Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1243/23 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: 4 The Downs, Steepdown Road, Sompting, BN15 0LJ

Proposal: Conversion of garage to habitable room (home office).

Date of site visit: Assessment has been assisted using the Applicants plans; Earthlight mapping; and Google 3D of the site

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings:

No. 4 The Downs is a detached chalet style dwelling, positioned on the east side of Steepdown Road. The Downs is a group of 4no. detached dwellings constructed in the late 1990's. No. 4 is the first dwelling at the south side of the group and is positioned next to the former 'Joyful Whippet' public house, now demolished. The dwelling is on rising land and a slope leads up to the property with a long flight of steps, approx. 9.5m long, leads from the pavement to the house. There is an additional flight of steps leading from the flat area directly to the front of the house, to the front door.

Each of the 4no. properties within The Downs have a long run of steps to the house also, plus an additional flight of steps to the front door. All 4no. of the group were constructed with an integral garage, and all have 2no. front dormers and 2no. rear dormers.

Proposal:

Permission is sought to:-

- Convert the integral garage into living accommodation, in this instance a home office; and
- Change the existing garage door to a window to serve the new room.

Relevant History:

S/26/97/TP 8 Detached chalet bungalows with integral garages. **Approved 15.09.1997**

Condition 3 of the above approval:- "The dwellings shall not be occupied until the parking spaces, garages and access facilities shown on the submitted plans have been provided in accordance with construction details to be submi8tted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The areas of land so provided shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than access, garaging and parking of vehicles incidental to the use of the proposed dwellings."

Representations: Sompting Parish Council: No objection.

Consultations:

WSCC Highways:

Steepdown Road is a D class road which adjoins Halewick Lane to the north of the A27 Sompting. The road is subject to 30mph speed restrictions. The LHA has checked the most recently supplied accident data for this area and can confirm that there have been no highways accidents or personal injury claims at the existing access point to flag an existing concern with the access arrangements at this property.

The proposal seeks to change the existing garage into a home office. From observation of the submitted plans, the existing garage does not meet current specifications for a garage in which to adequately serve a single average sized vehicle. Garages are expected to now measure 3m x 6m. The garage dimensions are currently 2.5m x 4.9m. Therefore this existing arrangement is not considered to be a viable parking space and does not currently count towards the existing parking provision.

On this basis, the LHA considers that the proposal does not impact upon the parking arrangement currently in operation. The proposal would see a single additional habitable room in the dwelling. The existing number of habitable rooms is unknown, however, it is not considered that the home office would generate a material number of additional vehicular movements to the property. On street parking appears to be a practise along Steepdown Road which could be an option for overspill parking. The LHA are unaware of any existing parking capacity concerns in this area, therefore the LPA may wish to look at this as an amenity consideration.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 1, 15, 28
Supplementary Planning Guidance comprising: Development Management Standard No.2 ‘Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings’
National Planning Policy Framework 2021

Planning Assessment

Principle:

The proposal comprises the conversion of an integral garage of a residential property located within the built up area and can be supported in principle. The relevant issues are the visual effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers and the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Visual & Residential Amenity:

A condition on the approval for the dwelling required that the garage shall always be used as a garage and for no other purpose. The reason for this condition was *"To ensure adequate provision for parking clear of the highway."*

However, subsequent to the garage being constructed, cars are now larger and thereby the size requirement of a garage is now larger, meaning that a car cannot adequately fit within the garage, making it not fit for purpose. And as the garage is an internal garage, there is no opportunity to widen it.

Notwithstanding the situation of the garage, there is a long drive leading to the former garage, which measures some 9.5m in length, which is more than adequate to accommodate a car parking clear of the pavement.

The former garage could thereby be satisfactorily repurposed to the proposed home office without any detriment to the neighbouring residential properties or the character of the area.

The proposal will also require that the garage door be removed and replaced with a window to serve the home office. The new window will be the same size as the other forward facing window of the dwelling, and the space below the window will be flint filled as per the space below the other window. Thereby maintaining the character and appearance of the 4no. chalets facing onto Steepdown Road.

Recommendation:

APPROVE subject to the following condition(s)

1. Approved plans
2. Standard time limit
3. Materials

Informative:

1. Approved without amendment

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Eve Hearsey Date: 08.11.2023

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 8 November 2023