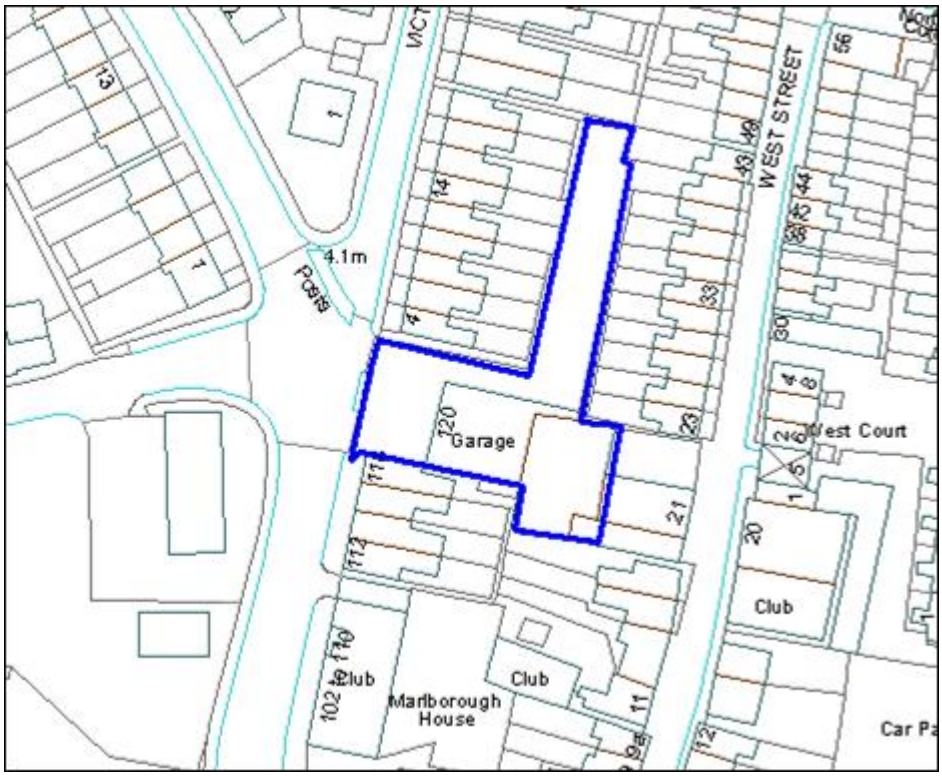
Expiry Date - 03/11/2010

6

Application Number: AWDM/0945/11 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: 120 High Street, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5DB

Proposal: External air-conditioning units, ventilation outlets and additional door for veterinary surgery



Not to Scale Reproduced from OS mapping with the permission of HMSO © Crown Copyright Licence No LA100024321

The Application

The application relates to the rear part of the former Ballamy's garage which has recently been converted to a pet shop at the front with a veterinary surgery behind, following the grant of planning permission ADC/0478/10. The surgery is at the rear of the premises with its entrance doors facing northwards onto the car park which runs between the rear of houses in West Street and Victoria Road. The part of the former garage site fronting West Street has now been developed with 3 new houses.

Retrospective permission is sought for:-

- 2 air-conditioning units, each measuring 0.8m high, 0.97m wide and 0.3m deep, protected by security cages have been installed just above ground level on the face of the boundary wall on the eastern side of the car park, to the north of the surgery.

- 2 louvres for ventilation ducts have been installed above the surgery entrance doors on the north elevation.

- A new access door has been formed in the east elevation serving a narrow piece of land in the north-east corner of the site bounded by the surgery building and the flint wall with the twitten leading to West Street. The side of the building in this area was the applicant's preferred site for the a/c units but it was considered that this would have been too close to the rear of houses in West Street and the units were therefore re-sited to their present position.

Consultations and Representations

Adur & Worthing Councils: The Environmental Health Officer has no objection or concerns about noise. The units face towards Ropetackle and the sound from the units is directional, with the bulk of the fan sound energy heading the way the units face. The wall immediately behind the unit also reflects sound towards Ropetackle. Such units are usually mounted on anti-vibration mountings in order that the casing does not rattle. The combination of these mounts and the stiffness of the wall will minimise any vibration through the wall, and at the very least the wall will provide 10dB sound reduction, possibly more. Add the attenuation expected over distance and it is fair to conclude that these units will have very little impact, if any, on the nearest houses (in West Street).

Third Parties: 4 letters have been received from the residents of No's 8 and 18 Victoria Road and No's 15 and 23 West Street, objecting for the following reasons:-

- Noise from machinery, particularly at night, is inappropriate in a residential area
- No evidence to suggest that the noise levels associated with the previous car workshop use were in excess of noise levels now expected from a/c units
- The units may not be visible from West Street properties but they will be heard, particularly when starting and stopping
- They should be relocated to the front of the building
- Access door could lead to disturbance and loss of privacy if staff use the area for breaks or for storing rubbish
- Light above access door shines into adjoining properties
- Proposed illuminated signage above entrance will also be visible from adjoining properties

[NB. Prior to the submission of the application, letters were also received from the residents of No's 23, 25, 27, 29, 31 and 35 West Street objecting as follows:-

- works being carried on without permission, including new door to access area at rear and wiring for light
- the original position of the a/c units adjacent to the north side of the building is unneighbourly, being close to houses and gardens
- noise, light and odour pollution
- noise disturbance from staff using new door/using area for cigarette breaks
- loss of privacy
- void area could be used as bin store and attract vermin
- Loss of property value]

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AB4
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' and Practice Guidance 'Planning for Town Centres' (DCLG 2009)

PPS5 ‘Planning for the Historic Environment’ and Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (DCLG 2010)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The Local Plan shows that the application site is within the town centre but, in common with the adjacent residential area to the north and east, it is not identified for any particular use or development. The block of shops to the south is within the area subject to policies AS1 and AE5-6 (shopping, food/drink, and office purposes) which refer to there being no loss of amenity to nearby residents and acceptable access and on-site parking arrangements.

PPS4 promotes economic growth and the vitality and viability of town centres as important places for communities. New economic growth and development of main town centre uses is to be focused in existing centres, with the aim of offering a wide range of services in an attractive and safe environment. The Government encourages competition between retailers and enhanced consumer choice through the provision of innovative and efficient shopping and services which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community. The historic and architectural heritage of centres is to be conserved and, where appropriate enhanced to provide a sense of place and a focus for the community (as also reflected in PPS5).

Visual Amenity

The veterinary surgery falls just within the Conservation Area and the a/c units and vents are on its boundary.

The air-conditioning units are functional in their appearance but are affixed to the boundary wall and, because of their siting, do not cause harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. They are too far from the A283 to affect public views from the street significantly but they will be visible to users of the veterinary surgery and its car park and from the rear of the houses in Victoria Road. This siting is the position that results in the least potential noise to adjoining residents and is not considered to cause serious harm to the visual amenities of the locality.

The ducts on the north face of the building above the entrance doors are flush with the wall of the building and face towards the car park. They are not considered to be unduly unsightly or harmful.

The new door is not considered to harm the character or appearance of the building or detract from the Conservation Area.

Residential amenity

The main concern is the impact on residential amenity as a result of noise from the a/c units, ducts and doorway.

The application is accompanied by a statement which explains the background to the works. It states:-

“*The main ducted ventilation system which incorporates a heat recovery unit has to obtain fresh air from and discharge to the exterior. This will be achieved over the fascia level of the shopfront by means of louvres which are connected by means of*

250mm insulated ducts to the unit which is situated over the suspended ceiling in the Waiting Room…. The building is to be air conditioned to provide ambient levels throughout for the clients, staff and patients….comprising internal coil units in each of the various rooms in the surgery connected by pipework to 2no. outdoor coil units which have to be located externally."

The applicants originally wished to site the a/c units in the void between the north boundary wall and the flank of the building adjacent to the internal plant room. This caused concern amongst local residents and Council Officers, and the units were relocated to their present position.

The units will operate only during the permitted hours of the surgery, namely 8.30am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 1pm on Saturdays.

The heat recovery ducted ventilation system has a noise level of 37.5 decibels with the a/c units measuring between 53 and 56 decibels. While this latter figure may appear to be high, noise reduces with distance. The rear of the nearest property in Victoria Road is some 19.5m from the a/c units and a reduction in decibel level can be expected. The dwellings in West Street can also expect a reduction in noise as a result of the wall on which the units are fixed, plus the secondary wall around the gardens of the dwellings themselves on the other side of the twitten. The Environmental Health Officer expects a 10db reduction. Furthermore, the units will only operate during the day when other noise sources will be more noticeable, such as traffic along High Street and customers and vehicles using the car park.

The insertion of the door initially raised concerns as to how the void area was going to be used. The applicant's agent has confirmed that the door is for access for maintenance purposes only and the area in question will not be used for bin storage or staff rest breaks. This can be controlled by condition. A proposed light to this area has also been omitted.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason:-

The air-conditioning units, extraction vents and door do not detract materially from the Conservation Area and do not harm the residential amenities of neighbouring residential properties. They consequently do not conflict with the relevant policies AG1 and AB4 of the Adur District Local Plan or guidance in PPG24.

Subject to:-

1. The air conditioning units and ventilation outlets hereby approved shall only be operated during hours of 8.30am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 1pm on Saturdays and at no other times.
2. The door in the eastern elevation shall only be used for access for maintenance purposes only and the outside area it serves shall not be used for any purpose, including use for bin storage or staff rest breaks.

.....