Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0481/24 **Recommendation: APPROVE**

Site: 301 Brighton Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 2HL

Proposal: Proposed application to combine 301 & 301a units to 1 no. dwelling house and provide additional lightwell/ escape stair to basement area

Date of site visit: 10/07/2024

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings
The site is located on the northern side of Brighton Road. The site contains a two-storey (with basement) semi-detached building. The basement has been in use as a separate two-bedroom flat. This has been registered for council tax but there is no planning history associated with this unit.

The site is not within a conservation area and does not contain a listed building or structure. There are no trees protected by tree preservation orders that would be affected.

Proposal
The proposal is to incorporate the basement unit back into the main house. The kitchen will be removed and the space will be used as additional floorspace for the main unit. A front lightwell is proposed which would infill the gap between the front and side elevations. A security fence of 1.1m tall would be installed around the lightwell.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/1447/22: Proposed single storey ground floor extensions to front of house. Refused Fri 21 Oct 2022 and appeal dismissed.

Consultations:
West Sussex Country Council

This application is to combine 301 & 301a units to 1 no. dwelling house and provide additional light well/escape stair to basement area. The site is located on Brighton Road, an A-classified residential road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph in this location.

The LHA does not anticipate that the proposals would give rise to a material intensification of movements to or from the site. Existing access and parking arrangements will be unaffected by the proposals.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 115), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Southern water:
Southern Water requires a formal application for any new connection to the public sewer to be made by the applicant or developer.

WSP (drainage comments)
Following a review of the submitted information, we have no objection on surface water grounds. Due to the site, size, location, and type of development we would recommend the approval of the application.

Environmental Health Public Health: No adverse comments

Representations:
None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM1, DM5, DM15, DM18, DM20
National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)

Planning Assessment

Principle of development

Policy DM1 seeks to resist the loss of existing homes. The proposal would result in one less residential unit. The policy states that "Planning applications that result in the loss of residential accommodation will not be permitted unless one or more of the following exceptions apply". Of the outlined criteria the one most relevant is "vi) applications for the conversion of flats or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) back to family sized homes will be considered on their merits taking account of other considerations including, for example, amenity considerations and evidence regarding the need for family homes".

The two-bedroom unit is 61 square metres with one single and one double bedrooms. While it appears to offer adequate floor area the double bedroom does not have any outlook or natural light. The rear bedroom and living room only have outlook onto a small lightwell and stairway which is within a conservatory. A section wasn't provided but from the site visit it wasn't clear if the unit would achieve the required head height. It is considered that the loss of this unit can be justified due to the poor standard of accommodation it currently provides.

Visual Amenity
Lightwells are not characteristic of the area. However, the scale of the lightwell is very small and would be tucked up adjacent to the house about 15 metres from the street. The proposal would retain the existing building line and generous front sized gardens which in the 2022 appeal decision were considered to contribute to a strong sense of uniform space around the buildings. The 1.1m security railings around the lightwell are considered acceptable and would not adversely affect the front elevation of the property.

A condition requiring the materials of the development to match the existing house will be secured to ensure the development is complementary.

Impact on neighbouring residents
The conversion back to one dwellinghouse is not considered to have an impact on neighbouring residents. The proposed would result in a reduction in activity to the rear of the house where the access to the basement unit was located.

Due to the location below ground the lightwell would not have any amenity impacts. The small security railings would not affect the neighbours due to scale and location.

Transport and highways
The LHA does not anticipate that the proposals would give rise to a material intensification of movements to or from the site. Existing access and parking arrangements will be unaffected by the proposals.

Drainage
The site is not located in an area prone to flooding. The application was reviewed by the council's drainage consultant who had no objection to the proposal.

CIL
The development is not liable for CIL as no additional floorspace is being created.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Matching materials unless as specified on the approved plans

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including

planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Southern Water advice

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

Case Officer: Louise Prew Date: 10/07/2024

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 10 July 2024