Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: **Recommendation – Refuse**
AWDM/1504/12

Site: **Garage Block Britannia House, High Street, Shoreham By Sea**

Proposal: **The redevelopment of a garage block to provide two residential units, with undercroft parking for three vehicles, cycle and bin storage.**

Date of site visit: 31 January 2013

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The site is located to the north of Norfolk House on the riverside, to the south west of Britannia House on the south side of the High Street (A259), to the rear of a single-storey shop ('Tanfastique'), and to the east of The Bridge public house.

The existing garage block is a single storey flat roof structure comprising of 8 garages with vehicular access from the High Street. Norfolk House, to the south, is a three-storey double pitch-roofed vacant office block built in the 1960s. The garages form part of the parking provision for this building.

Britannia House, on the street frontage, is a three-storey building with shops and commercial uses on the ground floor facing the High Street with 8 residential maisonettes above. Parking for this building is directly to the rear and separated from that of Norfolk House by a metal tubular fence.

Planning permission was granted in 2012 for a complete remodelling of Norfolk House to create 8 four storey townhouses with a 9th townhouse attached to the east. As part of this scheme the block of 8 garages were approved to be demolished and replaced by a two-storey office building, with the offices on the first floor and the ground floor comprising 3 car parking spaces, bins and cycle storage, toilets and entrance lobby (AWDM/0871/11 refers and followed an earlier scheme ADC/0056/11 to redevelop the office block and garages with a 72 bedroom hotel). Conservation Area consent for demolition of the garages (ADC/0872/11) has previously been granted.

The current scheme relates to the redevelopment of the garage block only and proposes an almost identical building to the previously approved scheme but to form two residential flats. The entrance, open undercroft car parking for 3 vehicles, bin and cycle storage and ancillary storage would be at ground floor level with communal stairs leading to one 1-bedroom flat and one 2-bedroom flat at first floor level. As with the previous scheme the building has been designed with brickwork on the lower floor and the upper floor behind

Tanfastique, with the remainder of the upper floor of white-coloured render with large aluminium-framed windows in its east side and smaller windows and panels on the west and north side.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement by the architects, a Flood Risk Assessment report by Dixon Hurst Kemp Ltd.

Relevant site history
As above

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The **Highway Authority** have commented as follows:

The application appears to seek approval for the redevelopment of an existing garage block to provide a 1 x 2 bedroom first floor residential unit and a 1 x 1 bedroom first floor residential unit with associated storage on the ground floor. The units will have the benefit of 3 shared off-street car parking spaces with the inclusion of secure cycle storage.

The building is situated in a sustainable location with a local train station and bus stops easily accessible by foot, therefore encouraging residents to use sustainable forms of transport. The ability to secure bicycles on site is envisaged to mitigate the need for a private car as well. However there is sufficient space for residents wishing to use a private car to park and turn on site, allowing them to exit on to the High Street in the forward gear.

I have checked the most recently available verified accident records, which reveals a number of reported road traffic accident in the vicinity of the access to the site. Having thoroughly checked this data, it does not appear to be relevant to the proposal.

Based on these comments there would be no concerns to this application from a highway safety perspective. If the LPA are minded to approve this application, a condition securing the parking and cycle storage should be included.

Adur & Worthing Councils:

The Environmental Health Officer has recommended a Full contamination condition and makes the following comments:

The area of development just off the High Street has been identified by DEFRA as an area severely affected by noise. I would 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 from excess noise. The standard to be achieved shall be British Standard BS 8233: 1999: Sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings.

British Standard 8233 Indoor Noise Levels

Room	*Good*	*Reasonable*

Living Room 30 dB LAeq,T 40 dB LAeq,T

Bedroom 30 dB LAeq,T 35 dB LAeq,T & 45 dB LAmax,F

As a minimum requirement I would expect the reasonable level to be achieved.

The scheme should recognize that the High Street is an Air Quality Management Area and any whole house ventilation scheme or forced air ventilation to habitable rooms should have the air intake at roof level to minimize the level of traffic polluted air blown directly into the property.

Environment Agency:
The proposed development will only meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework if the following measure(s) as detailed in the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with this application are implemented and secured by way of a planning condition on any planning permission.

Condition
The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) reference 42437 and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA: Finished floor levels are set no lower than 7.26 m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

Reason
To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

Conservation Advisory Group: No objection

Representations
None received

Relevant Planning Policies
The South East Plan (GOSE 2009): SP3, CC1-4, CC6, H1-2, H5, T4, NRM4, BE1, BE6
Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AP4, AB3-4 AB16, AH2, AH5 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)
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment

Policies
The site is within Shoreham town centre and Conservation Area and close to the north edge of the river Adur. There is a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and the setting of listed buildings. Local Plan policy AB3 states that permission will not be granted for development

generating a level of traffic or other activity likely to adversely affect the character of a Conservation Area. AB16 states that in order to protect the important amenity value of the river upstream of the Surry Hard, development adversely affecting views along and across the river will not be permitted.

In the Local Plan, the site is included within the area identified for mainly shopping and business use under policy AS1 (with office use also potentially acceptable under AE5 and AE6 provided it does not detract from the vitality and viability of the shopping area). AS1 states that permission will be granted for the development of land within the areas shown as subject to this policy for shopping and food and drink purposes provided that there will be no loss of residential accommodation at upper floor level, there will be no loss of amenity to nearby residents, access to the public highway is acceptable, and the development is of a scale and design appropriate to the locality.

Policy SCT1 of the South East Plan gives priority to pro-actively pursuing sustainable economic growth and regeneration of the Sussex Coast whilst also protecting and enhancing its high environmental quality, its cultural and historic assets and promoting excellence in design of new developments in recognition of their importance to economic success and quality of life. BE1, entitled management for an urban renaissance, states that local authorities will use opportunities associated with new development to help provide significant improvements to the built environment, including a requirement to "promote and support design solutions relevant to context and which build upon local character and distinctiveness and sense of place, including the sensitive reuse of redundant or under-used historic buildings" and "support and identify opportunities for appropriate higher density and mixed use development schemes". BE6 states that policies should be adopted and sensitive proposals supported which protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment and the contribution it makes to local distinctiveness and sense of place. Nationally and regionally-protected historic assets should receive the highest level of protection.

Principle of Development

The Local Plan includes the site within the area identified for primarily shopping and also office uses under policies AS1 and AE5-6. However, the policy is worded in a way that only protects the vitality and viability of the shopping area. It does not prevent the loss of existing office floorspace or its associated facilities such as parking as would be the case here.

The site's location to the rear of the High Street and without a street frontage does not lend itself to shopping use. In assessing the previous application it was considered that some form of office or business use was desirable in this central location but there is no specific policy requirement for it.

The National Planning Policy Framework recognises 'that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres' and states that Local Planning Authorities should 'normally approve planning applications for change to residential use….where there is an identified need for housing in that area, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate'.

The principle of residential development is therefore accepted but this is subject to detailed consideration of the individual merits of the scheme proposed as is discussed below.

Visual Amenity and Effect on Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2008 recognises that buildings in the High Street are generally rather larger than in the rest of the Area and mentions that the 1960s Norfolk House and Britannia House are of little aesthetic quality and represent a redevelopment opportunity.

The garages themselves are not prominent features and although their redevelopment to form a two storey building would make the site more widely visible, the building would be set against the backdrop surrounding townscape of mixed character and potentially screened from the riverside by the remodelled and extended Norfolk House if the previous permission is implemented.

The design merits of the proposed building were considered when determining the previous application as the current scheme is identical in form but with some adjustments to the configuration of the fenestration. The simple 'cubist' form, with mainly white rendered but with brickwork on the north was considered appropriate with the addition of the west side window/panel which has been included in this application as well as the inclusion of some fenestration on the brick north side, to provide some visual relief as seen from the High Street. The blank expanse of brickwork on the west side would be partly obscured by the unusual roofed gateway feature forming part of the Bridge Inn but was considered acceptable providing a soft-coloured light-medium red-brown stock brick is used.

Residential Amenity

The impact on neighbouring occupiers was considered in detail as part of the previous proposal with the scale and form of the building having been considered to have no significant impact on residential amenity.

It is not considered that the reconfiguration of the window design or the use of the building as two flats would have a significant detrimental impact compared with the commercial unit previously approved. A window on the west elevation remains in the current scheme and its use as a bedroom is not considered to have any significant additional impact on the nearest neighbour, the Bridge Inn occupants, when compared with the window serving a meeting room previously approved. There was no requirement for this to be obscure glazed as part of the previous approval and no justification to require it in the current circumstances.

Living conditions of future occupants

The Environmental Health Officers noise concerns could be dealt with by a suitable condition should planning permission be granted.

The Council's 'Good Practice Guidance Note: Internal Space Standards for New Homes' 2010 states that a one-bedroom dwelling should have a minimum floor area of 51m^2; with a minimum living, cooking and eating area

of 22m^2 and sleeping area of 12m^2 and that a that a two-bedroom dwelling should have a minimum floor area of 66m^2; with a minimum living, cooking and eating area of 24m^2 and sleeping area of 19m^2. At approximately 59m^2 (2-bed) and 39m^2 (1 bed), the proposed flats would not meet the floorspace requirements, with Living, Cooking and Eating areas also falling below the standard. In addition, measuring 2.35m wide, Bedroom 2 of the 2-bed flat would also fail to meet the minimum width standard of 2.6m.

The Council's DC Standard No. 2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats' requires a minimum of 20m^2 of communal amenity space. There is opportunity to provide some private space in the form of a balcony area although this would likely result in a loss of some living accommodation, but no private amenity space is proposed as part of the current proposal. Although town centre locations can often mean compromises on external space, as people wishing to live in a central location to be near facilities do not necessarily always seek a garden, the lack of any private or communal amenity space further exacerbates the poor standard of living accommodation in this instance.

Furthermore, outlook from the 1 bedroom flat would also be poor with a distance of only 6 metres to the side wall of Britannia House whereas the DC Standard No.2 requires a distance of at least 14 metres from a principal window to a 2 storey obstruction.

Accessibility and Parking
The site is in a highly sustainable location being in close proximity to town centre facilities and amenities, with very good public transport links by bus and train. The access to the site is via the existing entrance from High Street.

The proposals provide 3 undercroft car parking spaces and cycle parking which the Highway Authority have considered acceptable and have raised no highway safety concerns in relation to the access and no objection to the loss of the garages.

The expected level of demand for the development is 2 spaces and so the 3 spaces provided would exceed this demand.

Given the town centre location close to facilities and public transport links, and in the absence of any objection from the Highway Authority, parking and access are considered acceptable. A condition is recommended if permission is granted to ensure cycle storage is provided.

Flood Risk
The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. The site is located within Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at risk of flooding, primarily tidal rather than fluvial.

The ground floor of the flats is limited to garaging and other non-habitable use with all habitable rooms at first-floor level (above 7.26m AOD). The Environment Agency raise no objection subject to implementation of measures detailed in the FRA and so would be considered acceptable in relation to flooding on this basis.

Sustainable design
The site is in a sustainable town centre location. The submitted Design & Access Statement states that material choices will be made on the basis of low waste and low embodied energy, and local labour and skills would be utilised for the construction with the building being 'highly insulated and air tight' and fitted with 'water reducing and energy reducing appliances and fittings'. If approved a condition could be attached requiring the development to achieve Level 3 of the Sustainable Homes Code.

Recommendation
REFUSE for reason that:-

Having regard to the limited size, cramped layout, and lack of amenity space for the proposed flats and obstructed outlook from the living room of the one-bedroom flat, it is considered that the proposal would provide a poor standard of living accommodation detrimental to the amenities of future occupants. As such the proposal is considered contrary to saved policy AH2 of the Adur District Local Plan 1996 and Good Practice Guidance Note: Internal Space Standards for New Homes 2010.

Informative:
The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern with the proposal and determining the application within a timely manner, clearly setting out the reason(s) for refusal, allowing the Applicant the opportunity to consider the harm caused and whether or not it can be remedied by a revision to the proposal. The Local Planning Authority is willing to meet with the Applicant to discuss the best course of action and is also willing to provide pre-application advice in respect of any future application for a revised development.

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

Case Officer: Rebekah Smith Date: 12 February 2013

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 12 February 2013