Application Number: ADC/0166/07 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: 'Elmcroft', Croft Avenue, Southwick

Proposal: Demolition of existing care home and erection of 12 No. flats together with associated external works (WSCC Reg 4 outline application including means of access)

The Application

The site is located within the built up area of Southwick, abutting but not within the Conservation Area. The site is currently used as a residential care home for the elderly. The existing care home consists of a substantial 3-storey flat-roofed building with single-storey extensions and garages to either side. There is a large glazed entrance conservatory at the front of the building.

There is an existing vehicular access at the front of the site from Croft Avenue with existing hardstanding for car parking in front of the building.

To the north, the site is screened along the boundary by a belt of tall and mature trees, separating it from the garden of the house called 'Michaelmas' beyond. To the west, the site adjoins an open area with various mature trees that is open to the public and is known as the Rest Garden. This garden lies in the Southwick Conservation Area.

To the east, the rear part of the site is well screened from No.15 Croft Avenue by tall trees along the boundary. Closer to the house this screening reduces markedly and the side of the existing care home can be seen from the rear patio area at 15 Croft Avenue. 15 Croft Avenue is a detached house of typical style for the road. It has a garage attached to the side which is adjacent to the boundary with the application site. There are no windows in the side elevation of No.15 that face the site.

To the south, on the opposite side of the road, there is a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses.

The existing care home is set back broadly in line with adjacent houses to the east and extends almost the full width of the site (although it should be noted that this existing width is single storey at the sides, not entirely 3 storey). The rear part of the building extends at three-storey height almost to the rear (north) boundary. There are significant windows in the south, east and west elevations of the building but overlooking of 15 Croft Avenue to the east is largely prevented by the tree screening along the boundary.

Outline permission is sought for the demolition of the existing care home and the erection of a building for 12 flats together with associated external works. Initially the application provided details of the layout of the proposed development with an associated indicative front elevation sketch showing the

potential height and design of the building. Outline permission was sought for both layout and means of access with all other matters to be considered at reserved matters stage.

However, the application has since been amended with the only matter for consideration being the means of access to the site. It was considered by officers that the layout as proposed would result in over development of the site due to the height and scale of development and close proximity to the site boundaries. It was therefore agreed that the layout should be removed from the application and a revised layout could be designed at reserved matters stage which would provide a development with smaller units to reduce the bulk and scale of the overall development at this site.

Consultations and Representations

County Transport Planning Services: To be reported (NB. the applicant has submitted further information in response to the points below on which WSCC comments are awaited).
Initially commented that visibility (in both directions) from the site access must be shown from a point 2.4m back from the kerbline into the site access. Pedestrian visibility, at the back edge of the footway, must also be shown. Any alterations to the existing access are likely to require either a Section 278 Highway Works Agreement or Highway License.
Parking is below that in the adopted maximum Parking Standards which state that 2 car spaces per two-bedroom is the maximum requirement. A reduction can be made if the site is within close proximity to local services and is accessible by other modes of transport. However, Croft Avenue does have a high demand for on-street parking and any shortfall may then place further demands on on-street parking space. The applicant should either increase the level of parking or demonstrate how one space per flat would be adequate.
Comparison traffic flows (of the existing use against the proposed use) should also be demonstrated.
Other matters requested were: -
- a Stage 1 Safety Audit of the access and the internal layout to be submitted;
- a designer's response and amended drawing showing any recommendations arising from the Safety Audit.

Director of Services: The Environmental Health officer has no adverse comments.

Environment Agency: No objection provided that planning conditions are imposed on any permission granted relating to surface water drainage.

Health and Safety Executive: Does not advise against.

County Planning Services: The Infrastructure Officer states that a contribution of £187 would be required for Fire Service Infrastructure.

Third Parties: 6 letters of objection have been received from local residents at No's 4, 15, 16 & 17 Croft Avenue, 'Michaelmas' (off Southwick Street) and the Southwick Society on grounds that:-

- Overdevelopment of the site;
- The Society does not object to flats per se but to the design and layout of this application;
- Traffic increase will create a hazard;
- Overlooking of 'Michaelmas' to the rear;
- New building will overshadow 15 Croft Avenue, especially conservatory and garden, due to increased height and closer proximity of main bulk where at present is only a single storey structure – the overall reduction in footprint of the proposed building does not make up for this;
- Insufficient detail on the elevation design;
- Existing windows on the east elevation have frosted glass but kitchen windows now shown resulting in overlooking;
- Parking at western end of Croft Avenue is currently a large problem and proposed on site parking in insufficient;
- A two storey building containing eight flats would be more appropriate;
- Demolition of Elmcroft's garage could damage adjacent driveway and garage due to change in levels;
- East boundary needs to be clearly defined and fenced;
- Substantial weatherboarding should not be used as it can look tatty in a short period of time and would look out of place compared to nearby flint buildings and walls and the style of houses in Croft Avenue;
- Flats will be out of character in this road of good sized family homes;
- Parking in Croft Avenue has dramatically increased since charging for parking introduced in Southwick Square.

[NB. the residents of No's 4 & 15 Croft Avenue have requested to speak at the Committee meeting]

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plans 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, CH1, CH4, NE1-2, ERA1, DEV1, DEV3-5.
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AG3, AB3, AB25-27, AH1-2, AH5, AT12 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No. 2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'
Adur Development Plan – Submission Core Strategy 2006-26 (ADC 2007): R1, H1, H3, T3-4, ENV4, ENV10
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 203 and ADC 2004)
The Provision of Service Infrastructure Related to New Development in West Sussex – Part 1 (WSCC 1999)
Design Bulletin 'Trees and Landscaping' (ADC 1996)
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 'Housing' (DCLG 2006)
PPG13 'Transport' (DTLR 2001)

'Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice' (DETR 2000)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is not identified for any particular use or development in the Local Plan. In principle, the proposed redevelopment for residential purposes accords with both Structure and Local Plan policies because it is within the built-up area of Southwick. In order to meet the housing requirements of the Structure Plan, it is necessary that a significant proportion of new residential development takes place by way of 'unidentified' small infill sites such as this.

The above policies encourage redevelopment and infilling to help meet the demand for dwelling houses suitable for small families, single persons, the elderly, and to make best use of urban land. This is encompassed in Structure Plan policy LOC1 but it is on the proviso that 'the impact on the character of the area and the environment, resources and assets of the County is acceptable" (para a) and also in allocating sites in Local Plans, that account should be taken of 'the need to protect and enhance the qualities and characteristics of settlements which local communities value" (para d)

Policy DEV1, entitled high quality development, states that development should not be permitted unless the construction, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are of high quality taking into account the need to, amongst other things, integrate with and where possible enhance adjoining land uses and minimise conflicts between land uses and activities; have regard to context including site characteristics, townscape/streetscape views into and out of the site and building styles/materials; give high priority to pedestrians and reduce dominance of cars; create a high quality socially-inclusive adaptable environment; protect and enhance biodiversity; ensure energy efficiency; and meet the needs of service providers.

Policy DEV4 states (amongst other things) that development should not be permitted unless the travel needs it generates are met; it achieves safe and convenient access by choice of means of travel; it encourages and enables an increase in walking and cycling; and the number and impact of motorised journeys is minimised. DEV5 states that 'Development should not be permitted unless the level of parking is compatible with the need to avoid environmental or safety problems and the need is to encourage walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport where this is or can be a realistic alternative.

The relevant Local Plan policy AH2, related to housing development by way of infilling and redevelopment, expects development to be designed so that its 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 to the architectural form, height, materials, density and layout; respect for the natural features of the site, including trees, no unneighbourly

effect on existing dwellings by loss of privacy, light, outlook or open amenity space; adequate access and parking arrangements (as required by AT12) and accordance with adopted standards (in this case the Council's DC Standard No. 2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats' 1996.)

Government policy guidance in PPS3 encourages best use of urban land for housing development, particularly affordable housing, at higher densities (avoiding developments at less than 30 dwellings per hectare) and without rigid application of parking and amenity space standards. However it also seeks to improve the quality and attractiveness of residential areas and urges imaginative designs and layouts which make more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the environment.

Policy H2 of the Adur Development Plan Submission Core Strategy states that a minimum of 35% affordable housing should be sought from developments of 10 dwellings or more, unless it can be demonstrated that the exceptional circumstances of the site make it unviable to do so. This derives from the Adur Housing Needs Survey. In this case, the applicants have agreed that the affordable housing contribution from this site should be incorporated within that being sought at Elm Grove (see application ADC/0167/07 also on this agenda).

Residential Amenity

It is considered that an appropriate scheme providing 12 flats can be provided on this site as a replacement for the existing building. The site currently has a large care home on it and given the size of the site and its relationship with surrounding development and close proximity to the town centre and train station it is considered that the site can satisfactorily accommodate 12 flats.

Given that the application is now an outline application with all matters reserved except means of access, it is in effect an application to set the principle for 12 flats on the site, with all details of the sizes of the flats and resultant building, layout, parking, design, landscaping and external appearance to be submitted for full consideration at a later time. Although there are a number of residential properties around the site which could potentially be affected by this development to the north, east and south of the site, it is considered that the proposed redevelopment can be carried out without any significant impact on the occupiers of the surrounding properties.

The residential amenities of the future occupiers of the site should also be considered, sufficient amenity space and outlook should be provided within the development and it is considered that this could be achieved with an appropriate layout.

Density, Character and Visual Amenity

The site is located in a pleasant residential road, adjacent to the Conservation Area. The character of the development and a high quality design will therefore be very important. The existing flat-roofed 'box-like' building is of no

architectural merit and, to the contrary, is out of keeping with and detrimental to the visual amenities of the locality. It is considered that the redevelopment of this site, subject to ensuring a high standard of design, would bring about a much-needed enhancement of the appearance of this site, thus improving the visual amenities of the area.

This is an outline application where, following its amendment, the only matters for consideration are the principle of development and means of access. Therefore, if outline permission is granted, the appearance, scale and design of the development would be considered at the reserved matters stage. The indicative front elevation sketch submitted with this application and the proposed layout (which has now been deleted from the application) showed what is considered to be overdevelopment of the site with the bulk of the building in closer proximity to the east boundary of the site (adjacent to 15 Croft Avenue) and a cramped parking area at the front with little allowance for soft landscaping. Given the immediate proximity to the Conservation Area, it is considered that significant visual improvements to the front of the site should be made. It is considered that the bulk and scale of the development can be reduced to a more appropriate and acceptable level with improved design and layout. This would be considered at the reserved matters stage.

With 12 flats, the density of development on the site would be 67 dwellings per hectare. This is an acceptable level for a development of flats in a sustainable town centre location, in accordance with PPS3.

Trees

There is significant tree screening around the site, both from trees within the site and adjacent to it. While none of the trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders, it is considered that cumulatively they are important to the character of the site, the streetscene and for the protection of amenities for the adjacent occupiers. It is not proposed to remove any trees and ensuring their retention is considered important. Accordingly landscaping and tree protection conditions are recommended. Landscaping is a reserved matter in this case.

Access and Sustainability

The existing access to the site is to be used and altered with dropped kerbs and tactile paving proposed at the site entrance. Details of the proposed changes to the site entrance along with the Stage 1 Safety Audit and Designers Response have been submitted to WSCC as the Local Highway Authority for comments. No consultation response has yet been received from them and the recommendation for approval is subject to their not raising any significant objection. Further comments are expected prior to July 2nd and will be reported at the meeting.

Sustainable and Resource Efficient Buildings

Policy ENV4 of the Adur Development Plan – Submission Core Strategy states that measures will be required to ensure new buildings achieve efficient environmental performance and to meet the Government's new Code for Sustainable Homes. Policy H3 also required all new homes to be designed to 'Lifetime Homes' standards. Conditions are accordingly recommended below.

Recommendation

Subject to consideration of the reply awaited from WSCC Transport Planning Services (which may entail additional conditions or ground for refusal) APPROVE for reason that :-

The proposed development is within the built-up area and would help meet the need for additional housing without detracting from the existing local urban environment. It can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the amenities of neighbouring properties, without loss of trees and without detraction from highway safety. It would consequently not conflict with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AB3, AB25-27, AH1-2, AH5, AT12), the West Sussex Structure Plan (LOC1, NE1-2, CH1, ERA1, DEV1, DEV4-5) and the Adur Development Plan Submission Core Strategy (R1, H1, H3, T3-4, ENV4, ENV10).

Subject to:-

1. C1Ai (Standard outline condition reserving details of layout, scale, external appearance and landscaping for subsequent submission and approval)
2. C1Bi (Standard outline time limit)
3. C8Bi (Car and cycle parking spaces to be constructed and retained) (amended)
4. C7Cii (Details of walls/fences to be approved and implemented)
5. C9Ciii (Turning space to be provided and retained)
6. C9N (Temporary provision for contractors' vehicles, materials, etc on the site)
7. C9S (Temporary wheel cleaning facility during construction work)
8. C11Ai (Landscaping scheme including existing trees to be approved and implemented and replacement of those that die)
9. C11D (Retention of existing trees and protection during construction work, etc)
10. C12Aii (External materials for walls and roof to be approved)
11. C14A3 (Permission relates to application as amended)
12. C14Gi (No external lighting without approval)
13. C14H (Existing building to be demolished prior to development)
14. C18K (Provision for waste storage)
15. C18N (Surface water drainage details)
16. The proposed flats shall achieve efficient environmental

performance by, prior to their occupation, being completed to achieve at least level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

17. The proposed flats shall, prior to their occupation, be completed to meet the 'Lifetime Homes' standards in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.
18. No development shall take place until a planning obligation pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 relating to the application site has been completed and the Local Planning Authority has given notification of its approval. The said obligation shall provide contributions towards sustainable transport improvements in the area in accordance with the adopted Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology to be paid to the Local Planning Authority.

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