Application Number: ADC/0334/07 **Recommendation – REFUSE**

Site: **57 & 59 Boundstone Lane, Sompting BN15 9QR**

Proposal: **Demolition of No. 57 and 59 and erection of 13 flats (9 two-bedroom and 4 studio) together with associated car parking, bin and cycle stores and widened access (Outline application including access and layout details)**

The Application

This is an application for outline permission with only layout and means of access details to be considered. Indicative elevations and floor plans have also been provided.

The site is located on the west side of Boundstone Lane, roughly opposite the entrance to Elmstone Close. No. 57 Boundstone Lane is a detached bungalow and No. 59 is a detached two-storey house.

To the north, is a detached two-storey house, No. 61, which is of similar appearance to No. 59 and to the south is a bungalow of similar appearance to No. 57. Opposite, on the east side of Boundstone Lane and in Elmstone Close are a variety of dwellings including 2 two-storey blocks of flats (Cherry Tree Lodge). To the rear (west) of the site are two-storey terraced houses in The Martlets, which have rear gardens backing onto the site.

The proposal is to demolish both No's 57 and 59 to create a combined site for redevelopment measuring approximately 31m wide by 34m-38m deep. Illustrative elevational plans show a building that would be two storeys high plus accommodation in the roofspace with a single-storey projection at the back. The plans show 5 two-bed flats on the ground floor, 4 two-bed flats on the first floor and 4 studio flats within the roofspace (served by dormer windows).

There would be one vehicular access created by widening the existing access to No. 57 and the access to No. 59 would be closed. A total of 9 car parking spaces are proposed (one for each two-bed flat). The frontage of the site would be hardsurfaced to provide, as amended, 4 car parking spaces, with a landscaped area on the north side. A driveway is proposed alongside the southern boundary to serve a further 5 parking spaces at the rear, plus bin store and cycle store. The north half of the rear area is shown as a garden.

Consultations and Representations

County Transport Planning Services: No objection subject to conditions requiring the access to be widened to 4.5m; the kerb, verge and footway to be reinstated for the access that would be closed; to provision of parking and

turning space as shown on the amended plan; to provision of pedestrian visibility splays and a section 106 Obligation requiring a TAD contribution of £8,385 to sustainable transport improvements in the area.

Comments that, applying the adopted West Sussex maximum car parking standards, a maximum of 20 car spaces are required. However, the proposed 9 spaces are considered sufficient for this location as there is relatively little on-street car parking, the site is also close to bus routes and cycle parking is also proposed to encourage the use of sustainable transport in line with Policy DEV4. On the revised parking layout comments that spaces 1 and 2 still have restricted manoeuvring space and would most likely result in vehicles having to be reversed 15 metres in order to turn and exit the site but it is doubted that this would be hazardous. Also, a Designer's Response to the Safety Audit has not been produced but a note on the planning drawing states that all Stage 1 Safety Audit issues are to be implemented. No works should be undertaken in the public highway until a licence has been granted by the WSCC Area Engineer.

County Planning Services: Under 'The Provision of Service Infrastructure related to New Development in West Sussex – Part 1' (WSCC 1999), County Planning Services state that no contribution is required to education or library services and the contribution to fire and rescue services is insignificant (£198).

Environment Agency: No objection subject to planning conditions in respect of details of surface water drainage and any contamination encountered.

Southern Water: No comment.

Sussex Police: The Crime Prevention Design Adviser states that the key is to control access, in this case, audio/visual access control to the main entrance and a suited key access to the rear access. Any trades button should be coded and not timed. Final exit doors and entrance doors to each flat should conform to PAS024. All ground floor windows should accord with BS7950. Glazing to the main entrance doors and sidelights should be laminated. Each flat should have a door chain/viewer fitted. Lighting will also be an important element, both around the building and in the car park.

Director of Services: The Environmental Health Officer has no objection.

The Waste Services Manager states that access to the site would involve two 26 tonne refuse and recycling vehicles needing to reverse from Boundstone Lane down the driveway to the bin store adjoining the rear boundary. This would involve reversing down the side of the building past a 'blind' corner for anyone exiting by the south door. The vehicles would also need to negotiate a parking area. As there is a school located in this road it is attempted to eliminate or at least reduce any reversing manoeuvres.
Due to these issues the refuse collectors would not collect directly from the proposed storage facility and would require the bins to be presented at the front of the property on collection days. A bin store located at the front of the

property with direct access from the highway, either via the main entrance or a purpose built gateway, is therefore recommended.

Sompting Parish Council: Object on grounds of overdevelopment, out of keeping with the area. More family homes are needed and this would be an unwelcome development as there are no blocks of flats on this side of the road. There would be inadequate parking and access would be near the busy mini-roundabout. The development would also overlook neighbouring properties.

Third Parties: 28 letters/e-mails of objection have been received from residents of No's 10, 12, 22, 33, 35, 37, 46, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 61 & 74 Boundstone Lane and No's 1, 2 & 3 Cherry Tree Lodge (also in Boundstone Lane); No.11 The Martlets; No's 2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18 & 19 Elmstone Close; and No's 1 & 3 Cokeham Road, on the following grounds:-

- out of character with the surrounding area in design and scale
- obtrusive and dominating building
- overdevelopment
- three times as wide as other buildings in the road
- loss of privacy and overlooking
- increased occupancy of the plot and increased noise and traffic
- insufficient parking provision
- loss of security
- impact on safety for children going to Boundstone Community College and the nursery school and on the busy bus route close to a roundabout
- too high density for a family-oriented residential area
- the existing buildings are perfectly habitable
- parking and bin stores too close to existing homes
- noise, disturbance and light pollution from cars using the access drive
- overbearing to No. 57 (bungalow)
- impact on water supply as limited resources
- precedent set for similar redevelopment proposals
- Cherry Tree Lodge flats opposite (12 bedrooms in total) do not set a precedent to justify this development (22 bedrooms in an area half the size)

[NB. the residents of No's 51 & 61 Boundstone Lane and No's 17 & 18 Elmstone Close request to speak at the Committee meeting]

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, NE1-2, CH1, ERA1, DEV1, DEV3-5
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AG3, AB25-27, AT12, AH1-2, AH5 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No. 2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'

Revised West Sussex Parking Standards & Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003 & ADC 2004)
'The Provision of Service Infrastructure related to New Development in West Sussex – Part 1' (WSCC 1999)
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 'Housing' (DCLG 2006)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site lies within the built-up area of Sompting and is not allocated for any particular use or development. In principle, the proposed redevelopment for residential purposes accords with both Structure and Local Plan policies. In order to meet the housing requirements of the Structure Plan, it is necessary that a significant proportion of new residential development takes place by way of 'unidentified' small infill and redevelopment sites.

The above policies encourage redevelopment and infilling to help meet the demand for dwellings suitable for small families, single persons, the elderly, as well as affordable housing, and to make best use of urban land. This is encompassed in Structure Plan policy LOC1 but it is on the proviso that 'the impact on the character of the area and the environment, resources and assets of the County is acceptable" (para a) and also in allocating sites in Local Plans, that account should be taken of 'the need to protect and enhance the qualities and characteristics of settlements which local communities value" (para d)

Policy DEV1, entitled high quality development, states that development should not be permitted unless the construction, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are of high quality taking into account the need to, amongst other things, integrate with and where possible enhance adjoining land uses and minimise conflicts between land uses and activities; have regard to context including site characteristics, townscape/streetscape views into and out of the site and building styles/materials; give high priority to pedestrians and reduce dominance of cars; create a high quality socially-inclusive adaptable environment; protect and enhance biodiversity; ensure energy efficiency; and meet the needs of service providers.

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 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 that '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.

The relevant Local Plan policy AH2, related to housing development by way of infilling and redevelopment, expects development to be designed so that its appearance, character and scale create a pleasant place in which to live, is in keeping with and enhances the existing local environment with particular attention to the architectural form, height, materials, density and layout; respect for the natural features of the site, including trees, no unneighbourly effect on existing dwellings by loss of privacy, light, outlook or open amenity space; adequate access and parking arrangements (as required by AT12) and accordance with adopted standards (in this case the Council's DC Standard No. 2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats' 1996.) Policy AH5 states that there will be a presumption in favour of dwelling units that are suitable for smaller households but that regard should be had to the desirability of a mix of dwelling sizes and types.

Government policy in PPS3, in order to achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, improve affordability and create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities, generally encourages the maximisation of the use of previously developed land for housing development at higher densities (avoiding developments at less than 30 dwellings per hectare) and without rigid application of parking and amenity space standards. However, it is also states that "Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted".
It encourages LPAs to promote "designs and layouts which make efficient and effective use of land, including encouraging innovative approaches to help deliver high quality outcomes". It states:- "Careful attention to design is particularly important where the chosen local strategy involves intensification of the existing urban fabric. More intensive development is not always appropriate. However, when well designed and built in the right location, it can enhance the character and quality of an area. Successful intensification need not mean high rise development or low quality accommodation. The density of existing development should not dictate that of new housing by stifling change or requiring replication of existing style or form. If done well, imaginative design and layout of new development can lead to a more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the local environment".

Visual amenity – density, character and appearance

The existing dwellings are fairly typical for the immediate area. Both are set in quite large plots and are clearly open to view from Boundstone Lane. As shown on the indicative elevations the proposed replacement block would be two and half storeys high facing Boundstone Lane, with a single storey part at the rear.

The proposed density of development is approximately 123 dwellings per hectare. This is very high in relation to surrounding properties, which are predominantly detached and semi-detached bungalows and houses at a density of only about 22dph. There is only one other flat development in the vicinity, Cherry Tree Lodge, which is a two storey development dating from

the 1970s at a density of 65dph. The terraced houses to the rear of the site, in the Martlets, are at a higher density of 77dph.

There would be little space for soft landscaping at the front of the site and with 4 parking spaces located adjacent to the site entrance, it is considered that the site would have a relatively hard, built-up appearance, which would not enhance the streetscene. The building would be approximately 25m wide and 13m deep with an additional single-storey wing at the back. The building would be approximately 9.7m high. Although the design of the building is only indicative at this stage, it is considered that the scale and mass involved in accommodating 13 flats would be excessive and out of character in the streetscene, being visually overdominant, particularly in relation to No. 55, a modest bungalow. The relationship of the proposed building to the bungalow would be incongruous in appearance given that the bungalow is only 6m high to the short ridge of its roof and 10m wide, while the proposed building would be almost 10m high and 25m wide. Together with the associated parking, the proposal is considered to represent an overdevelopment of the site and this is further emphasized by the difficulty in providing for bin storage in a position that is both easily accessible from the road but not overly obtrusive. It is important that it is demonstrated at outline stage that the proposed number of units can be adequately accommodated on the site.

It is considered that the proposal conflicts with Structure and Local Plan policies and Government policy in PPS3 because the proposed design is inappropriate in its context and it would result in a deterioration in the existing character and quality of the area.

Residential amenity – standard of accommodation

The space around dwellings and flats is an important factor in the creation of a pleasant residential environment, contributing to the character, identity and appearance of an area. It is also important to ensure adequate privacy and daylight to individual homes. The indicative floor plans show that each 2-bedroom unit would have a floor space of approximately 60 square metres each and the studio flats a floor space of about 45 square metres. There are no standards for new development but, for comparison, the Council's DC Standard for flat conversions states a minimum overall area of 57sqm for two-bedroom flats and 30sqm for bedsittingroom flats, so the proposal exceeds these standards. It is intended that the ground floor accommodation would be suitable for disabled people.

External communal amenity space for residents of the development would be provided at the rear (north side). Its area is 185sqm. There would be a 56sqm planted area at the front (north corner). Under the Council's DC Standard No.3, 20sqm per flat is required, giving a total minimum requirement of 260sqm. Consequently, the proposal is deficient and indicates that it is overdevelopment.

Residential amenity – effect on existing dwellings

The Council's DC Standard No.2 requires a distance of at least 22m between principal windows of dwellings which back onto each other in order to provide reasonable privacy. It states that this distance should be increased for buildings of more than two storeys to 28m. In this case, the two houses to the rear in The Martletts would be approximately 22m away as measured from the two-storey part of the houses to the three storeys of accommodation proposed. The distance would be reduced between the single-storey rear extension at No.11 The Martletts and the proposed single-storey part of the proposal to approximately 16m. It is therefore considered that there would be some detrimental overlooking and loss of privacy resulting. No.11 The Martletts would be in very close proximity to the rear of the proposed building and to the proposed parking and cycle and bin stores. Due to an existing extension at the rear of No.11, it has only a short garden backing onto the proposed bin store location (the distance is probably only 5 to 6 metres). This could result in additional noise and an unpleasant environment in close proximity to No.11.

The side elevation of the bungalow to the south of the site (No.55 Boundstone Lane) has a door and a window and is within 1m of the common side boundary with the proposed access drive. While the window and door are not primary light sources for No. 55, the bungalow would be in very close proximity to the driveway and building and the increased activity from cars using the access and parking area. No. 55 would be likely to suffer some increased noise and disturbance as a result of the development, particularly the access, being in such close proximity.

It is considered that the residential amenity of No. 61, to the north, although only 2.8m away from the north side of the proposed building, would be unlikely to be affected so much as to warrant refusal.

Access and Parking

WSCC advise that the widening of the southern access in order to serve the development is acceptable subject to its width being increased to 4.5m and pedestrian vision splays being provided.

The existing northern access would be closed and the kerb, verge and footway would need to be reinstated.

They also advise that, in their view, 9 parking spaces are acceptable in this location, notwithstanding that the adopted maximum standard is 20 spaces, provided cycle parking is provided and a contribution towards sustainable transport infrastructure improvements of £8,385 is secured through a section 106 Obligation (in accordance with the adopted Revised West Sussex Parking Standards & Transport Contributions Methodology).

Recommendation

REFUSE on grounds that:-

1. The proposal is unacceptable in that it is out of keeping in design, form and scale with the existing environmental character of the locality and, together with the proportion of the site that would be covered with hardstanding and the number of flats proposed, it would be an overdevelopment of the site, conflicting with policy AH2 of the Adur District Local Plan and DEV1 of the West Sussex Structure Plan.
2. Having regard to the limited area of the site and its relationship to existing dwellings, the scale and proximity of the proposed development would be unneighbourly and detrimental to the residential amenities and environment of the adjacent dwellings, thereby conflicting with policy AH2 of the Adur District Local Plan and DEV1 of the West Sussex Structure Plan.
3. There is no evidence that the necessary contribution 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.

.....