Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1586/15 Recommendation – REFUSE

Site: 6 Roberts Road Lancing West Sussex BN15 8AR

Proposal: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of block of five flats with four parking spaces on frontage.

Date of site visit: 13.01.2016

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a rectangular-shaped plot measuring 30m deep x 12.4m wide on the north side of Robert Road. The plot is currently vacant, the former chalet dwelling on the site having recently been demolished (without Prior Approval).

Roberts Road is a quiet residential road in South Lancing made up of an eclectic mix of dwelling types including some traditional Victorian/Edwardian terraces and various examples of early, mid and late-20C houses, bungalows and domestic-scale flat blocks in a diverse range of traditional and contemporary styles. Materials are mostly brick or render or a combination of both. There is no strong building line on either side of the road or notable pattern of development. However, frontages typically consist of planted front gardens enclosed by low boundary walls or fences. The former chalet was one of the few remaining older dwellings of its type in the road. A hedge which enclosed the front garden has been grubbed out.

The carriageway is lined by grass verges on either side but is relatively narrow in width with on-street parking on the south side only. Bollards have been planted in parts of the verge on the north side to prevent vehicles parking on them.

Adjoining to the east is a 2-storey flat building with single-storey rear protrusion, comprising 5 flats. It was completed approximately 3-4 years ago. The frontage is laid out as 4 parking spaces with the access onto Roberts Road extending virtually the entire width of the plot.

Adjoining to the west, Clements also comprises a 2-storey flat building dating from the mid-1970's having an unusual mono-pitched roof design. It has no off-street parking provision.

The Council-owned public car park adjoins to the north.

The road slopes down gently from west to east

Proposal

Permission is sought to erect a block of 5 1-bedroom flats within a part single, part 2-storey building. The siting and layout of the building is similar to that recently competed at No.7, comprising a main 2-storey frontage building with single-storey 'outrigger'. The front of the building would roughly align with the front of No.7, approximately 1.5m behind (north) of the front of Clements. It would extend marginally deeper into the site than the building at No.7, with a gap of 6m to the rear boundary. The frontage would be laid out to provide 4 parking spaces with a 10.4m wide access onto Roberts Road. The submitted drawings show a minimum width of 1m between the east and west side walls of the main 2-storey element and the side boundaries, with the rear 'outrigger' set in to provide a minimum gap of 3m on either side.

Relevant Planning History:

7 Roberts Road: Demolition of bungalow and erection of 5 x 1-bedroom flats with 3 parking spaces and rear cycle store (L/94/05/TP refers).

Consultations:

WSCC: The Highway Authority has raised no objection in principle, commenting:-

"Roberts Road is an unclassified road served with pedestrian footways. The proposal seeks to install a vehicle crossover across the frontage of the site in order to provide four off street car parking spaces to serve the development. It is noted that the site is on the northern side of Roberts Road, which due to the restricted nature of Roberts Road is not used for on street car parking.

Access
The proposal seeks to install a vehicle crossover across the frontage of the site in order to create four off street car parking spaces arranged in a bay formation. No turn on site would be provided. I note other neighbouring points of access on the northern side of Roberts Road operate on the same basis. I have checked the most recently available personal injury accident data and these neighbouring points of access appear to be operating safety.

The formation of the access will require the removal of bollards that appear to be placed to prohibit vehicle parking on the highways verge on the northern side of Roberts Road. The crossover would also be within 1.5 metres of an existing street lighting column; this may need to be relocated at the applicant's expense.

The crossover works must be constructed to a speciation obtained from WSCC Highways and implemented under licence. The maximum width of crossover WSCC highways typically permits is 6.4 metres, this is to preserve maximum on-street car parking. I am mindful that the frontage of the site cannot realistically be used for on street car parking at present; however I have consulted with WSCC Highways to ensure the appropriate licence agreement would be permitted. I will provide an additional response in due course detailing the results of this additional consultation.

Parking
The proposal seeks to install a vehicle crossover across the frontage of the site in order to create four off street car parking spaces. Car parking spaces should measure 2.4 x 4.8 metres. It is noted on the site plan provided the spaces will measure 2.4 x 4.4 metres; though it would appear the frontage of the site is large enough to provide spaces measuring 2.4 x 4.8 metres. This will allow vehicles to be fully removed from the carriageway and footway.

Using the WSCC car parking demand calculator, on the basis that the four spaces proposed remain unallocated, it would be anticipated that a development of this size in this location would attract the demand for six vehicular spaces. However consideration needs to be given to the existing dwelling on site which would have generated a parking demand without the benefit of any off street car parking. It should be noted that that due to the restricted nature of Roberts Road the carriageway fronting the site is not used for on street car parking. In conclusion I would be minded to conclude that the impact towards on street car parking as a result of this development would be null.

It would appear that a shared cycle provision is proposed, this should be secure and covered and large enough to store at least 3 cycles.

Conclusion
In conclusion no anticipated highway safety or capacity concerns would be raised to this proposal."

Subsequent confirmation has been received that that would be no objection to a licence for the proposed cross-over.

Southern Water: A formal application for connection to the public foul is required by Southern Water and an informative to this effect is requested. In addition it is advised that investigation of the sewer shown on the submitted plan is carried out to ascertain ownership and exact location.

Lancing Parish Council: An objection is raised owing to concerns about overdevelopment and the possible increase in vehicles in this road which suffers parking problems. If an additional space cannot be provided the only feasible option is considered to be a reduction in the number of flats

Adur and Worthing Councils:

The EHO has no objection. The Contaminated Land Officer recommends the full contamination condition. The Council's Engineer has raised a holding objection commenting:

"The proposed site lies within flood zone 1 appears to be unaffected by surface water flooding, and has no history of flooding. The applicant has indicated the intention to use soakaways for the disposal of surface water. However it appears by measurement and full adherence to current Building Regulations that the architect has left insufficient space for the proposed soakaway. Please request that the

architect calculates the size of soakaway required and then show where this will be sited on a scaled plan."

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Saved Local Plan policies (ADC 1996): AG1, AH2
DC Standard No.2 Space Around new Dwellings and Flats
Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan (2014): 1, 2, 15, 21,
Good Practice Guide – Internal Space Standards for New Homes
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

The Development Plan comprises the saved policies of the adopted Adur Local Plan (1996) although the emerging Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan (2014) can be afforded some (albeit limited) weight. This aside, the Government has accorded the National Planning Policy Framework considerable status as a material consideration which can outweigh the Development Plan's provisions where such plan policies are out of date; or silent on the relevant matter or at variance.

The Council's own Conformity Assessment of the saved Local Plan policies indicates broad compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework, where relevant policies exist. It is recognised that the Local Plan does not demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land against Objectively Assessed Need as required in the National Planning Policy Framework and allied Practice Guidance. Although this will be addressed in due course by the emerging Local Plan, paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that in such circumstances unless the proposal is at variance with its restrictive development policies, it should be approved unless the harm caused significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits when assessed against the NPPF overall.

The proposed development would make a minor contribution to meeting housing targets including OAN under the para 14/49 tests of the National Planning Policy Framework.

A number of the original detached early C20 bungalows and chalets in this road have been redeveloped at higher densities over the last 30 or more years, typically by small flat buildings. The proposed infill development follows this trend and can be supported in principle under saved policy AH2 which allows for new residential development by way of infilling or redevelopment within the built-up area, subject to its appearance, character and scale providing a pleasant place in which to live, in-keeping with and enhancing the local environment with particular attention paid to architectural form, height, materials, density and layout of buildings and hard surfaces areas; it respecting existing natural features and land form; it not having an unneighbourly effect on existing dwellings and providing adequate standards of residential amenity for new dwelling; and providing the access arrangements to the public highway and on-site parking arrangements are acceptable.

The key considerations are the living conditions of existing and future occupiers, design and the effects on the character and appearance of the area, and highway safety and parking considerations.

Visual Amenity

The former building on the site was one of the few remaining early C20 timber-framed dwellings in the road, its distinctive and characterful design a reflection of its near seaside location. It was clad in horizontal timber boarding with a shingle-tiled roof and was articulated by a variety of traditional features including a front bay window, rear catslide-roofed element, chimney, decorative ridge tiles and finials. The front garden was entirely enclosed by hedging with no off-street parking provision. It is disappointing that this fragment of history of south Lancing and a vestige of its early character has been demolished without trace.

The proposed building would have a T-shaped footprint, extending deep into the plot and virtually it's full other than a 1m gap on either side. The roof of the 2-storey frontage element would consist of dual pitched and hipped roofs, with north-south ridges one lower (6.85m) than the other (7.25m) with a valley in-between. The ground-floor would consist of a combination of brick and rendered panels, with the upper floor finished in horizontal cladding. The roof covering would consist of slate-grey coloured roof tiles. The first-floor of the lower 2-storey volume would be 'jettied' forward by 0.5m with the cladding fitted vertically on this element facing the street.

The single-storey rear element would be flat-roofed (3m high) entirely finished in horizontal cladding (above a shallow brick plinth to damp course).

The architectural composition is poor, with the main influences in terms of massing seemingly to maximise the footprint and volume of development on the site. The resulting building is poorly proportioned with the shallow pitched roofs appearing weak and the fenestration on the street elevation unbalanced with the windows mis-aligned in relation to the roof ridges, the French doors and Juliette balconies at first-floor appear 'top heavy' and the narrow entrance door to the upper floor flats and landing window above appear 'mean' and cramped in relation to the 'jettied' feature. The harmful effects of its composition is further reinforced in streetscene terms by the considerable proportion of the site laid out as buildings and hard-surfacing; the harsh austerity of the setting of the building emphasising its overdeveloped, built- up appearance. The layout of the 'drive-on' parking spaces not only opens up the frontage in a way that (other than at No.7) is alien to the character of this road, it will remove any opportunity for soft landscaping as well as destroying a significant length of the existing grass verge which is a feature of this road.

The overall quality of design is poor and at odds with the objectives of sustainable development set out in the NPPF in which sustainable development is defined as involving seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in peoples quality of life, amongst other things, replacing poor design with better design; improving the conditions in which people live and widening the choice of quality homes (paragraph 9). The importance of good design is emphasised throughout the NPPF, in particular, in order to establish a strong sense of place by responding to local character and history, reflecting the

identity of local surroundings to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness (paragraphs 58-60).

The importance attached to good design is also reflected in the emerging Local Plan, and Policy 15 which requires new development to be of a high architectural quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area, making a positive contribution to the sense of place and distinctiveness of an area with particular attention (amongst other things) being paid to the architectural form, height, materials, density, scale, orientation, landscaping and layout of the development.

The fact that the proposed development is similar in terms of its plot coverage, layout and massing to the development recently completed at No.7 is not adequate justification for allowing further poor quality development which will continue to undermine and weaken the fragile character of this road, particularly in the context of other sites which are likely to come forward for redevelopment in due course. That development in any event pre-dates the emphasis on good design within the NPPF and the emerging Adur Local Plan.

Residential Amenity – Living Conditions of Future Occupiers

Only 1 of the proposed flats would meet the minimum floor space standard of 51sqm for a 1-bedroom flat within the Council's Good Practice Guide – Internal Space Standard for New Dwellings. Three of the others fall slightly below (49.3sqm) and 1 unit would fall substantially below at 37.8sqm. The bedroom in this smaller unit (8.1sqm) would also fall below the minimum requirement of 12sqm. However, the Government's Nationally Described Standard (NPPG) provides 2 minimum standards for 1-bedroom dwellings based on the number of bed spaces. Thus, whilst only 1 of the proposed dwelling units would meet the minimum standard of 50sqm for a 1-bedroom 2-person 1-storey dwelling, the others would all meet the minimum of 37sqm for a 1-bedroom, 1-person, 1-storey dwelling (where a shower room is provided instead of a bathroom).

The overall amount of rear garden space would meet the Council's minimum standard of 20sqm per flat unit, although it is not laid out in such a way that it would be realistically useable as a communal area for the benefit of all the flats without severely detracting from the privacy of the single-storey rear unit. Normal comings and goings to and from the communal bin stores and cycle stores by the residents will severely impact on the privacy of this rear flat.

The ground-floor flats within the frontage building would be accessed via the narrow side passages on either side. The single-storey rear unit would be accessed via the eastern side passage, passing directly in front of the bedroom window of the adjacent frontage unit. The occupiers of the frontage flat would be subjected to noise and disturbance arising from the comings and goings of occupier(s) and visitors to the rear flat at any time of night or day with the sole outlook from the bedroom in this unit facing onto the entrance to the rear flat less than 2m distant. The privacy of the ground-floor frontage flats would be further comprised at the front of the building by the proximity of the parking spaces. Whilst one of these parking spaces may be allocated to the occupier(s) of the front flat the other would not. Consequently, other

residents coming and going from their vehicles, and manoeuvring in and out of spaces, would be afforded views directly into the living/dining room window of both of the ground floor flats. Bearing in mind the comments of the Highway Authority, the depth of the parking spaces shown on the drawing is sub-standard at 4.4m and in order to meet the required 4.8m depth would be even closer to the front windows.

Although the layout of the proposed accommodation and relationship to the access and parking arrangements is similar to that existing at No.7, this does not justify accepting a poor quality living environment particularly in the context of the NPPF (paragraph 17) which identifies as one of its core principles as always seeking to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Residential Amenity – Effect on amenities of Existing Residents

The properties most affected are flats within Clements to the west and 7 Roberts Road to the east.

The 4 no. windows in the west side 7 Roberts Road serve kitchen areas and bathrooms in the nearest ground and first-floor flats, and are obscurely glazed. The flats in question will suffer some loss of daylight/sunlight, in particular the ground-floor flat, owing to the scale and proximity of the proposed building compared to the former chalet. However, the kitchen areas receive borrowed light from south via the larger window serving the living/dining area, and the effect on the bathrooms cannot be afforded the same weight as for habitable accommodation. The occupier of the ground-floor flat would also be aware of comings and goings along the adjacent passageway which serves as the main entrance to 2 flats. However, the windows in question are obscurely-glazed and the existing boundary treatment would provide an adequate separation barrier.

There are also 4 windows in the east side of Clements serving the nearest ground and first-floor flats. It not known what rooms these windows serve, but the fact that 3 are high-level and the other small in size, suggests they are secondary in nature. There would be a minimum gap of 2m between the east flank of Clements and the side of the proposed new building. As with No.7, the windows in question will suffer some loss of daylight/sunlight compared to the pre-existing situation, and the occupier of the ground-floor flat in particular may be aware of activity along the adjacent access path which serves as the entrance to the nearest ground-floor flat, and vehicle manoeuvres on and off the nearest parking space on the frontage.

A window is proposed in the west elevation of the single-storey rear flat serving a bedroom. It would be sited 3m from the site boundary and would face onto the rear amenity space of Clements. The existing boundary treatment on this side is insubstantial and partially missing at the front. Taller boundary treatment - would help provide a more effective separation barrier and safeguarding the occupiers of Clements from the most serious effects of overlooking.

The 2-storey element of the proposed building will project 2.4m deeper into the site than the rear wall of Clements and the single-storey element a further 6.4m. This will inevitably increase the sense of enclosure, particularly for the occupier of the nearest

ground-floor flat but given the single-storey scale of the rear element the effect would not be excessively overwhelming or overbearing.

Although it would be difficult to justify refusal on any single one of these impacts, cumulatively they will result in a reduction in living conditions for the occupier of the adjacent ground-floor flat at Clements, and make the nearest part of the garden a less enjoyable space to be.

Highway Safety and Parking

The former chalet dwelling on the site had no on-site parking provision. Four frontage parking spaces are proposed in this case to serve 5 flats. Notwithstanding the concerns about the potential for increased pressure for on-street parking raised by the Parish Council, the Highway Authority has not raised an objection to this level of provision, nor to the arrangement of the parking spaces or the width of the access required to service them.

The site is within a sustainable location, within easy walking distance of bus services along South Street and 10 minutes walking distance from the rail station. The shops and facilities of Lancing centre are also within 10 minutes walking distance. Cycle storage provision is shown within a rear store and could be secured by condition.

REFUSE on the ground:

The proposed development constitutes an unacceptable overdevelopment of the site by reason of its large plot coverage, poor layout, access and parking arrangements which would provide for an unsatisfactory standard of residential environment for the future occupiers and result in a reduction in the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. In addition, the poor architectural composition and detailed design of the building together with the layout of parking on the frontage and hard-surfaced areas fail to satisfactorily respond to important elements of local character and distinctiveness and would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area. The proposed development is therefore contrary to saved Adur Local Plan policy AH2, policy 15 of the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan and the NPPF

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 25.01.2016

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 26 January 2016