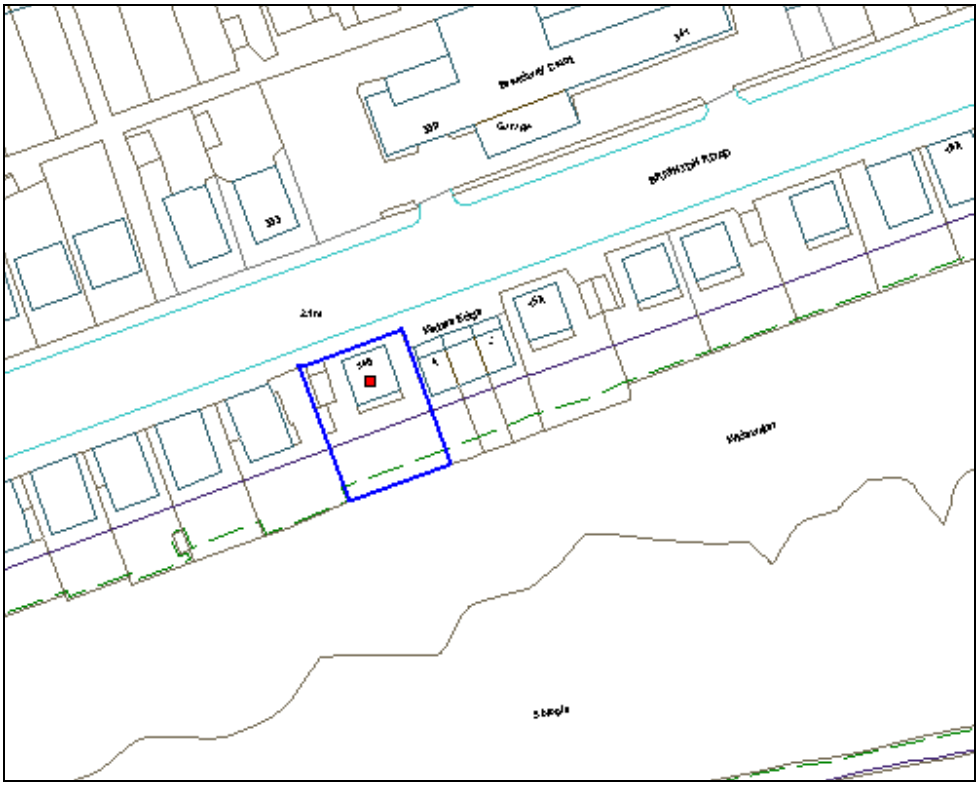
Application Number: AWDM/0266/13 Recommendation – REFUSE

Site: 148 Brighton Road Lancing West Sussex BN15 8LN

Proposal: Demolition of existing building and redevelopment to provide 2 no. 4-bedroom houses with parking

Applicant: Mr Russell Wilson Ward: Widewater
Case Officer: Jo Morin



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application property comprises a detached, 2-storey, hip-roofed building consisting of a ground and first-floor flat located on the south side of Brighton Road, backing onto the secondary sea defence embankment and Widewater Lagoon beyond. There is currently space on either side of the building for 3 vehicles to park. The adjoining property to the west, which is also in the ownership of the applicant, consists of an original gable-fronted dwelling with accommodation on three floors including rooms in the roof. The property has been enlarged by extensions and alterations to the side and rear, including large roof extensions and dormers. The adjoining property to the east

consists of 1 Waters Edge, an end of terrace dwelling within a short terrace of 3 units dating from the mid-1980s. The surrounding area is residential in character. Brighton Road is a busy road forming part of the strategic network (A259) linking the south coast towns. There is a light-controlled pedestrian crossing directly in front of the property.

Permission is sought to demolish the existing building and erect 2 no. detached 4-bedroom dwellings on three floors. The proposed dwellings would be built into the embankment and owing to the difference in ground levels would appear as 3-storey dwellings viewed from Brighton Road, whilst having 2-storeys in views to the south from Widewater. The accommodation (for each) would consist of a kitchen/dining room, 2 bedrooms, a bathroom and separate WC at first-floor, with living room, master bedroom with en-suite, and 4th bedroom or study on the second-floor. Bi-folding opening doors would lead from the south-facing living room onto a balcony structure with glazed panels and 1.8 metre high privacy screens on either side. There would be no habitable accommodation on the ground-floor, which would consist of 2 under-croft parking spaces accessed from Brighton Road, an enclosed bicycle store, plus a separate WC off the main entrance hall.

As originally submitted, the front of the proposed dwellings, were shown sited very marginally forward (north) of the existing building line fronting Brighton Road, with the rear elevations aligning with both the main rear wall of Waters Edge and No.146 to the west. [The proposed balconies would project a further 1.5 metres.] The proposed dwellings were also shown as having a full 3-storey eaves height (7.8 metres high) from Brighton Road, with a shallow hipped and pitched roof having a short north-south ridge 10 metres high. Following discussions with the applicant's architect, amended drawings have been received showing the front of the dwellings set back from Brighton Road by 0.3m with a reduced overall depth. In addition, the eaves height is shown as reduced by 0.425m with the second-floor windows 'breaking through' the eaves with flat, lead-topped roofs. The angle of roof pitch has been increased to 35 degrees with an associated increase in the height of the ridge by 0.3 metres.

The site is located within Flood Zone 3(a) and the application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment by 'Homecheck Professional'.

The application is referred to Committee for decision by Councillor Fred Lewis.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The Highway Authority has no objection on highway safety grounds subject to a condition securing the provision of cycle storage and a section 106 Obligation requiring an infrastructural contribution of £1,500 towards the provision of sustainable transport measures (TAD).

Detailed comments note that it is proposed to make provision for 4 parking spaces (an increase of 1 from existing) to serve the new dwellings. A turn on site facility is not included within the proposals and does not appear to be achievable. However it would

appear a precedent has been set by the existing use and neighbouring properties on Brighton Road that operate similar driveways. There have been no relevant reported road traffic collisions in the vicinity of this site and there appears to be no issues with visibility at both points of access on to Brighton Road.

Assessed in relation to the WSCC car parking demand calculator, there is a shortfall of one parking space for the expected number of vehicles at the development. However, given that this area is located in a sustainable location, close to public transport, it is not envisaged that the use of a private car would be relied upon as much. Whilst there are no concerns from a highway safety perspective on this, it is possible that this proposal could lead to an increase in parking demand in the local area and the Local Planning Authority may wish to consider this.

In response to a specific enquiry about whether the proposed access arrangements are affected by the pedestrian crossing, the Highways Authority have commented that there are already two existing accesses at the site, albeit one without a dropped kerb, and nearby properties also have accesses on and off the 'zig zag' lines. This, together with the fact there have been no reported road traffic collisions in the vicinity in the past five years, does not raise any highway safety issues. Restrictions can be enforced to prevent any on-street parking on the 'zig zag' lines.

Adur & Worthing Councils:

The Environmental Health Officer has no objection but requests an informative advising the applicant that an application for a Demolition Notice under the Building Act will be required prior to any demolition work commencing. The Contaminated Land Officer recommends a precautionary condition relating to possible contamination.

Environment Agency: No objection providing the development is carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment and Finished Floor Levels set no lower than 12.6 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

Lancing Parish Council: No comments received.

Representations

1 representation has been received from a resident of No. 1 Waters Edge who has no objection to the proposal, but draws attention to a pair of swans currently nesting in the garden and should be undisturbed until the young have left their nest, usually by the end of July.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AH2 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Control Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats';
'Good Practice Guidance Note: Internal Space Standards for New Homes' (ADC 2010)

West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003)
West Sussex 'Guidance for Parking in New Residential Developments' and 'Residential Parking Demand Calculator' (WSCC 2010)
The Provision of Service Infrastructure Related to New Development in West Sussex – Part 1 (WSCC 1999)
National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The proposal constitutes infilling within the built up area of Lancing and can be supported in principle under saved policy AH2 of the Local Plan subject to the dwellings being designed so that their appearance, character and scale create a pleasant place in which to live; is in keeping with and enhances the existing local environment with particular attention paid to architectural form, height, materials, density and layout; the design respects the natural features of the site, including land form; does not have an unneighbourly effect on the residential amenity of existing dwellings; provides adequate standard of amenity for future residents, and access and parking arrangements are acceptable.

Government Planning Policy within the national Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that housing applications should be considered in the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 49), which is defined as having three strands:

- an economic role, contributing to a strong economy and supporting economic growth;
- a social role, providing a supply of housing to meet current and future needs and creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services; and
- an environmental role, contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

The emerging Draft Adur Local Plan is at an early stage and currently carries little or no weight in the determination of planning applications.

Visual amenity, character and appearance

The proposed dwellings would have a contemporary appearance with visual interest created by the upper floors 'jetted' forward of the undercroft, supported on concrete posts. The materials would consist of brickwork with the upper floors of the front elevation clad in 2 different colours of timber boarding wrapping round to the side, and cladding of the upper part of the side and rear elevations. Windows would be white uPVC and the roof covered in natural slate.

The main concern, however, relates to the scale and massing of the proposed dwellings which is considered excessively large in the context of their surroundings. Although the amendment showing the second-floor windows in the front elevation 'breaking through' the eaves is considered an improvement on the original submission, the eaves height would still be 2 metres higher than the eaves of Waters Edge and 146/146A Brighton Road on either side.

The character of original development on this side of the road is predominantly 2-storey, made up of a mix of detached hip-roofed buildings and distinctive detached, gable-fronted dwellings with second-floor accommodation in the roof. Many of the original buildings in this road are coming to the end of their useful life and several have come forward for redevelopment over the last decade or so. Waters Edge, adjoining the application site to the east is typical of such redevelopments, being 2-storey in views from Brighton Road but with second-floor accommodation in the roof served by large front dormers. This form of building with a 2-storey eaves height fronting Brighton Road has been repeated by numerous recent developments along the length of this side of Brighton Road, with minor variations to the detailed design and use of materials. Making use of the difference in ground levels to straddle the embankment, the scale of recent development is typically 2-storey viewed from Widewater. The adjoining property to the west, No.146, consists of the one of the original, distinctive gable-fronted dwellings, forming one in a row of seven in this part of the road. It has been enlarged by various ad hoc additions, including large side dormers. Although cumulatively the visual effect of the extensions is somewhat unsympathetic, they do not overwhelm the original 2-storey scale of the building.

The taller eaves and resulting larger 'bulk' of the front elevation of the proposed dwellings seen in the context of neighbouring properties and the established character of surrounding development would appear unduly dominant and intrude unacceptably within the streetscene. The larger scale of the proposed dwellings would be prominently visible in views from both directions along Brighton Road, but particularly emphasized from the east owing to the set back position of Waters Edge.

Although there are some examples of buildings with taller eaves along Brighton Road, including one or 2 with full 3-storey eaves; it is considered these have an imposing effect in the street scene and visually dominate neighbouring properties.

Notwithstanding the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, including the need for new development to respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings (paragraph 58). The street scene is derived as much from the scale of development as it is from architectural style and in this respect it is considered the proposed development has failed to satisfactorily respond to this important element of local character

Residential amenity – the living conditions of future occupiers

The proposed dwellings would each have an internal floor area of 133 square metres which exceeds the minimum floor area for a 4-bedroom dwelling stipulated in the Council's Good Practice Guidance Note by 27 square metres. The living room and kitchen/dining areas would have a floor area of 46 square metres, which exceeds the minimum requirement of 33 square metres for living, cooking and eating. The master bedroom at 13 square metres (excluding the en-suite) exceeds the minimum standard for a double bedroom by 1 square metre. Bedrooms 3 and 4 meet or exceed the minimum standard for a single bedroom (7 square metres), but bedroom 2 falls marginally short of the minimum standard at 6.7 square metres.

The proposed dwellings would each be provided with a short section of paved terrace and a rear garden sloping down to the edge of Widewater Lagoon, having an overall depth of 11.8 metres and an area of 106 square metres. This exceeds the minimum garden area of 100 square metres required for a large detached dwelling in the Council's Development Control Standard No.2.

In general, it is considered the proposed dwellings are well laid out and would provide a good standard of family accommodation.

Residential amenity – effect on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers

There would be a minimum distance of 1 metre between the flank walls of the proposed dwellings and the respective site boundaries with neighbouring properties, with external steps up the embankment on either side of each dwelling leading to the private rear garden areas. Windows in the side walls serve bathrooms and landings and could reasonably be required to be obscurely glazed with only fanlight openings.

As amended, the nearest part of the 'jetted' upper floors of the eastern-most dwelling would be sited approximately 1 metre forward of the front wall of No.1 Waters Edge. There would be a distance of approximately 2 metres separating these properties. There are no windows in the west flank wall of No.1 Waters Edge. The proposed dwelling would have a more enclosing effect on the outlook from the front of No.1 Waters Edge by reason of its closer proximity and increased height and 'bulk' compared to the existing building, but would not be unacceptably overbearing. No.1 has a flat-roofed element to the rear (facing Widewater) with doors serving second-floor rooms opening onto a shallow balcony enclosed by railings. The existing open aspect from the rear second-floor rooms and balcony at No.1 would be partially interrupted by the balcony structure attached to the rear wall of the proposed eastern-most dwelling. However, the latter would not project further south than the flat-roofed rear element of No.1 and the impact would not be excessively intrusive. Privacy between the respective balconies is shown to be safeguarded by 1.8 metre high privacy screens on either side of the proposed balconies.

There are several windows serving habitable rooms in the ground, first and second floor of the east elevation of No.146/146A, adjoining to the west (in the ownership of the applicant). In addition, French doors in a second-floor extension towards the rear (south) of the property open onto a small balcony enclosed by railings. There would be a minimum distance of 5 metres between the flank wall of the proposed western-most dwelling and the nearest windows and balcony at No.146/146A. The closer proximity of development together with the additional height and of 'bulk' of the proposed dwellings compared to that existing would have some impact on the outlook and daylight to this property, particularly to windows in the ground floor. However, in view of the separation distance the effect would not be unacceptably poor. [The address 146/146A suggests that the property is in use as flats but there are no formal planning records relating to its sub-division.]

Accessibility and parking

Each dwelling would be provided with 2 side-by-side undercroft parking spaces served by accesses from Brighton Road in a similar position to those serving the existing building, adjacent to the 'zig zag' markings on either side of the pedestrian crossing. The Highway Authority has raised no objection on the basis that there have been no reported traffic collisions to suggest the existing arrangement is unacceptable, and the proposed layout is consistent with other recent developments in the vicinity.

The applicant has agreed to pay the Highway contribution and this could be secured by a S106 Obligation in the event of approval.

Flood risk

A submitted FRA has been considered by the Environment Agency. All habitable rooms are at first floor level and 12.6 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The Environment Agency has raised no objection subject to the habitable rooms being secured by condition at the height shown.

Other Issues

A neighbour has raised the issue of a pair of swans, which are currently nesting on the site. Nesting birds are afforded protection from disturbance under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and this could form the subject of a condition requiring any development works to take place outside the nesting season (normally March to July).

Recommendation

REFUSE for the reason:-

By reason of their scale and massing the proposed dwellings would appear visually dominant in relation to neighbouring properties and would intrude unacceptably within the streetscene to the detriment of the visual amenity and local character of the area. If

permitted, the proposed development would set a precedent which would make it difficult to resist other over large and unsympathetic developments, the cumulative effect of which would detract from the established character and built environment of Brighton Road. The proposed development is therefore contrary to saved policy AH2 of the Adur District Local Plan and the NPPF.

3rd June 2013