EXPIRES 4.02.08

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0641/07 Recommendation - Refuse

Site: **16A - 18A North Road Lancing West Sussex BN15 9AE**

Proposal: **Conversion of first floor from offices to ~~five two-bedroom~~ 1x2bed and 1x3bed self-contained flats (including replacement windows)**

The Application

The application relates to first floor commercial premises located on the east side of North Road, a main shopping street, within the built-up area of Lancing. The premises which occupy the whole first floor of No's 16A – 18A are currently vacant but were previously used as office space.

The proposal is to convert the premises into residential accommodation in the form of three self-contained flats (1x three-bed and 2 x two-bed).

At ground floor level are four commercial premises. No. 14 to16 is an Indian restaurant, No.18 is a sandwich bar and No.20 is currently vacant but was a greengrocers. North Road is characterised by normal high street functions such as shops, banks and restaurants at street level, with offices and residential properties generally occupying the first floor.

Consultations and Representations

County Transport Planning Services: In terms of transport, the property is situated in a sustainable location, within walking distance of a range of services and public transport, and therefore there will not be a reliance as such on the use of the private car. Cycle storage must be provided which is covered and secure, the details of which must be submitted and approved. A TAD contribution of £2,145 would be applicable.

Director of Services: The Environmental Health section have objected to the internal arrangement and unsympathetic layout of the three flats, commenting that room sizes are substandard and in one case lacks natural light.

The proposals have been amended with the number of flats being reduced to two (1x two-bed and 1x three-bed), and on this basis Environmental Health have withdrawn their objection.

Third Parties: There have been no third party objections to the proposal.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, CH1, NE1-2, ERA1,DEV1, DEV3-5.

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AH1-2, AH5, AT12 and Appendix II 'Suplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No.4 'Flat Conversions'.
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003 and ADC 2004)
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 ' Housing' (DCLG 2006)
PPG13 'Transport' (DTLR 2001)

Planning Assessment

Policies
Structure Plan policies give weight to the re-use of existing buildings at higher residential density provided the character of the area is protected (LOC1, ERA1, CH1). Policy DEV4 states (amongst other things) that development should not be permitted unless the travel needs it generates are met; it achieves safe and convenient access by a choice of means of travel; it encourages and enables an increase in walking and cycling; and the number and impact of motorised journeys is minimised. DEV5 states ' Development should not be permitted unless the level of parking is compatible with the need to avoid environmental or safety problems and the need is to encourage walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport where this is or can be a realistic alternative'.

A key objective of PPS3 is that development continues to make effective use of land by re-using land and buildings that have been previously developed or vacant. There is no specific policy in the Local Plan relating to the conversion of upper floors in shopping streets to residential use, however Policy AH2 states that new residential development be permitted by way of redevelopment or infilling provided the site is not allocated for any other purpose.

Visual amenity
The only change to the exterior of the building would be to the windows which are proposed to be changed in design, but would remain the same size as existing. The front of the building which faces North Road has a variety of shop fronts and the alterations to the windows above would not be out of keeping or unsympathetic.

Residential amenity
The amended scheme now shows two-flats which would have bedrooms and living accommodation which exceed the minimum standards as set out in the above Development Control Standard, and is therefore acceptable. The ground floor premises have a small shared yard, but no garden or outdoor space would be provided for the flats themselves. The lack of external amenity area contravenes the Standard but few flats in town centre locations above shops have external amenity space and in this case it is considered acceptable.

The flats themselves would be orientated so that the bathroom and kitchen of both flats would have windows facing to the east. Bedroom 1 of each of the flats would also have an eastern outlook. The one to the north would have views into Meadow Lane and the one to the south would have views across the rear garden of No.4 Meadow Lane. It is felt that the level of privacy experienced by the dwelling to the east (No.4) would not be adversely affected by the conversion of the offices to flats as no rooms are directly overlooked and currently there are no restrictions on the hours of operation for the offices.

Access and parking

WSCC Highways have commented that the proposed use would not increase the amount of parking within the area, due to the flats proximity to a variety of public transport modes. There is concern that the lack of outdoor space would result in there being no room for the secure and covered storage of bicycles for the proposed flats.

A TAD contribution in the form of a Section 106 agreement is required for the amount of £2,145. This agreement was required to be executed as a deed and the Council need to be in receipt of this by the 4th February 2008 (the date that the statutory period for determining the application expires). This agreement has not been received and therefore the application does not comply with Policies DEV3-5 of the Structure Plan and revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology.

Recommendation

REFUSE for reason that :-

There is no evidence that the necessary contributions would be made to improvements to sustainable transport to offset the effects of the travel and infrastructure demands generated by the proposed dwellings, as required by the West Sussex Transport Contributions Methodology and policies DEV3-5 of the West Sussex Structure Plan.

Case Officer:

Date: 4.2.08

PB 4/2/08