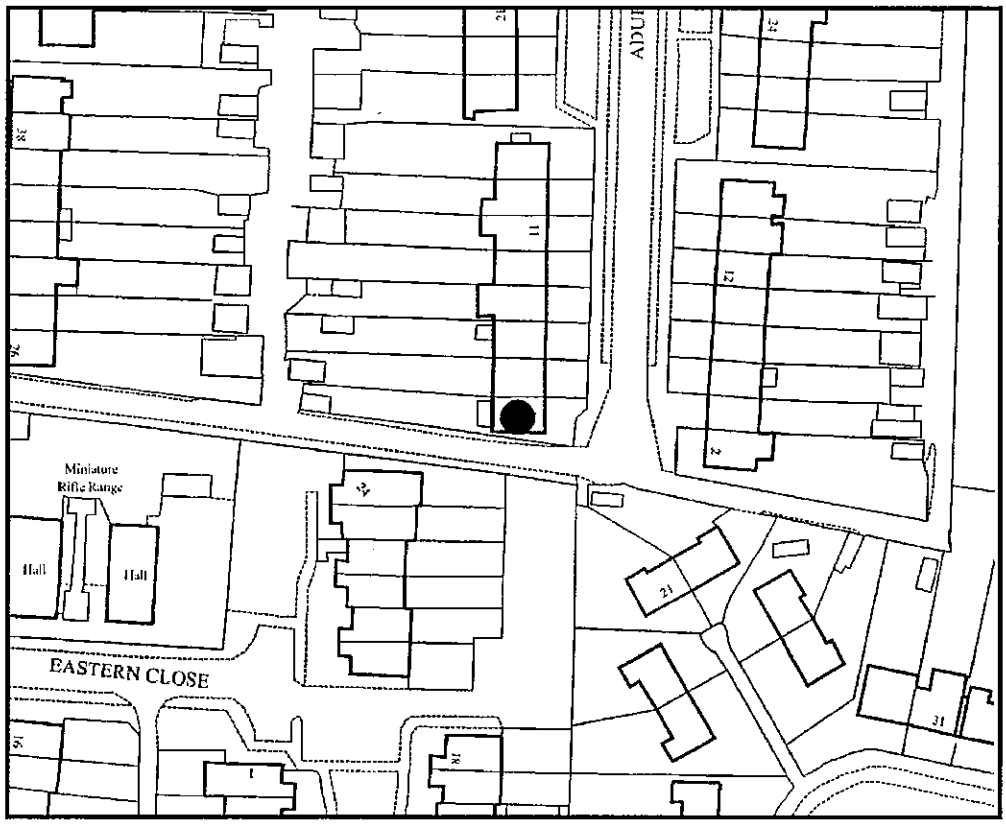
Application Number: ADC/0204/09 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: **1 Adur Drive, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 6PN**

Proposal: **Conversion of end-of-terrace three-bedroom house into 2 one-bedroom flats with single-storey rear extension and loft conversion (with side gable)**



The Application

The application property is the southernmost end-of-terrace house on the east side of Adur Drive. To the south is an access track serving rear garages, linking to Eastern Avenue. Beyond the fence on the south side of the track, is a parking area serving terraced houses in Eastern Close.

This three-bedroom house has a small rear conservatory and a detached garage at the end of its 19m long rear garden. The application seeks permission to extend and convert the house into 2 one-bedroom flats, both for the applicant's sons. A 3.5m deep single-storey flat-roofed rear extension is proposed (to replace the conservatory), converting the enlarged ground floor into a 60 square metre one-bedroom flat. The first floor and loftspace would be converted to a second 60 square metre one-bedroom flat. This would entail enlarging the roof from a hip at the side to a gable, plus front and rear rooflights. The existing hallway is to be subdivided and a door provided at the side for the upper flat.

To the front, the existing hardstanding is to be retained (accommodating two cars).

A previous application for subdivision into 2 flats with an external staircase but no other extension/addition was refused on grounds that it would result in the loss of a small family house, result in an unsatisfactory standard of amenity and because the external staircase would be out of keeping in character and appearance (ADC/0548/08).

Consultations and Representations

West Sussex County Council: No objection subject to imposing a condition requiring 2 car and 2 secure covered cycle parking spaces. No sustainable transport contribution is required.

Adur District Council: The Environmental Health Officer recommends that details of the kitchen extract be approved to avoid detriment to the neighbour's rear bedroom.

Third Parties: 2 letters have been received.
The residents of No.2 (opposite) state no objection to conversion into 2 flats but express concern about the length of time the conversion work would take and the impact of additional parking of builders' vehicles on existing parking problems in the road.

The resident of No.3 Adur Drive (attached to the north) reiterates his previous objection on grounds that the conversion involves the loss of a budget family dwelling; would set a precedent for further such conversions in the road; and have an impact on their property as the firstfloor lounge would be sited next to main bedrooms (a condition is requested requiring sound insulation of the party wall as it is not currently a Building Regulations requirement)]. He adds that there would be overlooking of rear gardens from the rear firstfloor room.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AH5, AH7, AH9, and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising:-
Development Control Standard No.3 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'
Development Control Standard No.4 'Flat Conversions'
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003 and ADC 2004)
Planning Policy Statement PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 'Housing' (DCLG 2006)
PPG24 'Planning and Noise' (DoE 1994)

Planning Assessment

Policies

Local Plan policy AH5 favours the supply of dwellings suitable for small households such as single persons, small families and the elderly.
Policy AH9 states that the conversion of dwellinghouses into smaller self-contained units will normally be permitted providing that access and car parking provision is acceptable; the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking or noise transmission through party walls and the type of property concerned and the standard of accommodation to be provided accord to the adopted standards. However, it states that the conversion of

small family houses to flats will not be permitted, the reason being to retain an adequate stock of such purpose-built dwellings for small families.

Development Control Standard No.4 'Flat Conversions' defines small family houses as having less than 100sqm internal floor area or 3 or less bedrooms. It states the subdivision of such houses will not normally be permitted and that the effect on the character of the area (eg. through loss of front garden to forecourt parking) will be an important consideration. It states that conversion of semi-detached or terraced dwellings to flats is not favoured because of potential noise disturbance (eg. from a proposed kitchen or living room adjoining a neighbouring bedroom). If this cannot be minimised by appropriate 'stacking' and 'side-by-side' layouts, the onus will be on the applicant to prove that adequate sound insulation measures can be provided. It also states that where conversions include a material change to the exterior of the building, the effect of this on the property itself, on adjoining premises and on the local environment generally must be considered, and that conversions should result in an acceptable amount of amenity space for each flat.

PPS3 contains no specific guidance on flat conversions except for the general statement that "Conversions of existing housing can provide an important source of new housing" (para 31). It advises LPAs to "take account of the need to deliver low cost market housing as part of the housing mix" (para 26). This is against the background of the overall objectives of delivering high quality well-designed housing; a mix of housing, including tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households; sufficient quantity and improved choice; and locations close to jobs and facilities.

Character and principle

There are no other examples of conversion of houses to flats in Adur Drive. It could be viewed as being out of character with the road but this is not likely to be seen as sufficient reason to justify refusal, given the lack of any policy basis for doing so, judging by decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate in other cases.

The existing house currently has three bedrooms (two doubles and a single) and an internal floor area of approximately 90 square metres (including the conservatory). It falls within the definition of a small family house under the Council's DC Standard No.4 which supplements policy AH9. This was one reason why the previous application was refused.
However, in a recent appeal case (58 Southview Road - ADC/0192/08), the Inspector did not support this argument and considered that, in assessing whether the house was a small family house or not, regard should be paid to extensions included as part of the proposed conversion even though the extensions did not already exist.

In the case of the present application, the proposed extensions (rear groundfloor and side gable) included as part of the application could be built as 'permitted development' (whilst the property is a single dwellinghouse). They would increase the floor area to 110sqm. Consequently, having regard to the above appeal decision, loss of a small family house would not appear to be a sound reason for refusal.

Visual amenity

The proposed enlargement of the roof from a hip to a gable at the side is not a type of addition found on any of the other similar terraces in Adur Drive and Eastern Avenue. However, there are gable-roofed houses to the south in Eastern Close and Corbyn Crescent. Some of the nearby houses have very large rear dormers. Overall, given the location of the property, it is not considered that the gable would appear out

of place or prominent and, aesthetically, it is preferable to adding a large flat-roofed dormer.
The proposed groundfloor flat-roofed rear extension is typical of many others and would not have a harmful visual impact.

Most notably, the present application avoids the need for an unsightly external staircase which was one of the reasons for refusing the previous application.

Amenity space

Policy AH9 also requires flat conversions to meet adopted standards set out in DC Standard No.4 'Flat Conversions'. The proposed groundfloor flat, at 53sqm, comfortably exceeds the minimum internal floorspace required for a one-bedroom flat (45sqm) and its extended lounge and double bedroom exceed the minima. Its kitchen area is very marginally deficient (5.3sqm instead of 5.5sqm) but overall the accommodation would clearly provide acceptable living conditions.
The proposed upper flat is on two levels but similarly exceeds the minimum standard in total size (55sqm) and its kitchen/diner, bedroom and loftspace livingroom meet or exceed the minimum standards.

The usable rear garden area is 84sqm and, subject to its subdivision approximately in half to serve both flats, it is clearly more than enough garden space to meet the minimum 20sqm required for each flat as referred to in the above DC Standard. The groundfloor flat will have direct private access to its rear garden and garage but the upper flat will need to use a side path running along the southern boundary.

Residential amenity- privacy

The proposed single-storey rear extension would not affect any other properties including the attached house to the north which itself has a rear extension. The extension, at 3.5m deep, complies with the Council's standards. The proposed loft conversion, with rooflights only, would not cause unacceptable overlooking.

Residential amenity – noise transmission

The DC standard for flat conversions refers to room 'stacking' between the two floors being consistent so that rooms of the same type are above each other. The submitted proposal meets this requirement vertically but the firstfloor kitchen/diner would be adjacent to the bedroom of the attached house (No.3). In the appeal case quoted above, the Inspector dealt with this by imposing a condition requiring sound insulation.

However, Annex 7 of PPG24 states that the Government considers that the Building Regulations are the most appropriate means of control for sound insulation in conversions and that planning conditions should not be used to control sound insulation in such cases. It refers to Approved Document E - Resistance to the passage of sound which was updated in June 2004 and a sound test is now required to be carried out to justify the adequacy of sound insulation between new dwellings (including conversions).

Parking and access

WSCC have no objection subject to the provision of secure, covered cycle parking. Under the adopted maximum parking standard, the proposals require 2.4 car parking spaces as compared to 2 for the existing house. There is current space for up to 3

cars in total on-site, comprising 2 on the existing front hardstanding and one in the rear garage. The site is in a relatively sustainable location and with good access to public transport links. No section 106 Obligation for a sustainable transport contribution is required.

Other Issues

Provision for refuse storage is shown on the south side. This would be out of sight from the street and is considered acceptable.

Recommendation

APPROVE for reason that:-

The proposed development is within the built-up area and would help meet the need for additional dwelling units without detracting from the existing local urban environment. 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 relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH5, AH7, AH9)

Subject to:-

1. C1Ci (Standard time limit)
2. C12Ai (External materials to match existing unless otherwise approved) (amended)
3. C8Gi (Provision and retention of car parking and secure covered cycle parking for both flats)
4. Prior to commencement of use of the property as 2 flats, the rear garden shall be subdivided by the erection of fencing to provide separate amenity areas of at least 20 square metres for each flat.
5. Prior to commencement of use of the property as 2 flats, bin storage shall be provided as shown on the submitted plan.
6. No kitchen extract system shall be installed except in accordance with details which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

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