Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0943/24 **Recommendation: APPROVE**

Site: 135 Brighton Road Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Conversion from 2 No. flats (Flat 1 and 2) back into single dwelling house and alterations to provide new doors

Date of site visit: NA

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings
The site is located on the northern side of Brighton Road. It contains a mid-terrace two storey building in use as two flats. Both flats are accessed via a single door to the front with separate internal access from the hallway. The ground floor flat is a two bedroom unit and the first floor flat has three bedrooms.

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 convert the building back into a single dwellinghouse. The proposal would result in reinstatement of the property back in to a five-bedroom dwellinghouse providing.

New bifold doors will be provided at the ground floor to the rear to access the garden from the dining area. A replacement front door will also be provided.

Relevant Planning History:
None

Consultations:
West Sussex Country Council
This application has been dealt with in accordance with the Development Control Scheme protocol for small scale proposals.
This proposal is for the conversion from 2 No. flats (Flat 1 and 2) back into single dwelling house and alterations to provide new doors. The site is located on Brighton Road, an A classified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph in this location.
No vehicular parking is to be provided for this development as per the likely existing arrangement. The WSCC Car Parking Demand Calculator indicates that a dwelling of this size in this location would require at least three car parking spaces. Consequently, vehicular parking would have to be accommodated on-street.

Whilst on-street parking is limited in the immediate vicinity, there are comprehensive parking restrictions in place prohibiting vehicles from parking in places that would be a detriment to highway safety. The LHA does not anticipate that the proposed nil car parking provision would result in a detrimental highway safety impact, nor give rise to a parking capacity issue. However, the LPA may wish to consider the potential impacts on on-street parking from an amenity point of view. Weight is given to the fact the site is situated within a sustainable town centre location, within walking distance of public transport links and public car parks.
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:

The Council's Building Control officers or technical staff should be asked to comment on the adequacy of soakaways to dispose of surface water from the proposed development. No new soakaways should be located within 5 metres of a public or adoptable gravity sewer, rising main or water main.

Officer's response: There is not considered to be a material difference between the two uses as the development is predominantly internal.

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 Private Sector Housing: No comment

Representations:
None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM1, DM2, DM5, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM20, DM22
National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)

Planning Assessment

Principle of development
There is no record of conversion, but council tax records indicate the two units have been in place since at least 1993.

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".

It is noted that both existing units appear to meet the Technical Housing Standards minimum floor areas. A bedroom within the first-floor unit is too small to be considered a one-person room. This first floor unit also has no access to external amenity space undermining its potential as family accommodation.

As set out in Worthing's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the trend for new dwellings has been for smaller units which "contributes to above average levels of overcrowding and constraints growth in family households". It is noted that there is a need for a mix of units and that 10-20% of market units should have four or more bedrooms.

In light of this, whilst there would technically be a net loss of 1 dwelling, this proposal would provide an opportunity to raise the standard of accommodation and provide a high-quality larger family home. Thereby resulting in a net increase in the family housing stock, by providing a good sized four- or five-bedroom family house, returning the property to its original use. Therefore, on balance, the benefits in terms of reinstating a good-sized family home and to the character of the area outweigh the loss, and the proposal is therefore acceptable in principle.

Visual Amenity
External changes are limited to alterations to the doors on the front and rear elevations. The replacement front door will be of a similar style which is acceptable. The rear doors to the garden will not be visible from the streetscene and will have no impact on it. They are in the place of existing doors and are of a scale considered appropriate for a dwellinghouse.

Standard of accommodation
The proposal will reinstate a five-bedroom home. The rooms are an acceptable size and the floorspace of the dwelling meets space standards. One small room could be used as a study or office given the number of other good-sized bedrooms. The home would have a rear garden providing adequate amenity space for all residents.

Impact on neighbouring residents
The conversion back to one dwellinghouse is not considered to have an impact on neighbouring amenity as the increase in bedrooms is not considered likely to result in an intensification of the site which would be materially different to two units.

The doors to the rear are at ground floor and face directly into the garden. They are largely in the place of an existing opening therefore there is not considered to be any adverse impact in terms of increased overlooking.

Transport and highways
The proposal does not affect access arrangements to the property. While the property may generate some transport movements requiring parking this is not materially

different to the existing situation. There is space within the rear garden to provide cycle spaces. The LHA has raised no objection to the proposal.

Drainage
The proposal does not result in a change in the vulnerability of the use on site and there is no increase in permeable area. The development is therefore acceptable in relation to policy DM20 which relates to flooding.

Biodiversity net gain
Biodiversity net gain is not applicable due to the nature of the development as a conversion.

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

Recommendation

The conversion of this property back to a single-family dwelling would be consistent with the character of the street scene which consists of both retained single dwellings and converted houses. The property is sustainably located within easy walking distance of schools and public transport. A good standard of family housing would be provided for the future occupiers. On balance, the loss of a dwelling unit is considered acceptable as it would reintroduce a good-sized home in this location.

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Matching materials

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.

New address

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

Case Officer: Louise Prew Date: 23/09/2024

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 23 September 2024