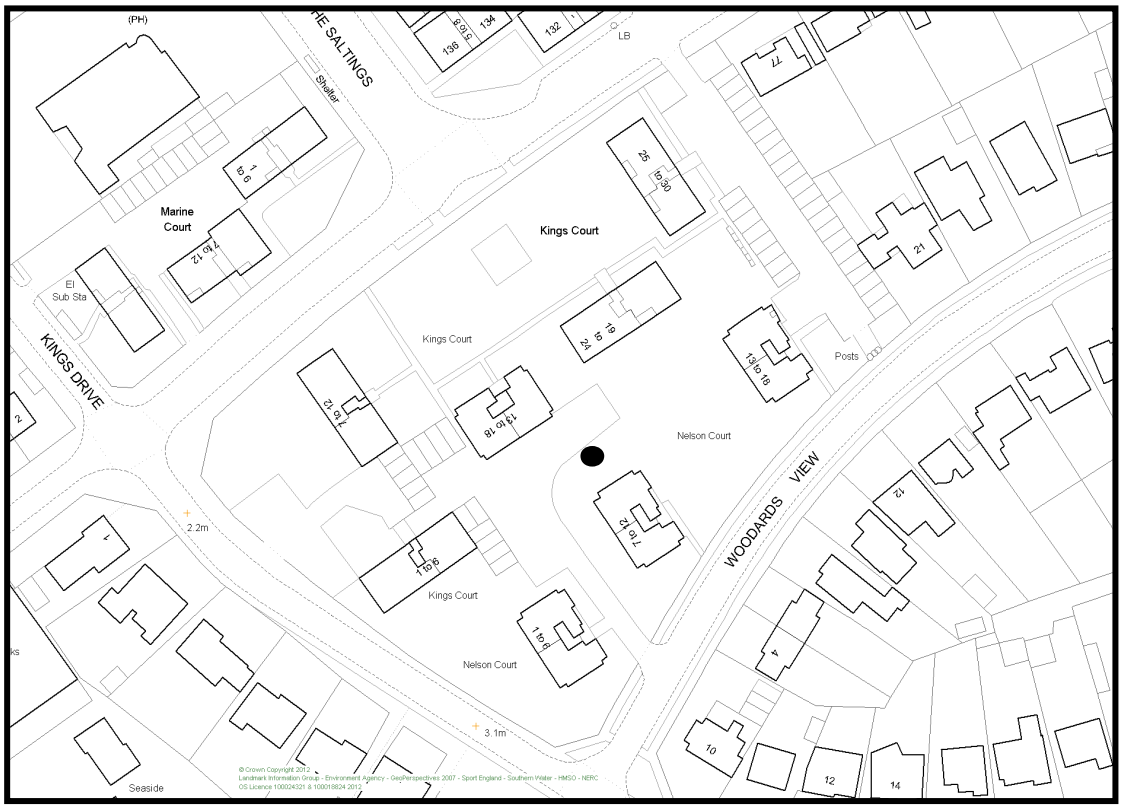
Application Number: **Recommendation – Approve**
AWDM/0067/12

Site: **Nelson Court, Woodards View, Shoreham-by-Sea,**

Proposal: **Proposed 4 additional parking bays to the north of block Nos. 7-12 Nelson Court**



Proposal

The application applies to Nelson Court and Kings Court, eight purpose built blocks of three-storey flats within a 1.1 hectare site located where Woodards View and Beach Green meet Kings Walk, on Shoreham Beach. The blocks are comprised of six flats per block, two per floor of the buildings. Identified parking for the occupants of the flats are located in two areas, on the east side of the site in a garage compound of 30 garages with 10 surface spaces, accessed from an entrance on Beach Green, and centrally with 15 garages and 10 surface spaces accessed from Woodards View. A smaller gravel parking area off Kings Walk provides a further 8 car spaces. The total number of flats at the site is 48, and the number of parking spaces (garages and surface spaces combined) is 73.

Permission is sought for an additional 4 parking bays (a reduction of 1 as amended). The bays would be located in the centre of the site accessed from Woodards View, adjacent to No's 7 -12 Nelson Court. The existing informal gravel parking area can currently accommodate 4 cars, and it is intended to resurface the area in concrete and excavate a 5m (as amended) by 22.5m

strip of the grassed verge for the parking of an additional 4 cars with angled siting.

The closest flat to the site is No. 7 Nelson Court. It is arranged with kitchen to the eastern side of the layout, and lounge/diner to the west. Both rooms have a primary outlook in those directions, but secondary windows face north towards where the proposed parking bays would be. The existing parking area is on a lower ground level that the floor level of the adjacent flat, and a 10m wide grassed area currently separates the side of the flats to the south from the existing parking area.

The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement where the applicant states that when the estate was constructed in the early 1960's very few people had cars and it was never envisaged that more than one space would be required per flat. Clearly car use has increased substantially and although there is good use of the garages for car parking this does not satisfy the modern need. Whilst there is already some parking on the site, this regularly becomes over crowded with the result that it is necessary to park on one of the adjacent roads. There is clearly considerable space on the site although resident committee has no wish to make any substantial ingress to the main grassed area or open feel that the estate provides.

The proposed spaces would be of standard size equal to others in the area. The parking will be a little closer to some properties on the estate than existing, to the main central section the parking is at a significantly lower level than the floor of the nearest block which will substantially conceal the cars. The view from the windows will not be adversely affected at all. With regards to the northern corner (of the parking) this is just a continuation of existing parking bays and away from the living room area where it is felt it would not have any adverse effect on the adjacent owner. The parking areas will be finished in concrete to match the existing roads and parking areas on site and have been designed to allow easy access. The cut edge of the soil adjacent to the central parking area will be grassed to match the existing bank.

The application has been called to be determined by the Planning Committee by the local Ward Member.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The Highways Authority state that the development will take place on land under control of the applicant and it would not be anticipated that there would be an increase in vehicular movements associated with the site, as no new dwellings are being proposed. The parking bays measure 2.4 x 4.8 metres, and from the plans provided it is unclear whether of not a turn on site for these particular parking bays can be achieved. However it does not appear that this proposal would worsen the current turning situation at the site. No overriding highway safety concerns would be raised to this proposal.

Representations

Third Parties: There have been four letters of objection to the proposals, and five letters of support.

The owners of Flat 7 (the closest of dwellings to the site of the parking) state that a considerable width of the existing grassed lawn would be sacrificed to concrete and this destruction would be irreversible. Provision of additional parking would lead to an increase in traffic, and more parking considerably closer to their property would cause disturbance by noise fumes and headlight pollution. There would be no concealment of the parked cars which would be facing both their living room and kitchen windows, which they feel would be akin to living in a car park. They have lived at the property for 18 months and have not experienced overcrowding and have not been forced to park on the road. They challenge the need to bring the additional traffic on to the site.

The other objectors to the proposals live at No's 8, 9 Nelson Court and No. 17 Kings Court.

- There is no need for any more parking than existing;
- The additional parking will bring more pollution, and lack of privacy to very pleasant surroundings;
- Loss of amenity by replacing existing grass lawn;
- More parking will increase traffic, noise and lack/difficulty of turning;
- There are other more suitable places for parking.

Subsequent to neighbours being notificed of the revision of plans having been submitted, reducing the number of parking spaces from 5 to 4, and a reduction in the amount of concrete hardstanding two further objections have been received.

The owners of No.7 Nelson Court state that the loss of grassed area would be 105sqm, and that letters of support are from management committee members who propose the consent. And that an area of parking for 8 cars off of Kings Walk is severely underused. [NB: the occupiers state that only 42 of the 48 owners have been notified under the requirements of Certificate B of the application, however the submitted list shows 48 names against the properties and is considered correct for the purposes of administering the application]

The owner of No.17 Kings Court states that there is sufficient garages and parking spaces for the number of flats (45 garages, 26 spaces and 12 other spaces) and 200m of unrestricted on street parking adjacent to the site. The car parking will take a large section of the attractive lawn, impacting on one particular flat through extra noise and intrusive headlighting.

The letters of support have been received from both the occupiers of No.19 King's Court and the occupier of No.20 Kings Court, and those at No's 3 & 4 Nelsons Court,

- Occupiers with two cars within the flats have more need for spaces, in addition to visitors and friends;

- We are having to regularly park in nearby roads causing bad feelings with those residents in the roads concerned;
- Small space required will make life easier for many owners;
- Small bit from a very large grass verge not used by anyone and will make no difference to any residents;
- The lack of just a few extra spaces life could become quite stressful as neighbours fight for space;
- It will greatly improve the parking;
- Parking area outside our block and happy for it to go ahead;

Relevant Planning Policies
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'
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)
Manual for Streets (DCLG 2007)

Planning Assessment

Principle
The Government's guidance document Manual for Streets is expected to be used predominantly for the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new residential streets however it is also applicable for existing residential areas subject to redesign. It states that the level of parking provision and its location has a key influence on the form and quality of a development and the choices people make in how they travel. The way cars are parked is a key factor for many issues such as visual quality street activity, interaction between residents and safety. Parking can be provided on or off street, off street parking includes parking within a cartilage (on plot) or in off street parking areas (off plot). Reduced on street parking can remove road safety problems and allow pedestrians to cross with adequate visibility.

National Planning Policy Framework recognises the need to support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion, and that if Local Authorities are setting parking standards for residential and non-residential development that accessibility, type and mix of development, availability to public transport and local car ownership levels should be taken into account.

Access and Parking
The applicant has claimed that the amount of parking on site is regularly in excess of the demand for the 48 flats, and this is supported by some of those who have written in favour of the application, however it is noted that those against the application claim that parking areas are under used. It is apparent that the entrance verges off of Woodards View are being used as informal parking areas, probably by those in the adjacent flats, rather than using the parking areas around the site, specifically the 8 spaces served by Kings Walk.

The amount of parking currently provided is in garaged areas providing 45 spaces, which is almost one space for each of the 48 dwellings. The additional surface parking provides an additional 28 spaces. It is common with

such sites that the parking of cars close by the occupiers front door is more convenient that in a garage compound that is further away. The layout of the site is such that the majority of the garage and surface parking is located along the eastern boundary of the site, with there being 30 garages and 10 surface parking spaces serving the adjacent 12 flats. However the western side of the site is where most of the blocks of flats are, and therefore the parking areas are under more pressure. In the central area served by the Woodards View entrance there are 15 garages and 16 surface spaces which serve the adjacent 36 flats.

Whilst the distances from one side of the site to the other side, where the majority of flats are located, is relatively small it is clear that the disproportionate amount of parking on the east side, in combination with the probable use of garages for general household storage rather than parking of cars could be resulting in additional on-street parking in nearby roads, and the informal parking of the verges.

West Sussex County Council have made no objection to the proposals on the basis that the level of occupancy of the entire site is unlikely to rise, and therefore the number of additional vehicles that could use the vehicular access onto Woodards View will not increase significantly. On the basis that the proposals will not result in an excessive level of parking that would result in a highways safety problem, supported by West Sussex County Council, it is considered that sustaining a reason for refusal on this point would be unreasonable. The level of parking within the site and whether there is an established need does appear to be a matter for the Management Board in this case.

Visual amenity

The informal parking on the verges has a cluttered appearance from the street, which will also impact the ease of access and passing of cars at the entrance point of the site. The provision of sufficient parking spaces within the central core of the site would reduce this informal parking, which would further improve the appearance of the site from Woodards View.

The applicant has reduced the number of proposed new spaces from 5 to 4, and has adjusted the angle to which they are located, thereby reducing the amount of grassed area required by 1m. The parking area that is being extended is rough unmade gravel and dirt currently. The proposals seek to formalise the existing area, and extend to the south to provide space for the additional 4 parking spaces. The amount of grassed verge is a relatively small proportion of the overall amenity area serving the flats, and whilst the formation of a more formal concrete area would add to the amount of hardsurfaced area that covers the site, it is considered that there is adequate screening by the built form of the buildings to prevent this detracting from the appearance of the site as a whole, particularly if it results in a reduction of the levels of informal parking in and around the site.

Currently the occupiers of the closets flats (No's 7-12 and 13 –18 Nelson Court) and specifically those occupiers of No.7 have views directly towards and existing parking area. Whilst the proposals would reduce the grassed buffer to 5m in width, from 10m as existing, it is not considered that the impact on the outlook from the flats would be significantly altered. The applicant has

agreed to create a planted strip to the south of the proposed new parking spaces which would further aid the screening of the parked cars from views from their kitchen and living rooms windows. It is proposed the type and size of this planting be subject to a planning condition to ensure the most appropriate type of planting is used.

Residential amenity

The closest of flats to the proposed parking bays is No.7 Nelson Court, which as described has its main outlook to the east and west. The kitchen is located on the east side of the block and has a secondary window above the sink in the north elevation facing towards the existing parking area. The lounge/diner is located to the west of the building, it too has a dual aspect with a window in the north elevation serving the sitting area, and the main outlook towards the west from the dining area.

There is an open character to the site due to the expanses of grassed space, however these are in the main separating the blocks in the centre of the site, and to the north towards Beach Green. The central core of the site is currently dominated by the access from Woodards View and the associated parking and garages. The proposed parking bays would be 5m from the windows of Flat No.7, however they would be adjacent to the existing area of parking currently used for the parking of 4 cars. The flats are on slightly higher ground level than the proposed parking bays, and therefore the impact from the proximity of the proposed spaces would be lessened to a degree, particularly with the addition of planted screen to the south.

The applicant has angled the siting of the spaces so that headlights would generally be directed towards the grassed area between Nelson Court and Kings Court to the east, particularly when starting and stopping the vehicles where there may be waiting time before manoeuvring begins. Inevitably there will be headlights which sweep across the adjacent buildings, as there are currently, however the planted strip should help to diffuse the direct impact of this.

The cars using the proposed spaces would be 5m from the windows of No.7, whereas in other places on the site the parking is more direct (being front on) to windows and in much closer proximity. In some places parking is within 2m of windows. Given the retention of the 5m of grass verge it is not considered that the open character of the site would be particularly altered, and the level of disturbance due to traffic movements, fumes and headlight glare, through the additional four cars is not considered to be so significantly worse than other parts of the estate that it would warrant refusal.

Flood risk

The proposed 4 parking bays and existing adjacent parking which is to be resurfaced will be formed with a concrete hardstanding. There are large amounts of grassed open plan communal garden between the proposed parking area and the main access road. It is considered therefore that it is unlikely that any surface water run off would be directed into the main highway. However a planning condition requiring the drainage of surface water from the parking area to a planted area or soakaway is considered necessary to prevent standing water on the parking area itself.

Recommendation

The proposed four parking spaces would result in the loss of an area of grassed amenity space, however it is not considered that this would detrimentally affect the appearance of the estate as a whole and it can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the amenities of neighbouring properties and without detraction from highway safety. It would consequently not conflict with the relevant 'saved' policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH7) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Subject to:

1. C1Ci (Standard 3 year time limit)
2. C18Li (provision to be made to direct surface water run-off from hard surfaces to a permeable or porous area within the cartilage of the site)
3. The four parking spaces hereby approved shall not be used until a planting scheme for trees and/or shrubs approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority has been planting along the south side of the site. In the event that any such trees or shrubs die or become seriously damaged or diseased within a 5 year period following planting they shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.
4. Permission relates to approved plans:
   Drawing No: 1:1250 Site location plan. Date Received: 16.01.12
   Drawing No: 1:500 Proposed parking layout plan. Date Received: 12.04.12.