Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1426/17 Recommendation – Approve

Site: 135 - 137 South Street, Lancing

Proposal: Conversion of former car dealership to 3 x 1 bedroom flats including 4m deep single storey extension across part of rear

Date of site visit: 4 October 2017

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a former car dealership on the ground floor of a 3 storey building on the east side of South Street. The upper floors are in residential use (Chelmer House). There is a mix of commercial uses on the ground floor of the properties to the south, with flats above. The site is opposite the former Bell Care Home which is currently being redeveloped with flats. There is a parking area and garage court at the rear.

The proposal is to convert and extend the ground floor to form 3 x 1 bed flats. On the forecourt at the front of the flats a small yard is to be provided by constructing a low wall and railings. As amended, a 4m deep extension is to be constructed across part of the rear to serve bedrooms for two flats, leading to a small private external amenity area enclosed by a closeboard fence.

Relevant site history

None

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The ***Highway*** Officer has no objection. A nil car parking provision is proposed for the new flats. Under the WSCC Car Parking Standards, two car parking spaces may be provided for the proposal. Whilst on-street car parking is limited in the immediate vicinity there are comprehensive parking restrictions prohibiting vehicles from parking in places that would be detrimental to highway safety. We would not consider that highway safety would be detrimentally affected through the proposed nil car parking provision. The Planning Authority may wish to consider the potential impacts of this development on on-street car parking.

The location is suited well to sustainable forms of transport with good footway links to a range of local shops and amenities. Lancing Train Station is 0.4 mile distant with services on to nearby key locations. We would advise that secure and covered bicycle storage is included in the proposals, details of which can be secured via condition.

Adur & Worthing Councils: Original Plans - The ***Environmental Health*** Officer advises that the area of development on South Street, Lancing, has been identified by DEFRA as an area severely affected by traffic noise. He would normally ask for an acoustic assessment to be undertaken to ascertain the exact noise exposure of the property including a scheme to protect the habitable rooms and amenity areas from excess noise. However, as we are aware of the existing noise levels from the development of the Bell site opposite, he recommends the following:

The front windows shall be fixed. The railings shown on the top of the wall should be replaced with a close boarded fence to the same height. The gate shall also be close boarded. This will act as a partial barrier to protect the Western Facade from road noise.

Internally, whole house ventilation shall be provided as the front window will need to remain closed in order to obtain good internal noise levels. To the rear, he recommends that the French doors be replaced with a single door and a window with fan light, in order that a window can be left open at night for ventilation to aid thermal comfort on warm summer nights.

If any of the above is an issue then he would request the following condition:

“The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a scheme for protecting the proposed dwellings and outside amenity areas from noise has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall demonstrate good acoustic design and shall comply with the internal noise level guidelines set out in BS8233:2014. The scheme shall also try and achieve as far as reasonably practicable the WHO guidelines for external amenity areas. All works which form part of the agreed scheme shall be completed before the permitted dwellings is occupied.”

An asbestos informative is also recommended.

Amended Plans – The ***Environmental Health*** Officer is happy with the plans. Given the westerly outlook of the main living rooms that will get the afternoon sun and the fact that windows will need to be kept closed for acoustic reasons he requests whole house ventilation to help mitigate the living areas becoming stuffy in the summer months. Given the close proximity of the dwellings to the road he suggests that the air intake is to the rear of the property.

“The dwellings hereby permitted shall have whole house ventilation with continuous mechanical supply and extract with heat recovery (MVHR), as described in Approved Document F (System 4)”... or words to this effect.

The **Private Sector Housing** Manager objected to the original plans.

- The proposed plans currently show that the bedrooms can only be accessed through the kitchen-living area and so they are inner rooms. Although there is a sliding door indicated to the bedrooms, these exit into a 2.5 metre deep yard enclosed by high fences with no gate and so they cannot considered to be a secondary fire escape route.

- In addition, the outlook from the bedrooms is poor and could be an actionable hazard under the Housing Act 2004, whilst the sliding doors would not offer suitably controllable ventilation.
- The outlook from the front of the flats would be poor.

Lancing Parish Council: No objection

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017: Policies 2, 3, 9, 15, 20
Lancing Vision
National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)
Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (DCLG 2015)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site lies within a secondary retail frontage as identified by the Adur Local Plan. Within such frontages a more flexible approach to change of use can be taken provided it does not conflict with other policies in the Plan or in lancing Vision.

The former car showroom was a sui generis use and there will not be a loss of Class A uses in this mixed area. Lancing Vision sets out the future vision and aims for the village and states that a flexible approach to uses will be allowed in the Seaside Zone, in which this site falls.

The proposal comprises the provision of new housing stock located within the built up area and, in accordance with the above policies, it can be supported in principle. The relevant issues are the effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers, the quality of the future living environment and the effect on the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings.

Visual amenity

The proposal will replace the former glazed frontage with new windows and doors and brickwork to match existing. The doors and windows generally align with the existing windows on the upper floors. The building is set back from the pavement leaving a narrow forecourt underneath the projecting saw tooth elements of the building which oversail the ground floor. It is proposed to enclose this area with a low wall and railings plus entrance gate to each flat to provide a small area of defensible space in front of the flats. This will align with an existing low wall and planted area in front of Chelmer House further north and will not appear unduly prominent or out of character, despite the commercial nature of buildings further south. A new residential development

of flats is currently under construction opposite the site and the provision of flats on this site would be in keeping.

Residential amenity – existing occupiers

The application has been amended from its original submission to reduce the size of the proposed rear extension in order to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of 141 South Street to the south of the site. That property is in residential use and has a conservatory at the rear plus a window at the side that faces the site. The conservatory is boxed in and faces east but it does currently gain some light as the existing building at 135/137 does not project significantly beyond the rear of the conservatory and the existing boundary wall is not too oppressive. By contrast, the proposed extension would have been constructed immediately on the boundary and 4m deep to a similar height as the grey painted brickwork of the existing building. It would have been an overbearing addition which would have caused light loss and an increased sense of enclosure.

The amendment has brought the extension off the boundary by 3m which has helped to remove the bulk and impact of the proposal on the adjoining occupiers to the south.

To the north the site is adjoined by a parking area for the existing flats in Chelmer House. The existing flats themselves are at first floor level and above, or are a sufficient distance from the site, and there is not considered to be any adverse impact on residential amenity as a result.

Residential amenity – future occupiers

Two of the flats will meet the minimum recommended floor area for a 1 person 1 bed flat in the national housing standards (39sqm) with the other meeting the standard of 37sqm for a 1 bed flat with shower room rather than bathroom. The agent has confirmed the floor areas for each flat as follows:

Flat 1 – area 48.46sqm
Flat 2 – area 40.66sqm
Flat 3 – area 37.14sqm

Externally, a small fenced amenity area (less than 10sqm) is to be provided at the rear of each flat. Generally, 20sqm is expected for each flat but it is considered that sufficient space is to be provided for the drying of clothes or sitting outside. The site is very close to Beach Green and a larger area of open space is therefore easily accessible to future residents.

The Environmental Health Officer has commented on the exposure to traffic noise that the flats will be subjected to. The plans have been amended to move bedrooms to the rear but he has recommended a whole house ventilation system be installed and this could be controlled by condition if the application was to be approved.

The Private Sector Housing Manager has also commented on poor outlook for the flats and the lack of means of escape in the event of fire. The plans have

subsequently been amended to include a gate in the rear fence to enable access to the rear parking yard (which is in the same ownership).

Outlook will be poor but, overall, the development is considered to be acceptable in terms of the standard of living accommodation to be provided. Similar flat conversions have taken place along South Street previously, including at 178 South Street, and it is not considered that there are sufficient grounds to warrant refusal in this case. The development would be providing three small flats which would meet a housing need in the District and it is considered that the application can be supported.

Parking and access

No parking is to be provided but the Highway Officer has no objection as the site is in a sustainable location with good footway links to a range of local shops and amenities. He has advised that secure and covered bicycle storage should be provided and this may be possible in the rear yard. This can be reserved by condition.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. Approved Plans
2. Time limit
3. Cycle parking
4. Whole house ventilation

Informative:

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.

Asbestos

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 26 February 2018

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 26 February 2018