Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0944/14 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: 1 - 3 South Street Lancing West Sussex BN15 8AE

Proposal: Part two-storey and part single-storey extension to west elevation for Gardner and Scardifield to extend sales area on ground and first floor

Date of site visit: 12.09.2014

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: Y – Flat 1 and 2 5A South Street (Amended Plans)

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application property is a two-storey flat roofed building (440sqm) in use as a garden centre since 2001. The site has 4-5 parking spaces on the south side of the building served by a vehicular access from Grinstead Lane, and also benefits from pedestrian access to South Street to the west. There is a large outbuilding fronting Grinstead Lane used for storage of goods and an extensive outdoor display area on the west side of the building. Display of goods also wraps around the parking area on the south side.

It is proposed to construct a part single/part 2-storey extension on the west side of the building (253sqm). As originally submitted the proposed extension would be 9.1m deep and 21m wide at ground-floor, extending as far as the western and southern site boundaries, and the first-floor element 8.8m deep and 11m wide. The extension would provide for an enlarged retail floor area on the ground and first-floor (and initially included a first-floor office element which has been omitted). The proposed extensions would match the flat roofed form and external appearance of the existing building. The external finishes would consist of pebble-dash at ground-floor (except the north side which would be brick) and timber cladding above to the match the existing building. Four roof lights are shown on the flat roof of the single-story element.

The site occupies a ‘backland’ situation sitting behind commercial properties in South Street, a designated shopping street. A planning permission to convert the first-floor offices at 5-7 South Street into 2 no. 1-bedroom flats has recently been implemented (AWDM/0129/13 refers). Adjoining to the north of the site is a 3-storey purpose-built flat block, Freshbrook Court; and to the south a 2-storey terrace of flats 1-10 The Willows.

Relevant Planning History

Single-storey extension on west side of gardening shop approved 30.06.2011 (AWDM/0140/11) – not implemented.

Two-storey extension to form extension to shop with two studio flats over – withdrawn (AWDM/0948/13).

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council:

The Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposed development on highway safety grounds commenting that it appears the site for the extension is already used in some form of retail capacity. It is unlikely that the development will result in a large number of additional customers. The construction is set back form the highway and has minimal impact upon it. The addition of the office element is unlikely to cause a significant intensification of vehicular movement to the site than currently exists. The site does appear to have limited parking provision for staff/customers. However the site is located within a sustainable location with close links to bus travel and within walking distance to Lancing rail station. As initially submitted a TAD contribution of £2,119 was sought for the proposed office element.

Following re-consultation on the amended plans the Highway Authority has confirmed that the TAD contribution previously sought is no longer required due to the omission of the proposed office element.

Lancing Parish Council has raised no objection to this application.

Adur and Worthing Councils: The Council's Contaminated Land Officer requires that the full contamination condition is attached to any permission.

Representations:

An objection has been received from the freeholder 5 & 7 South Street commenting that the proposed extension will be an overdevelopment, invading the light and privacy of the flats above 5 & 7 South Street. The development will lead to additional parking problems with customers trying to park in the private car park of 5 & 7 South Street, causing obstructions, difficulty turning and dangerous reversing manoeuvres onto South Street. It would be preferable for the extension to be on the side of the building or fronting Grinstead Lane where it would not cause nuisance to adjoining properties.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1
Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan (2014): 9 (Block 3), 15, 28
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The adopted Adur Local Plan (1996) remains the appropriate development plan against which development proposals should be assessed where in

conformity with the NPPF. However, the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan (2014) is afforded some status as a material consideration.

The site is located within the town centre boundary of Lancing village, but not within a designated shopping frontage.

Policies 9 and 28 of the Submission Local Plan allow for appropriate retail development within the areas defined by the town centre boundary.

Policy 15 of the Submission Local Plan requires that development should be of a high architectural quality and should respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area in terms of proportion, form, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, materials detailed design and landscaping.

Thus, there is no objection in principle to the proposed extension. The key considerations are the effects on the residential and visual amenities of the locality and highway safety considerations.

Residential amenity

As originally proposed the two-storey element of the extension adjoining the western site boundary would have been sited within approximately 7m of the first-floor windows in the recently completed 1-bedroom flat above 5-7 South Street. These windows form the sole aspect providing an outlook from this flat unit. Notwithstanding its flat-roofed form, it was considered the height and proximity of the proposed extension would have an enclosing and intrusive effect that would severely detract from the amenities of the occupier of this unit.

An amendment has been received reducing the depth of the proposed first-floor extension by 5m and omitting the office element. This would allow for a separation distance of some 12m between this element and the first-floor windows in the east elevation of 5-7 South Street. The proposed ground-floor and first-floor extensions would still have an enclosing effect on the rear outlook from the first-floor flat, but the impact would not now be so unacceptable as to warrant refusal on this ground.

The drawings show 1 modest-sized window on the west side of the proposed extension and a larger 3-pane window on the south side, both serving the enlarged retail floor area on the first-floor. Whilst it is noted that there are currently 2 larger first-floor windows in the west side of the existing garden centre building, it is recommended that the window on the west side of the proposed first-floor extension is obscurely glazed in order to safeguard the occupiers of the flat above 5-7 South Street from the risk of more intensive overlooking arising from the closer positon of the window.

The window in the south side would be sited some 10m from the site boundary, facing the flank wall of 9-10 The Willows. There is a first-floor window in the flank wall of latter building but this is already overlooked by windows in the south side of the existing building and it is considered the effect on privacy for the occupiers of this end unit would be little different to the existing situation.

The area to the west of the garden centre is currently used for the outdoor display of garden items and plants. The boundary on this side is relatively open, defined in part by chainlink fencing and timber fence panels. A right of way leads to the existing shop entrance on this side. Despite its physical proximity, the occupiers of the newly created flat above 5-7 South Street will likely be less aware of activity at the site than is currently the case owing to the solid form of the proposed extension with relatively few openings.

Visual amenity

The simple flat-roofed design of the proposed extension(s) is utilitarian in appearance but in keeping with the scale, proportions and external finishes of the existing building. Its larger mass would be visible through the gaps between existing frontage development on South Street and from Grinstead Lane, but would not be a prominent additional to the streetscene owing to its 'backland' situation.

As well as various temporary-looking structures used for storage and outdoor display, a variety of stacks and piles of goods for sale are located haphazardly around the site resulting in a rather untidy appearance. The current proposals represent an opportunity to tidy up the site.

The outbuilding on the Grinstead Lane frontage is shown as being retained as a 'secure store', together with an existing 'lean-to' on the north side of the existing building. Three narrow racks or stands for the outdoor display of plants are shown on the east side of the proposed single-storey extension, but all other items would be contained within the enlarged shop unit or the above-mentioned outbuilding/lean-to. This can be controlled as a condition of planning permission to maintain a tidy site and to avoid the outdoor storage and display of goods insidiously encroaching into the parking and turning areas shown on the block plan (which appears to occur at present).

Highway Safety

The submitted drawing shows 5 parking spaces with turning in front of the south side of the existing building accessed from Grinstead Lane. Notwithstanding the concern raised by the third party, the Highway Authority is satisfied that the amount of parking provision is adequate to serve the enlarged garden shop having regard to its sustainable location.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard time limit
2. Approved drawings
3. Full contamination condition
4. Agree materials and external finishes
5. First-floor window on west side to be obscurely glazed

6. Retain parking and turning area
7. Agree details of external plant display stands
8. No outdoor storage or external display of goods for sale other than agreed plant display stands and within secure store and lean-to shown on approved plan.

Informative

1. Proactive Statement – Amended Plans

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 05.01.2015

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 5 January 2015