Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1630/24 Recommendation: Approve

Site: 96 - 98 South Street, Lancing

Proposal: Change of use of north east part of Parish Hall from Class E to (C3) Residential and conversion of existing roof space, with new first floor window to side (north) elevation and rooflights to rear (west) roofslope.

Date of Site Visit: 14 January 2025

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

The application relates to the north east part of the Lancing Parish Hall which is currently vacant but was previously used as ancillary office space. It is accessed from the front facing South Street and currently comprises a first floor only.

It is proposed to change the use to C3 residential to provide a 1 bed dwelling on the first floor and within the roofspace, which it is proposed to convert with the addition of two rooflights on the rear (west) roofslope and one north facing window at first floor. Glazing is also to be provided within an existing circular opening on the north side gable.

The Parish Hall is to the south of St Michael and All Angels Church, fronting South Street in a mixed commercial and residential area. There is a car park at the rear, accessed from Chester Avenue. Bungalows within Chester Avenue back onto the site.

The hall is a two storey building with a pitched roof.

Planning History:

None relevant to this part of the building

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council: The Highways Authority has no objection. Considering the existing permitted usage (although acknowledged that this proposal will only replace a small portion of this use), in terms of highway safety and level of

activity to the site, it is unlikely that this proposal to change to C3 would have an adverse impact on the local highway network. From experience of other similar proposals, the LHA recognise that both parish halls and office spaces have capacity to generate more vehicle movements compared with residential developments. As such, there is no expectation for this proposal to give rise to any increase in the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site.

The proposal includes a single parking space to be allocated within the associated car park to the rear of the property, although this has not been demonstrated within the associated plans. Parking should be conditioned with plans and details to be provided, or details should be provided prior to determination. From observing the WSCC parking demand calculator, it is considered that a single parking provision would be acceptable for a property of this size in this location. Overspill parking could on occasion be accommodated in nearby on street parking provisions.
The property is located within a sustainable location, close to shops and amenities. Lancing Railway station is a 6 minute walk from the site and Bus services operate to the south along the A259 providing services to Littlehampton, Goring by Sea, Worthing and Brighton, this is a 7minute walk. Cycle storage has been provided within the ground floor of the plot, given the restricted available space within the site for this to be provided, the LHA support this provision as cycling is a viable alternative to the use of a car for a number of journeys within Lancing

Adur and Worthing Councils: Planning Policy: From what info I have it's an area within the Lancing Parish Church Hall and was used as an office. It's only a very small space. According to the info supplied it is of low quality and would not have the facilities required to meet the requirements of an independent /self contained office space.

Policy 25 of the ALP is relevant. If we are satisfied that the use of the office was part of a wider use/ that the condition of the offices are poor and would not attract an independent user then I think we could support its loss. In terms of proposed uses - the policy seeks to ensure a mix of uses - however this proposal involves a small area and will the residential help to reinvest in the remaining space?

No comments from a town centre perspective - the site is within the secondary frontage and the latest study supports a more flexible approach.

Public Health: No adverse comments

Drainage: No objection on surface water grounds

Southern Water: No objection

Lancing Parish Council: Support

Representations

2 letters of objection received from the occupiers of 81 South Street and 76 Chester Avenue:

- With the car park development not yet finished, I am concerned that another piece of council property, in the same immediate area as that development, is being proposed for further residential use. I feel that the council should look elsewhere within Lancing for development opportunities.

- I am also concerned that the proposed use of the residential property is not being mentioned - it would be odd to add more social housing into an area that is about to have 7 social housing properties.

- We are concerned that building residential space above the Parish Hall will mean our property will be overlooked, invading our privacy in our garden and also being able to see into our upstairs bedroom window.

- We currently also experience issues with parking down Chester Avenue at peak times and when there are functions at the Parish Hall, and several times have had people park over our driveway and on both sides of the road making it nearly impossible to enter/exit our driveway - thus being another major concern. Both of these issues will have an impact if we decide to sell the property in the future.

- We already experience light (and sometimes noise) shining through our upstairs bedroom window from the Parish hall, and further light shining into our upstairs bedroom could then begin to affect our and our children's sleeping which would be detrimental to our physical and mental health.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 2, 3, 9, 15, 20, 22, 25
'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Management Standard No.1 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'
National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).
Lancing Vision 2012
Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (DCLG 2015)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The proposal will result in the loss of office space. The Parish Council has written in support of the application, advising that the premises have proven to be unsuitable as offices due to the lack of toilet facilities and running water. The space needs to be refurbished and its re-use for residential purposes would be a more viable use which would go a small way towards the provision of much-needed housing in the District.

Policy 25 of the Adur Local Plan refers to those employment uses outside of protected areas and states:

"*The conversion or redevelopment of land or buildings, currently or last in class B1, B2 or B8, for other uses will only be approved where:*
(i) The loss of a small proportion of employment floorspace would lead to a significant upgrade of the remaining employment floorspace; or
(ii) It can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the site or premises is/are genuinely redundant and that no effective demand exists or is likely to exist in the future to use the land or buildings for B class uses. This should include the length of time the property has remained vacant, the attempts made to sell/let it, and the demand for the size and type of employment premises in the area.
Where part (ii) of the above criteria has been satisfied, a mix of uses will be considered. Employment generating uses should be considered as part of this mix of uses. Complete loss of employment uses will only be acceptable where it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that partial employment use cannot realistically be achieved. The upgrading of existing employment sites and buildings will be supported."

While no marketing evidence has been submitted, for the reasons set out above, the space is not considered to be viable for long term office use and its conversion to residential is therefore acceptable in principle.

The relevant issues are the effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers and the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Visual amenity

The proposal will not result in any significant external alterations. The proposed rooflights are to be a conservation style due to their location adjacent to the Church (the site is not in a Conservation Area). A new window is proposed at first floor on the north side to match the existing window on that elevation and which will provide a more balanced appearance.

Residential amenity

The proposed flat would have a floor area of approximately 56m2 over two floors (if the ground floor non habitable cloak/utility and entrance lobby is discounted). The

accommodation over the two upper floors includes living room/diner and kitchen at first floor and a bedroom and bathroom on the second floor. Storage space is also shown to be provided. The 56m2 falls just short of the national standard of 58m2 for a 1 bed 2 storey dwelling but the submitted floor plans show a reasonable layout and this minor shortfall is not considered to be of such significance in this case to warrant a refusal on this ground.

No garden space is to be provided, as is common with upper floor residential units, but the site is within a short walking distance of Beach Green.

There are bungalows to the rear, which are 25m from the rear of the proposed unit to the boundary and 35m to the back of the bungalows. Any overlooking from the existing first floor window and proposed rooflights would not be unduly intrusive or harmful to privacy as a result. The rooflights are shown to be a minimum 1.7m above floor level. Light intrusion from the windows is not expected to be harmful in this urban location.

The new window on the north side will serve the proposed living room and will face towards the churchyard only. No loss of privacy or amenity will arise.

Highways and parking

A single allocated parking space is shown within the existing car park at the rear for future residents. Cycle storage is shown as being provided on the ground floor. The site is in a sustainable location and there are no highway concerns with the proposed use or parking provision.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard 3 year time limit
3. Conservation rooflights
4. Car parking
5. Cycle parking

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation Y

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 12 February 2025

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 12/02/2025