DELEGATED APPLICATIONS

ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO/ADDRESS: 11/0207 – 37 Upper Brighton Road

DATE OF SITE VISIT: 14/6/11

NEIGHBOURS CHECKED: Y

ADDITIONAL NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATIONS (LIST ADDRESSES): None.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The property is a detached 1920s three bedroom house, located in an outer residential suburb on the north side of Upper Brighton Road (A27 trunk road) which backs onto Rotary Recreation Ground.

It is a modestly sized 3 bedroom house in period 'Tudorbethan' style with a pretty traditional appearance. It has a hipped and tiled roof with a strong tile hung front gable and the remainder of the building is rendered with some timber framing at first floor level and brick on the ground floor. The front elevation incorporates tile hung bay windows on two floors with a projecting gabled porch. The property still has its original timber framed and leaded windows. There are two small single storey rear additions. Vehicular access is directly from Upper Brighton Road and the site currently has off street parking for one car on the forecourt and an integral garage.

The site is not in a conservation area and nor is the building statutorily or locally listed. There are three protected trees on the site, a Yew in the front south east corner adjoining the access, a Eucalyptus on the boundary but in the garden of No. 35 to the west and a Japanese Maple in the rear garden also on the west boundary.

The area is characterised by attractive detached, family, inter-war properties of varying but complementary period designs modestly scaled with sizeable front and rear gardens. No. 41 has recently been extended to the rear and converted into 5 flats by the same applicant. The property enjoys reasonable separation between the neighbours at 35 and 29 which allows oblique views to the property's sides and views of the mature trees at the rear.

PROPOSAL

This is a full application to replace the existing dwelling with 3 No. four bedroomed terraced houses over three floors. The replacement building has a roughly square footprint measuring 13.45 metres in depth and 12.55 metres in width, with a set back of 1.5 metres from the frontage of the most easterly dwelling. The building is fully three storeys with a varying eaves height and a hipped mansard roof with three pitched roof dormers. The ridge height is 9.2 metres which is higher than either neighbouring building.

The rear garden has been subdivided lengthways into three with the middle garden 4.5 metres wide and the outer two 5.3 metres wide and each of them an average of 22 metres in length.

The frontage is shown developed to provide 5 car parking spaces perpendicular to the western boundary with the existing crossover repositioned more centrally on the frontage.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

10/1060 – Demolition of existing single storey outbuildings and construction of two and half storey rear extension (north elevation) and provision of new leaded light window in existing front gable in connection with conversion of loft space into home office, WC and storage area. Resubmission of WB/10/0682/FULL. Granted 27.1.11

10/0682 – Demolition of existing single storey outbuildings and construction of two and half storey rear extension (north elevation) and provision of new leaded light window in existing front gable in connection with conversion of loft space into home office, WC and storage area. Refused 28.9.20

10/0314 – Two storey rear extension, internal alterations and conversion of property into five self contained two bedroom flats. Refused 13.7.10. Appeal Dismissed 23.11.10.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

RES7, TR9, H16 and H18 of the saved Local Plan.
CC1, CC4, CC6, H1, H2, H4, H5, H6, NRM1, NRM2, NRM9, NRM10, BE1 and T4 of the South East Plan.
PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
Core Strategy Policies 7, 8, 9, 16 and 17.

REPRESENTATIONS AND RELEVANT CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Five neighbour objections received summarised as follows:

i) The picturesque cottage should not be demolished.
ii) The proposed building is very ugly and totally unlike any other in the area and out of keeping.
iii) It is too tall in relation to the footprint it occupies.
iv) There are no other three storey houses in the area.
v) The area is characterised by detached family homes with large gardens which the Borough is short of.
vi) The proposed houses do not represent good size properties with large gardens.
vii) The amount of living space in each house is very limited given the potential occupancy of 4 bedroom houses.
viii) Occupants would likely wish to want to extend to the rear of each with conservatories to provide additional communal living space.

The most westerly house would not be able to do this because of the need to avoid tree roots of the protected Acer close by.

ix) The proposed gardens are small and the protected Acer and Eucalyptus trees would significantly restrict the use of the most westerly garden.

x) The sixth parking space proposed on the plans is unusable and makes the parking layout workable.

xi) One property is shown as having all the developments bins outside it. This is unacceptable.

xii) Bike storage is referred to but not shown.

xiii) If allowed this development would set a very unfortunate precedent for the area.

xiv) The A27 cannot cope with further traffic.

xv) This area is not well served by local facilities or a bus route.

xvi) The A27 is a major severance to access to facilities to the south in Broadwater.

xvii) Five parking spaces are inadequate for a development of this size. This will result in the Recreation Ground car park being used as overspill. This will be dangerous for future users of the recreation ground, particularly children.

xviii) Windows in the west flank would overlook No. 35 and need to be obscurely glazed.

xix) Worthing needs some lower density housing. Affordable housing needs to be in more sustainable locations.

xx) The proposed development will overshadow No. 39's rear lounge and patio.

xxi) Core Strategy Policy is to retain family housing, this development will result in the loss of one.

Highways Agency: No objection to the revised parking plan.

Highway Authority: *No objections from WSCC, however the A27 is maintained by the Highways Agency; therefore you will need to consult the Highways Agency on the acceptability of the access proposals and traffic generation on the highway network.*

WSCC would comment that whilst the parking arrangement is not ideal, all vehicles parked at the site should be able to turn and exit in a forward gear. WSCC would also comment that the proposed level of off-street parking is appropriate to serve the expected demand.

Health: No objection subject to contamination watch condition, dust suppression condition, working hour's condition and a condition requiring the submission of a scheme to protect future residents from road noise.

Parks/Arboriculture:.

'Plans look a bit sketchy but from what I can glean there aren't any particular tree issues that weren't addressed last time around and in this regard my previous comments stand. The retention of the yew at the entrance, the nice Japanese maple in the rear garden and the eucalyptus trees in the adjacent

gardens appear to be ok however the development appears to come closer to the maple than previously which will require some sympathetic crown lifting. If the project was being approved we would need to agree construction detail of any foundation hard surfaces within the root protection areas for the proposed sheds and bin stores as well as the positions of the protective fences.

The boundary to the west of the new car parking is very hard with no allowance for any landscaping which would be desirable with regard to the neighbouring property.'

HUMAN RIGHTS:

Article 8 (Right to Respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application. It is accepted that the proposal, if refused, would have some impact on the applicant's Rights. However, it is considered that the harm caused by the development outweighs these and that in the public interest the application should be refused. Accordingly, it is considered that the decision complies with the Human Rights Act 1998.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

For consideration with this application is the principle of the demolition of the existing house and the site's redevelopment with three houses, the design and scale of the proposed building and its impact on the streetscene, the impact of the proposed building on neighbours, the adequacy and functionality of the accommodation to be provided, the adequacy and layout of the proposed car parking and the potential impact of the development on protected trees within the site.

Principle of Redevelopment

The existing building is a modest, almost cottage style, dwelling on a generous plot in keeping with the general age and pattern of development in the area. However, it is not a listed building and it is not in a conservation area so its demolition in principle is not objectionable.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies a shortage of family houses in the Borough and Core Strategy Policy 9 seeks the retention of the existing housing stock. However, it does say that such a loss will be tolerated where the proposal results in a net increase in family housing. In this case three 4 bedroom houses, with gardens, are being created and so in principle the replacement of one dwelling with three is also not objectionable.

The layout and functionality of the proposed houses has been questioned by neighbours and it is clear that there are issues with the proposed layouts. These are four bedroom houses with just a single living room with internal bathrooms. They are also on narrow plots with long and narrow rear gardens (averaging 21m x 5m with the middle property narrower at 4.3 metres with no alternative access other than through the house.) The protected trees on the western boundary will also restrict the use of one of the gardens. The plots

are cramped plots with little living space relative to the potential number of occupants per dwelling. However, in the absence of adopted internal space standards or garden space standards there can be no specific objection to the functionality of the layout. That said, the form and layout of the houses and gardens are uncharacteristic of the area and point to a cramped overdevelopment of the site.

Design and Scale of the Proposed Scheme

The proposed building has a greater footprint than the existing dwelling and is fully three storeys in height. It has a largely square footprint with a 1.5 metre recess at the front on the most easterly house. It extends forward of the attractive porch feature on the front of the building and is closer to the western boundary than the main flank wall and one of the side bay windows of the original property. It extends beyond the rear wall of the existing house to the depth of an approved extension to the original building. The difference however, is that the approved extension was an extension in keeping with the original property, subordinate to the original house, with lower eaves and ridge heights incorporating cat slide roofs on both sides. From the front, the building was little altered.

The proposed building has higher eaves and ridge lines. It is a more imposing building and its appearance much more assertive than the original building. It does not have the appearance of a single family dwelling, having two front doors on the frontage, the third being in the east flank.

The neighbouring detached houses are two storeys. No. 41, which was built identically to the application property, has a three storey rear extension and is converted into flats. From the front however, it retains its original two storey appearance with rooflights and a gable window only. A feature of the existing houses is their uncluttered and prominent hipped roofs and the existing house is a good example of this as it has an imposing deep hipped roof with front gable feature. Although the neighbouring properties differ in their designs hipped roofs with varying gable features is a common element running through the vernacular. Three storey development or terraced housing is entirely out of keeping.

The proposed building with its high shoulders and shallow roof punctuated on the frontage with three pitched roof dormers is entirely uncharacteristic and would appear as an anomalous addition in the streetscene.

The unrelenting height to eaves and resultant high shoulders in a semi mansard roof over the continuous length of building proposed produces austere and unsophisticated flanks that would be visible in the streetscene and harmful to its appearance.

At the rear the three hipped gables proposed sit atop a very shallow roof which looks disproportionately small on the three storey building proposed. This smallness of the roof accentuates the scale of the building and accentuates how out of character it would appear in relation to neighbouring properties. Although the previously approved extension included second floor

windows they were in an extension that reduced in width the higher up the building it went with only two windows at second floor level. The continuous and very flat featureless rear elevation is excessive in scale and bland in its appearance and would detract from the areas appearance particularly when viewed from Rotary recreation ground at the rear.

The bulkiness, awkwardness and contrived nature of the building and lack of sensitivity to the prevailing period vernacular results in a building of a poor composition, ill conceived, heavy handed and unresolved with the ambience of a block of flats. It is over dominant, incongruous and obviously unsightly in the streetscene and viewed from Rotary Recreation ground.

PPS1 expects new development to respond to their local context and create or respond to local distinctiveness. This scheme does not. PPS1 also states that designs which fail to take opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area will not be acceptable. The proposed building is unattractive and will detract from the character of the area. Core Strategy Policy 16 expects new development to demonstrate good quality architectural design that takes account of local characteristics of the area. This proposal does not.

Impact on Neighbours

The proposed building is not deeper at the rear than a three storey extension approved to the rear of the existing house. It is wider and taller. It is considered that the extra height of the three floors and their resultant increased proximity to boundaries will result in a building that is oppressive and overbearing for both adjoining neighbours at the rear. The submitted block plan shows an extension to the rear of No. 39 nearest the shared boundary. No such extension exists.

The existing building sits almost alongside No. 39 at the front. The new building will extend 2 metres or more forward of it, it is difficult to be precise in the absence of a proposed layout plan that plots neighbours houses. This extra length at the front at the scale proposed would increase the sense of overbearingness for occupiers of No. 39 Upper Brighton Road.

Car Parking

The proposal sees the relocation of the drop kerb to a more central position on the frontage and the revised plan shows five parking spaces running parallel to the boundary with No. 41.

The Highways Agency and Highways Authority has confirmed acceptability of this layout. How it would work in practice for the three houses is not clear. Many local front gardens have been hardsurfaced and space for more than one is common. The previous appeal dismissal for the extension and conversion of this property into five flats showed forecourt parking at this level. The Inspector did not believe it was a problem aesthetically. Increased soft planting, as suggested by the arboricultuist would enhance the layout.

Loss of Garden and Impact on Trees

The new development occupies a larger footprint than the existing house but the impact on the value of the cartilage space as an environmental asset is minimal, other than the visual impact on the streetscene. The Council's Arboriculturist has confirmed that root damage to the TPO'd trees on the site is unlikely to occur with careful digging. The recently protected Acer may need to be crown lifted to accommodate the development but that this should not be problematic. Further single storey rear development if proposed later would need to be carefully excavated to avoid root damage.

Conclusion

The height, mass, form and design of the proposed building is out of character with the pattern of development in the area. The design is of poor quality in itself and does not reflect any of the best elements of the local vernacular and would be completely out of keeping in the streetscene and harmful to the appearance of the wider area. Its scale and bulk would also be harmful to neighbours in terms of an overbearing impact.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reason:

The design of the building is of poor quality in itself and in its context is ~~complete~~ly out of character. The height, mass and form of the proposed building is excessive and would be out of keeping in the streetscene and with the pattern of development in the area. Its scale and bulk would also be harmful to neighbours in terms of an overbearing impact. The development is therefore contrary to saved Local Plan policies H16 and H18, Core Strategy Policy 16, South East Plan policies BE1, CC1, CC6 and H5 and PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The proposal conflicts with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

IS RECOMMENDATION CONTRARY TO LETTER (S) OF REPRESENTATION?

No.

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign..... Date 28/6/11

Authorising Officer sign..... Date 27 6 11