Plan, it is considered refusal on this ground would be difficult to justify. The proposal would contribute towards meeting housing need within the District and is considered acceptable subject to a satisfactory standard of accommodation being provided for future occupiers, there being no adverse impacts on the amenities of existing occupiers, the development preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Shoreham Conservation Area and there being no adverse implications for highway safety.

Visual amenity

The existing 2-storey building has a flat roof with a parapet. The ground-floor shop fronts are modern in appearance, below a deep fascia. There is a corbel remaining on the southern shopfront, but the one on the north side is missing. The upper floor consists of red brickwork at the front, with pebble dash to the sides and rear. The single-storey rear element is rendered with a felt, flat roof. The building has no particular architectural merit or historic importance but sits unobtrusively within the street scene which is made up of buildings of differing heights and roof forms, albeit of a similarly modest scale. There is no objection in principle to a mansard roof on this building. It would be positioned 150mm behind the parapet, and would protrude 2.55m above the flat roof. There is a discrepancy on the submitted drawings with the section detail

showing the angle of the mansard walls at 70º whilst the elevation drawing shows the angle at 75º. The advice of the Conservation Architect is that a 70º angle would be more in-keeping with a traditional mansard roof, and it is considered this detail could be the subject of a condition of planning permission. A more traditional double-pitched form would have been preferred, but the applicant was not agreeable to a revision and it is considered this detail could not be insisted upon, particularly given the modern form of the mansard roof to The Vinery (to the south). The mansard would be covered in natural slate. There would be two flat-roofed dormer windows at the front aligned with the first-floor windows below. These would be finished with lead cheeks. Whilst the proportions of the dormer windows are considered satisfactory, it is considered their construction detail should be the subject of a planning condition. Two dormers are also proposed at the rear. These do not align with the new first-floor windows below, although a degree of visual separation would be created by the verandah.

The first-floor rear verandah would be marginally inset from the north flank wall and would appear as a subordinate element on the rear elevation. It is important that the detail of the verandah is carried out to a high standard, using good quality materials, in view of its relationship to the setting of the listed St Mary's House to the rear (west).

Residential amenities of Future Occupiers

The Council's Internal Standards for New Dwellings are set out in the Good Practice Guidance Note adopted in 2010.

The first-floor flat would have an internal floor area of 54 sqm which marginally exceeds the minimum standard for a 1-bedroom flat. The bedroom (13.5 sqm) and living/cooking/eating area (25.6 sqm) also meets the minimum standard required.

The second-floor flat would have an internal floor area of 38.7 sqm which is well below the minimum standard of 51 sqm for a 1-bedroom flat. The minimum floor area for a studio flat is 32 sqm, but the arrangement of the accommodation on either side of a central staircase does not lend itself to studio accommodation. The proposed bedroom (10.5 sqm) is 1.5 sqm below the minimum area required for a 1-bedroom flat and the proposed living/cooking/eating area (20.8 sqm) is 1.2 sqm below the minimum area required for a 1-bedroom flat. Both the bedroom and living/cooking/eating area comprise regular-shaped rooms, having a good standard of natural daylight. The first-floor flat would have an outlook east (onto Brunswick Road) and north. The second-floor flat would have an eastern aspect. All the windows shown on the west elevation are shown as obscurely glazed.

Whereas in the refused scheme, provision for refuse storage was shown within an internal cupboard which was considered unacceptable; outdoor refuse storage space is now shown on the first-floor verandah at the rear. [This would require refuse sacks being put outside on collection day, as wheelie bins would be impractical.] The verandah is shown as a common area, but could just as easily be sub-divided to enable each flat occupier to have a dedicated space for the storage of refuse and bikes and a small amenity area. This could be dealt with as a condition of planning permission.

Effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers

The site backs onto a walled garden containing a number of mature trees (within the CA but not subject to a TPO) belonging to St Mary's House, St Marys Road. The latter is a grade II Listed building, originally a dwelling, but used for many years as offices and a dental practice. To the west of the garden is St Mary's Close, a residential cul-de-sac. There is a separation distance of some 40m between the site and the nearest residential dwelling in St Mary's Close.

Adjoining the site to the north is a small area of public realm with seating, and beyond is a vehicle access to the car park to Shoreham Post Office, which wraps round behind the seating area.

Attached to the south is 5/5A Brunswick Road, consisting of retail-related uses on the ground floor and offices above.

Opposite the site in Brunswick Road are shops, some with residential flats above.

The windows in the west elevation are shown as obscurely glazed. However, anyone standing on the first-floor verandah would be able to directly overlook the garden belonging to St Mary's House and at an angle towards the rear of St Mary's House itself (14 metres). The mature trees in the garden would provide good screening when in leaf. Bearing in mind the St Mary's House (and garden) is not in residential use, and the verandah does not in itself comprise habitable accommodation, it is considered the effect of overlooking from the verandah would not be unacceptable in this case.

The 'bulk' of the proposed mansard roof would have an enclosing effect on the outlook from the front of the properties on the east side of Brunswick Road, and result in increased overshadowing in the afternoon/evening, but not to an unacceptable degree.

Accessibility and parking

There is no ground-floor curtilage, but provision is made for cycle storage on the first-floor verandah. This is will necessitate bikes having to be carried up a flight of stairs. Whilst clearly not ideal, this is considered preferable to there being no cycle storage provision and is considered satisfactory for a small or single person household in this town centre environment.

Other Issues

The EHO has recommended a pre-cautionary contamination condition, but this is considered unnecessary as no groundworks are proposed.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason(s):-

The proposed development would help meet a need for additional housing in the District and would not detract from the character or appearance of the Shoreham Conservation Area. It can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the amenities of neighbouring properties and without detraction from highway safety. It would consequently not conflict with the saved policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH2, AH5, AB4) or the policies of the South East Plan (CC1, CC6, BE1, BE6).

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year time limit
2. Materials to be agreed.
3. Mansard walls to be carried out at 70º pitch as shown on drawing 900/R2
4. Agree construction detail of dormer window and verandah
5. Obscure glaze windows in west elevation
6. Agree and implement provision for cycle storage
7. Agree and implement provision for refuse storage
8. No cables, flues, meter boxes on elevation fronting Brunswick Road
9. Permission relates to approved plans:
   Site Location Plan Date Valid: 31 Oct 2012
   Block Plan Date Valid: 31 Oct 2012
   Drawing No: 9622/1D Date Valid: 31 Oct 2012
   Drawing No: 900/R2 Section Detail Date Valid: 31 Oct 2012

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern at pre-application and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 20 Dec 2012

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 20 December 2012