Expiry Date - 27/08/2024

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0851/24 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: **Former Project House 30A To 30B The Drive Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Convert existing offices into 2 houses. (Class C3). Side extension instead of garage. Part retrospective application to Vary Condition 1 (Approved Plans), Condition 5 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) and remove Condition 9 (Matching Windows) of previously approved AWDM/0451/22. Amendments: retain windows and cills, reinstate decorative boarding, amendment to perimeter wall and changes to soft and hard landscaping.**

Date of Site Visit: 02.08.2024

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site, Surroundings and Proposal

This S.73 application relates to an extended 2-storey end of terrace building occupying a corner plot on the north side of The Drive where it meets Rugby Road. Previously in commercial/business use, planning permission was granted in 2022 (AWDM/0451/22) for its conversion to create 2no dwellings, involving ground-floor infill extensions, elevation alterations and alterations to the external areas.

Works to implement the planning permission have commenced and are currently in progress. The current application has been submitted in response to an enforcement investigation and seeks to regularise a number of discrepancies between the 'as built' development and the scheme approved under AWDM/0451/22 by varying Condition 1 (Approved Plans) and Condition 5 (Hard and Soft Landscaping); and removing Condition 9 (Windows to match), which state:-

5. No works or development shall take place until full details of all hard and soft landscaping works and the proposed times of planting have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and all soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with those details and at those times. Any plants which within a period of five years from the time of planting die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the environment and to comply with policy 16 of the Core Strategy.

9. The new windows hereby permitted shall match in all respects those of the existing building including the design of the windows, expressed window cills and depth of the window reveals.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy 16 of the Worthing Core Strategy.

The proposed changes can be summarized overall as follows:-

- Installation of replacement UPVC windows;
- Change in size to first-floor window opening (West elevation);
- Reinstatement of decorative 'Mock Tudor' boarding to upper part of main building;
- Installation/reinstatement of expressed cills to ground and first-floor windows;
- Reduced length of proposed front boundary walls (amendment to details approved under AWDM/0288/23);
- Formation of raised planting beds to frontage (in place of soft landscaping agreed under AWDM/0288/23).

No. 78 Rugby Road attached to the east is a mid-terrace residential dwelling. No. 32 The Drive to the north is an end-of-terrace house. A narrow, unmade private footpath separates the application site from No.32.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/0451/22 Convert existing offices into 2 houses. (Class C3). Side extension instead of garage. Permitted 01.09.2022.

AWDM/0288/23 Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 4 (house 1 fencing) and 5 (hard and soft landscaping) of Application AWDM/0451/22. Approved 05.04.2023.

Consultations

WSCC: The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has raised no objection commenting that the proposed amendments are relatively minor and would not be anticipated to give rise to a detrimental highway safety impact.

Environmental Health (Public Health & Regulation): Previous comments remain valid.

AWDM/0451/22 – recommended precautionary contamination condition.

Private Sector Housing: No objection.

WSP: No objection raised.

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Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SS1, DM1, DM2, DM5, DM11, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM20
National Planning Policy Framework (DHLU 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Principle

The principle of conversion to 2no residential dwelling has been accepted and the development scheme is under-construction. The key considerations are the effects of the proposed changes on the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area and highway safety.

There are no changes to the internal layout of the proposed dwelling units.

Visual Amenity

At the time of the application in 2022 the windows in the ground-floor of the building were UPVC windows (a mix of small-paned casements and plain glass, a relic of its history of commercial/retail use). They had a notable horizontal proportion at odds with the traditional character of the building and out of keeping with the windows on the upper-floor. The latter were also UPVC replacements but within the original, vertically-proportioned openings with expressed cills and a traditional, generous reveal depth.

As approved, it was proposed to alter most of the existing ground-floor window openings, and insert new openings. Condition 9 requires these to match in all respects the design, expressed cills and reveal depth of the existing windows in order to reinstate some of the original traditional character of the building.

Replacement UPVC windows have been inserted throughout which has removed the original traditional window reveal to all of the window openings (ground and first-floor windows). The replacement windows are of a different design to those previously in situ, now with a fixed upper pane and top-hung, opening lower pane.

There has also been a slight change to the fenestration pattern, with a small window inserted in the ground-floor west elevation in place of a previously proposed larger window.

Following discussions, the expressed cill detail has been reinstated on all windows.

Although the traditional reveal detail has been lost, and the design of the replacement UPVC casements is notably ‘heavier’ in appearance than those previously in situ, the alterations have at least restored a degree of visual cohesion between the ground and first floor.

At the time of the officer site visit the former ‘Mock Tudor’ detailing to the upper part of the building had been removed. However, it is proposed to replace this decorative detail in a similar design as shown on the submitted plan.

As approved it was proposed to replace up to two-thirds of the concrete hardstanding on the west side of the building (fronting The Drive) with soft landscaping, extending the existing brick wall on the boundary to enclose the respective garden areas. Instead, raised planting beds have been built around the perimeter of the proposed front gardens, with slate chippings placed on top of the retained concrete hardstanding. The front wall has been extended, but not as far northward in The Drive, or southeast into Rugby Road as originally proposed. Nevertheless the wall has been implemented to a good standard and the mix of hard and soft landscaping proposed on the frontages will be consistent with other domestic gardens in the surrounding residential environment.

Residential amenity

There are no impacts on the residential amenities of future occupiers or neighbours as a result of the minor changes to the elevations and external areas.

Accessibility and parking

Both dwelling houses will benefit from a single forecourt car parking space utilising the existing VCOs. The LHA has raised no highway safety issues in relation to the proposed minor changes to the extent of the front boundary wall.

CIL

There has been no increase in floor area compared to the previously approved scheme and no CIL charge is applicable (as before).

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. Approved Plans
3. Matching Materials. Decorative boarding to upper part of House 2 implement prior to first occupation
4. Implement details of fencing of courtyard for House 1 as per AWDM/0288/23
5. Implement hard and soft landscaping

6. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional openings shall be formed in the elevations or roofs of the dwellinghouses hereby permitted.
7. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the dwellinghouses hereby permitted shall not be extended or any incidental building over 5 cubic metres in volume erected within their respective curtilage or hard surfacing laid.
8. Precautionary contamination

Informatives

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) 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.

Case Officer signed: Jo Morin Date: 08.08.2024

Authorised and signed by: Peter Barnett Date: 8 August 2024