Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0408/08 Recommendation - APPROVE

Site: **The Old School House, Ham Road**
Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 6PR

Proposal: **Change of use from Class D1 (non-residential institution) to Class B1 office use**

The Application

This Council-owned school house was deemed to have been granted planning permission in 1950 for change of use to a flat and store (SU/8/50). In October 1991 permission was granted for change of use from part office/part residential (flat) to residential (2 flats or a house). In December 1991 it was given permission for use as a day centre for persons recovering from mental illness (SU/150/91). In 1994, a single-storey rear extension was added (SU/121/94). This use ceased in 2006 when the Trust moved to Southwick Street.

The present proposal is to use the whole premises as offices for the Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan (funded by SEEDA). The building has a gross floorspace of 150sqm (90sqm on the ground floor and 60sqm on the first floor). It will remain in the Council's ownership. It is expected to be occupied by the Planning Director and his team of 5 or 6 staff. Use is stated to be during normal office hours but there may be the occasional evening or weekend meeting. No on-site parking exists or is intended and the ADC Civic Centre car park will be used.

Consultation and Representations

West Sussex County Council: No objection. The proposal should not result in an intensification of use and, given the accessible location, should have a negligible effect on on-street parking.

Adur District Conservation Advisory Group: To be reported. No objection

Third Parties: 3 letters have been received.
The resident of 2 Glyndebourne Court expresses the hope that the proposed use would not result in noise during the evenings and weekends as was the case with the previous institutional use (which was endured without complaint because it was a charity) and also that it would not result in continual parking on double yellow lines causing hazard, congestion, noise and pollution as was also the case with the previous use. He questions what exactly is meant by use 'out of office hours' and where the parking will be provided.

Another resident (address not given) states that she does not agree to it becoming offices and it should instead be given to a person with children as she is elderly and does not like noise.
Bourne Housing Society, owners of Glyndebourne Court, state that they have no obvious concerns at this time.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, NE5-6, CH4, DEV1, DEV4-5
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AB3-4
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (DoE 1994)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is not identified for any particular use or development in the Local Plan and there is no objection in principle to office use within this town centre location. Employment provision is encouraged by policies NE5-6. Residential use would be a suitable alternative but there is no policy requirement for this in preference to office use. As the property is owned by the Council, upon cessation of the temporary use as offices, it is likely to be marketed for sale at some future date which may result in residential use then being proposed.

The property is located within the Conservation Area and, with the larger old school building, makes a contribution to the historic character and appearance of the area. There is a statutory duty to have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas, as required by policies AB4 and CH4. However, in this instance no external alterations are proposed. Moreover, the use would not result in a level or type of activity that would in any way adversely affect the character of the area under policy AB3.

Residential Amenity

The proposed office use would not generate any more activity or potential for noise disturbance than was the case with the previous use as a day centre.

In fact, there should be less disturbance given the small number of staff involved and because, with few exceptions, the use should be within normal office hours. Also, the proposed office will, in effect be akin to an annex to the Civic Centre, sharing its car park. This will greatly reduce the need for cars or other vehicles to stop outside the premises.

Access

As stated above, the site is in an easily-accessible location in the town centre close to other facilities and to public transport (buses and trains). In such circumstances, there is only a need for cycle parking, not for on-site car parking.

Recommendation

Subject to no further objections being received by 12 September 2008, APPROVE for reason that :-

The proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would not adversely affect the residential amenities of nearby flats or highway safety. It is a use appropriate to this easily-accessible town centre location. The proposal consequently accords with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AB3-4) and the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH4, DEV1, DEV4-5)

Subject to: -

1. C1Ci (Standard time limit)
2. C8Gi (.....until provision for secure cycle parking has been made.....thereafter such provision shall be retained.)
   R. To encourage sustainable travel and comply with policy DEV4 of...

Case Officer/Planning Services Manager..... Date...1/9/08

Development Control Committee Chairman... A. J. Mills. Date...1/9/08