DELEGATED APPLICATIONS ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS: Stoke Abbott Court, Stoke Abbott Road

DATE OF SITE VISIT: 10.1.08

NEIGHBOURS CHECKED: Y

ADDITIONAL NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATIONS: N

PROPOSAL, SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The application property comprises a detached, 3-storey, mixed use building occupying a prominent corner site with frontages onto Stoke Abbott Road, Winton Place and Chapel Road. It consists of various commercial uses on the ground-floor and the upper floors fronting Chapel Road, with undercroft parking on the west side of the building. The larger part of the upper floors comprises 48 residential flats. The building has been identified as a Local Interest Building owing to its stylised art deco form and appearance, but over the years the integrity of its appearance has suffered from unsympathetic minor alterations, including the ad hoc insertion of uPVC windows, and poor maintenance generally. There has been a history of anti-social behaviour and associated damage to the building, including to the existing entrance doors which have been temporarily boarded over. In addition, the exposed position of the communal bins serving the residential flats, sited on a concrete hardstanding fronting Stoke Abbott Road, has lead to problems with flytipping locally.

The Assembly Rooms, located opposite the site, fronting the south side of Stoke Abbott Road, form part of the Town Hall complex and is a Listed Building.

Permission is sought for replacement doors to the communal entrance to the residential flats fronting Winton Place and Stoke Abbott Road, and a brick-built bin storage enclosure fronting Stoke Abbott Road.

The doors (2 pairs of equal-width, inward opening leafs at either entrance) would be constructed in solid sapele wood with sub-divided, crescent-shaped, vision panels mirrored on either side of stainless steel, vertical opening bars/handles. The door frames would also consist of sapele wood with the existing horizontal-louvre panels above the doors, replaced with a glazed panel having a single central transom bar.

Following advice, an amended drawing has been received in respect of the proposed bin enclosure showing a 2m high brick-built enclosure set behind the raised kerb surrounding the existing hardstanding with a pair of inward-opening, hardwood, vertical, boarded doors on the east side with a narrow ramped access off the existing drive leading to the undercroft parking area. On the west side the enclosure is shown separated from the front face of the building by a 0.7m wide section of black-painted, vertical metal railings. The

adjacent wall opening would be infilled (to a height of 2m) with hardwood diagonal boarding on hardwood framing.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

Various applications relating to the site, but none relevant to this proposal.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 – DEV1, CH1, CH5

Saved [Worthing Local Plan 2003] – BE1, H16

REPRESENTATIONS AND RELEVANT CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Conservation Area Advisory Committee: There is no objection to the new entrance doors. The proposed brick walls enclosing the refuse bins area are considered to be intrusive and should be rendered to match the other exterior walls. The design of the entrance gates is regarded as unsuitable for the setting of the Conservation Area and it is suggested that a plain hardwood is used and that the height matches the walls. These changes could be enhanced by planting the area south of the bin enclosure with grass and shrubs to give a softer appearance.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

The main consideration is the effect on the character and appearance of this Local Interest Building, and on the wider streetscene (including the setting of the nearby Listed Building).

The pre-existing doors (identical on both sides of the building) were of a simple design, each leaf consisting of a glazed vertical panel with a timber surround. Whilst not original to the building, they were nevertheless in keeping with the art deco ethos of creating light and airy interiors. Unfortunately the glazed panels have been prone to vandalism and damage and the applicant does not feel that replacement doors of the same design, consisting predominantly of glass, would be cost effective or sufficiently robust to provide a secure environment for residents. The design of the proposed replacement door is therefore of a substantially more solid construction, but with the crescent-shaped vision panels giving some semblance of a 1930s-style appearance. The construction of the frames and doors in solid sapele wood (a durable hardwood, similar in appearance to mahogany) would assist in achieving the high quality of external finish that this distinctive Local Interest Building deserves.

The north side of the building fronts directly onto Winton Place, but there is a short depth of open frontage on the south side, onto Stoke Abbott Road. The majority of this frontage is grassed, except for the area at the far western end which has been concreted to provide an area of hardstanding to store the large communal bins serving the flats. Historically, the bin area for the flats was located within the open parking area to the west side of the building, with

a bin shute affixed to the west side of the building. However, this open area is no longer included within the leasehold of the residential flats, having apparently been sold off separately and used for many years as a parking area by nearby businesses. Since then the bins serving the flats have been sited on the above-mentioned hardstanding in front of the building. This very exposed siting is not only unsightly but its very prominence within the streetscene has lead to illegal flytipping. [The adjacent bin storage area within the undercroft parking area is for use solely by the commercial occupiers of the building and is also outside the residential leasehold.] The current application seeks to provide a suitable bin enclosure that will result improve the untidy appearance of the existing area, and create a secure storage arrangement that will deter opportunistic flytipping.

The Waste Strategy Manager is satisfied that the proposed enclosure is sufficiently large in size to accommodate the required number and size of bins/re-cycling bins to serve the residential flats (6 x 1100l communal bins and 6 x 240l re-cycling bins).

The siting of the enclosure directly onto the road frontage would undoubtedly be a conspicuous addition to the streetscene, but not wholly out of keeping in the context of surrounding development. A brick-built bin enclosure serving Newland, the modern three-storey flat building located on the west side of the above-mentioned open parking area, is similarly sited abutting the edge of the highway, albeit smaller in size than the current proposal. The key concern is the way in which the proposed enclosure relates to the distinctive stylised character and appearance of the existing building. In this respect, as originally submitted, it was considered that the combination of siting, size, height and materials of the proposed enclosure would result in an unduly dominant and clumsy addition that would detract from the remaining fragile charm of this building. The application has subsequently been amended to reduce the overall height of the enclosure and re-position the walls just inside the tall kerb edging which surrounds the existing hardstanding. This would allow the existing kerbing to be retained, which is a unifying feature of the wider frontage area onto Stoke Abbott Road.

During pre-application discussions it had been suggested that a rendered finish to the walled enclosure would be more in keeping with the appearance of the existing building (as also suggested by CAAC), which is predominantly rendered on the upper floors, but with brickwork piers and panels at ground-floor, above a concrete block plinth. On reflection, it is considered a more acceptable solution would be to create a distinct visual break from the existing building in which case brickwork (to match the existing building) is considered the most appropriate external finish. On the west side, a visual break has been created by inserting a short section of black-painted metal vertical railing (not palisade) sufficient that the bin enclosure reads in visual terms as physically separate from the main building. A similar visual impression is created on the east side by the position of the hardwood, vertical boarded timber doors into the enclosure.

In conclusion, there is no realistic practical alternative to siting the bins serving the residential flats other than the existing prominent position on the

site frontage. In these circumstances, whilst the enclosure is necessarily relatively 'bulky' in order to accommodate the requisite number of bins to serve 48 flats, its form and external appearance, as amended, has been designed to cause minimal harm to the visual integrity of this distinctive Local Interest Building and would clearly result in an enhancement of the surrounding environment (including the setting of the nearby Listed Building) by screening the existing unsightly bins from view.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to:-

1. Standard time limit
2. C13A Permission relates to amended plan
3. C9F Materials of enclosure to be agreed and to match existing building. Door and and infill panel to comprise hardwood with external colour and finish to be agreed
4. Railings to comprise black-painted, flat-top, vertical metal railings (not palisade).
5. Replacement doors and frames to consist of solid sapele wood as shown on the approved drawing and external finish to be agreed

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The proposal does not conflict with development plan policies or current Government Guidance.

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 approved, would have some impact on the neighbouring properties. However, it is considered that on balance, existing residential quality of life would not be significantly adversely affected as a result of the proposal. Accordingly it is considered that it is acceptable with regard to Article 8 and Article 1.

IS RECOMMENDATION CONTRARY TO LETTER (S) OF REPRESENTATION?

Yes - CAAC

DELEGATED

Case Officer
Sign..... [redacted] .....Date..... 16·1·08

Authorising Offi
Sign..... [redacted] .....Date..... 21·1·08