WITHDRAWN
4.6.08
T.P. OFFICE COPY

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

42-46 Teville Road, Central Worthing

Full planning application for redevelopment, comprising a new ground floor retail unit and fourteen self contained flats in new upper floors.

RECEIVED WORTHING
DEPOSITED 2/4/08
Ref. No.
08/0349/FULL

BACKGROUND

The existing buildings on the site comprise a two storey mixed use building with two prominent gables and pitched roofs, together with an adjoining two store former house, part of a short terrace of housing fronting Teville Road.

The main building appears to date back to the end of the 19C having yellow brickwork elevations with some decorative brickwork features over windows and in string courses and a slated roof with some decorative red clay ridge tiles. The external fabric of this building is now in a poor physical state having been subject in the past to major uncomplimentary alterations along the ground floor frontages and at the rear, while also suffering from a prolonged period of vacant use on the upper floors and a serious lack of any maintenance and repair. The adjoining terrace building has a part rendered bay window elevation which has been completely removed at the ground floor and replaced with a full width glazed frontage and is also in a poor physical state of repair.

The buildings have been used on the ground floors as a tool hire shop since 1994 with the upper floors remaining vacant, but included in the same lease The tool hire shop closed down its operation at this location in Worthing and vacated the building about the end of 2006. The buildings have remained vacant since then, but the freehold has been acquired by new owners who have appointed Arablu architects to review options and make proposals for a full and effective use of the buildings and/or site, in line with central Government guidance, Local Plan saved policies and the emerging local development framework.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

The design process involved a review of:

central Government guidance and the local planning policy framework,

specific local demand for retail space, office and business space, community facilities and housing need in the built up area of Worthing,

recent conversions and redevelopment in the surrounding environment,

the restraints imposed by the physical condition, form of construction and internal structural arrangement of the buildings,

opportunities for a full and effective use of the site, either by conversion of and additions to the existing buildings or by redevelopment of the site, while not adversely affecting the character of the area or the amenities of local residents and businesses,

access to the site.

From the reviews a design concept evolved for:

a mixed use scheme, based on retail on the ground floor with residential flats for small households on upper floors.

a redevelopment rather than a conversion of the existing buildings as the physical condition and structural limitations would severely limit the opportunity to make a full and effective use of the site.

a building of good design quality that would enhance the character of the surrounding area, create a visual feature to signify the corner between Teville Road and Oxford Road and set a standard for the regeneration of this part of Worthing

a building design that would make reference to traditional materials and traditional building forms while providing modern facilities.

a redevelopment that would respond to the excellent public transport links very close to the site and provide good access for all.

The design proposals are described under the following headings which are based on CABE guidance on the content and presentation of Design and Access Statements.

USE

The planning use class for a tool hire shop is unclear and may even be considered a business or commercial sui generis use. Consent for alterations to form the tool hire shop were granted with conditions, in 1994, but did not appear to specifically include the upper floor spaces. It is not clear from older planning records precisely what the 'permitted' use of the upper floors is deemed to be, although it does appear from the character of the buildings and the rooms that it has been a residential use in the past.
Certainly the building which is part of the adjoining terrace of houses would have been in residential use, on both floors in the past.

Local Plan 'saved policies' however no longer include the former employment policies, one of which sought to resist the loss of business space, except in special, defined circumstances. However the existing ground floor building footprint is just over the 300m2 former policy criteria, so it may well have come under these special defined circumstances which would have allowed a change of use to be considered.

The redevelopment design proposals include 450m2 of ground floor retail space, which the freeholder proposes to open as a 'Taj the Grocer', a speciality, international, natural and organic food store like their two successful food stores in Brighton, both of which are located in Conservation Areas. This retail use will create about 20 jobs, which is a very significant increase in employment opportunities when compared to a trade counter in a tool hire shop.

This site is only three terraced houses (now flat conversions) away from the retail frontages at the corner of Teville Road and Railway Approach, the opposite corner being the start of a neighbourhood shopping centre, which is defined in the Local Plan. The design proposals for ground floor retail can therefore be considered to enhance the character of the surrounding area and increase employment opportunities.

The design proposals for the new upper floors are for small self contained flats, in response to the housing need for smaller households in central Worthing, which was identified in the Local Plan.

A demand for small office and business spaces in Worthing has also been identified in the local policy framework and recently several of the upper floors of buildings in this area around the railway station have either been converted to these uses, or have been advertised as available.

The uptake of these units is patchy however and many remain unlet. It is very difficult to provide small business/office units at a market rent, when providing the relatively small number that would be possible as part of a mixed use redevelopment scheme at 42-46 Teville Road.

Local policy priorities would also appear to favour provision of small household flats over small office/business spaces in central Worthing and demand for these flats remains strong.

Reviewing the spatial and servicing requirements for possible community users on upper floors suggests that high ceilings and structure free main spaces would be required, structural floor loadings

and fire resistance requirements for community uses would be higher than for other uses and sound insulation measures would have to be incorporated with residential properties adjacent. Costs would be very significant and if undertaken by the freeholder would result in a rent way beyond a market rent for community facilities. Similarly, a community use occupier , would be very unlikely to be able to justify the additional costs arising from an upper floor location, themselves.

Local Plan policies address the provision of affordable housing in residential and mixed use schemes. Even with the proposed addition of a second and part third floor above the retail unit, the number of new flats in the redevelopment design proposals is below the threshold where the Local Authority would seek to obtain an affordable element.

In summary, the design proposals for a mixed use scheme with ground floor retail and upper floor small household flats have been tested against other possible uses. These other uses have been found to present very significant difficulties that would make them unviable and unsustainable. The design proposals are consistent with local planning policy for this area of Worthing, and are also viable and sustainable.

AMOUNT

The site is 506m2 in total, the existing ground floor, formerly occupied by the tool hire shop, comprising approximately 320 m2 of internal space with a further 140 m2 of external yard used for storage of equipment and a hardstanding at the front of 46m2. Although the ground floor has been opened up somewhat in the past, there are still several load bearing masonary walls and piers which would significantly interrupt the potential use of the space for modern retail use.
The spatial requirements for a convenience food store, like a Taj the Grocer, are around 450m2 internal ground floor area, which includes about 330m2 relatively uninterrupted trading area with 120m2 for storage and ancillary spaces.

Taking into account the obstructions presented by the existing load bearing walls and piers; the poor physical condition of the building, which makes it very difficult to remove any further walls; an existing internal ground floor area less than the requirements for a modern food store or other retail use; and central Government guidance that planning authorities should seek to ensure the full and effective use of sites, particularly in built up areas; the design proposal is to redevelop the site, providing 430m2 of new ground floor retail/storage, in effect building up to the rear boundary wall of the former external yard, and to provide small household flats on new upper floors.

The amount of floor space to be provided on the new upper floors seeks to balance the requirement to make full and effective use of the site, to enhance the character of the surrounding area, not to adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents, to ensure good sunlight, daylight and private amenity space are provided, to respond to local housing need for small household flats and to ensure a viable and sustainable proposal.

The site is in the built up area of Worthing, it is close to very good public transport links, it is within an a mixed use area with building heights between two and four storeys, it is a prominent corner position. A medium to high density proposal, with no on site parking, would therefore seem the appropriate response to the above factors and be in line with central Government guidance and Local planning policy.

Density is 277 dwelling units per hectare, which is in the acceptable range for 'no on site parking' developments in built up town centre areas.

The design aspects of the proposal to provide fourteen new flats, a mix of 1 bed and 2 bed units are described in the following paragraphs.

LAYOUT

The layout on the site is similar to the existing layout with the retail unit extending along the Teville Road frontage and a service access from Oxford Road.

The proposal however also seeks to extend the shop front over the existing hard standing to Teville Road, up to the back of pavement line, to extend the shop front along Oxford Road, to position the main shop entrance at the corner of Teville Road and Oxford Road and to include the former rear storage yard within the footprint of the new building.

Entrances to the flats are positioned at the far ends of the shop, one in Teville Road adjacent to the residential terrace and one in Oxford Road, which provides separation and some privacy from the main entrance to the shop.

The depth of the site is significantly more than is needed for double aspect small household flats and at the rear boundary there is only a narrow path and then the flank wall of the former print works, which is currently being converted into flats with only two small windows to non habitable rooms in this flank wall. Double aspect layouts for small household flats, particularly 1 bed flats, create very narrow floor plates, which increase the amount of internal corridor space and create the need for additional communal entrances along the main frontage, so are not usually considered a layout form that is consistent with achieving a full and effective use of a site.

The design proposal is mainly therefore for a single aspect arrangement of flats with private balconies, one set of flats with a Teville Road aspect and one set with a rear aspect, with terraces. The three corner flats and the three Oxford Road flats are however double aspect flats.

SCALE

This part of Teville Road is a mixed use area with a range of building heights from two to four storeys. Several of the buildings have a retail use on the ground floor, particularly at the neighbourhood shopping section. The existing building is essentially two storey, however the prominent gables give a sense of greater scale.

The design proposal for a three storey redevelopment rising to a fourth storey at the feature corner is therefore not considered out of scale with this locality and positively contributes to the varied scale while enhancing the corner with Oxford Road.

APPEARANCE

The design proposal seeks to rework the 'gabled' appearance of the existing building, generally using traditional forms and materials, render elevation with brick features, pitched slate roofs with decorative lay ridge tiles and decorative gable boards and timber windows.

The gable fronts break up the length of the Teville Road frontage into the appearance of separate residential dwellings above shops, which reinforces and enhances this overall character of Teville Road.

The shop front design further enhances this impression, dividing the frontage with traditional timber pilasters and corbel brackets separating timber stall risers, fascias and cornices.

This approach to the shop frontages and flats is also taken into Oxford Road with the corner itself strongly featured with its extra floor, octagonal plan form and turret pitched roof.

LANDSCAPE

The building footprint takes up most of the site at ground floor so there is no opportunity to include any significant landscape proposals. However the detail design of the terraces and balconies will provide some opportunity to include small planting in pots.

Discussions will be held with Worthing Council to seek agreement on improvements to the surface materials of the pavement in Teville Road in front of the shop.

ACCESS

Access to the site is by public transport is excellent, the railway station is very close and several main bus routes use Teville Road. A range of local shops, cafes and community facilities are also in the locality and the town centre is a five minute walk.

The two entrances to the flats are purposefully separate and distinct from the main shop entrance to give some privacy and identity to the flats. Stairs lead to the upper floors. Lifts are not proposed, as this busy site location with no on site parking and upper floors only, is not the most appropriate to consider as a full access for all development.

Full access for all will of course be included in the shop design, with wide doors, level access threshold and a disabled back of shop facilities for staff.

The proposal does not include any on site parking spaces, but in line with Council policy this can be considered acceptable because public transport links are very good at this location and a contribution can be sought from the applicant towards Council transport and parking provision costs.

There are also short stay on street pay parking spaces close to the site and at the railway station which also has a taxi rank.

Attachments: Sheets of annotated photographs of existing building and surrounding streetscape.

26 March 2008

David Hutchison B Arch Dip TP RIBA Arablu