Application Number: ADC/0175/08 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **228a Harbour Way, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5HZ**

Proposal: **Loft conversion including raising roof level and side dormer**

The Application

The application property is a semi-detached house, with a mono-pitched roof, located on the west side of Harbour Way at the east end of Shoreham Beach. The pair of houses (including 226a) were erected in 2000, on the site of a former boat park, and are adjoined by linked detached two-storey houses to the south and a curved terrace of three-storey flat-roofed townhouses to the north.

No.228a is two storey but the attached house (226a) is three storey. Both are mono-pitched. The proposal is to raise the roof of No.228a by I metre, so that it is 0.4m below the top of the roof of No.226a rather than 1.4m below as at present, and to add a small side dormer (2.1m wide by 1.2m high). This would enable two bedrooms and a bathroom to be provided within the roofspace.

Consultations and Representations

Third Parties: A letter of objection has been received from the residents of the attached house No.226a on grounds that the design of the proposal would be totally out of keeping with the other houses to the south in the street, going against the aesthetic integrity of the original design of the houses, and it would also result in noise and disturbance through the party wall, with loss of privacy to their bedrooms.
It is stated that it would radically change the front of the house and that none of the houses to the south, which No's 226a/228a mimic, have undergone any such radical change; only one has a small side dormer, the others appear totally unchanged from the front. It would make the building as a whole look bulky, with loss of its sleek geometrical shape. A rear or side extension would be more appropriate.
At present their bedrooms suffer little or no noise, being effectively 'detached'. The proposal would create bedrooms the other side of a new party wall and it would be very noisy, particularly in summer when windows are open, especially as it is believed they will be for young children.
Also, it will take away their option of installing a south-facing window in this wall to increase ventilation to their bathroom and possibly create sea views.
[NB. the resident of No.226a has requested to speak at the committee meeting]

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005) (saved policies): LOC1, DEV1
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AH7 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Control Standard No.3 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)

Planning Assessment

Policies

Structure Plan policies seek to protect, and where possible, enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area, requiring high standards of design, layout and construction (DEV1).
Policy AH7 of the Local Plan states that extensions and alterations should be designed so as not to result in an unacceptable degree of overlooking, a loss of natural light or an overbearing effect on neighbouring dwellings. They should be of sympathetic design and materials to the original dwelling and the area in general.
DC standard No.3 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings' states that dormers should not overdominate the dwelling, should be kept well below the ridge level of the existing roof and should not project as far as the walls of the house.

Government policy is set out in Planning Policy Statement PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development'. Relevant paragraphs are 17, which refers to the commitment to protecting and improving the environment; 18 which states that planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design; and 34 which states that good design is indivisible from good planning and that design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area, should not be accepted.

Visual amenity

The pair of houses were permitted on this infill plot in 1999 to a design which was considered to fit in with the 1970s style of the adjacent houses either side. The assymetrical mono-pitched roof design, with the distinctive 'step' in height between the two houses, was negotiated as a desirable design solution, similar to the houses to the south.

The present proposal to increase the roof height of the lower of the pair of houses would tend to spoil the appearance as it would make the variation in height relatively slight (ie. the 'step' would become insignificant).

However, there would still remain a 'step' in the front elevation and, whilst the change to the design is considered undesirable, it is not considered that it

would cause significant harm to the streetscene to a degree that would justify refusal of the application. The proposal is not excessive in scale, the side dormer is small, and overall it is considered that the enlargement would not stand out or otherwise have a significant adverse visual impact.

Residential amenity

The residents of the attached house also object because they consider they would suffer noise and disturbance through what would become a party wall with their top floor bedrooms, and that this would also result in loss of privacy.

However, it is not considered that this amounts to a reasonable ground for refusal of a planning application. Extensions to dwellings have to be constructed to meet the Building Regulations and this is normally regarded as sufficient to achieve an acceptable internal environment.

The fact that the proposal would prevent the neighbours from in future inserting any windows in the south-facing wall is similarly not a reason to refuse planning permission. The rights of the two owners are a matter to be resolved under property law, not planning law, and the Part Wall, etc Act 1996 exists to formalise this process.

The proposed side dormer would not result in unacceptable overlooking of the house to the south because it would serve a bathroom and have obscured glass and the rooflights would be at a sufficiently low angle as to inhibit outward view.

Recommendation

APPROVE for reason that:-

The proposed development would not detract from the local environment and can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the amenities of neighbouring properties. It would consequently not conflict with the policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH7) and the West Sussex Structure Plan (LOC1, DEV1).

Subject to:-

1. C1Ci (Standard time limit)
2. C12Eii (External bricks and tiles to match existing)
3. C18Ci (Window in south side dormer to be obscure-glazed)
4. C18Eii (No additional windows in south side of wall or roof) (amended)

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