Mr and Mrs C Sharpe

Malthouse Cottage

Riverside

Southwick

Brighton

BN42 4AW

9 July 2019

Adur and Worthing Councils (Development Management)

44 Richmond Road, Worthing, BN11 1HS

FAO: Peter Barnett, Adur and Worthing DC

Dear Mr Barnett.

AWDM/0636/19: Alterations and extensions to facilitate change of use from offices to flats previously approved under application reference NOTICE/0011/17. Extensions comprise first and second floor rear extensions and provision of balconies and roof terraces plus formation of additional flat to provide total of 7 flats (5 x 2 bed and 2 x 2 bed) over 3 floors at Unit 1 The Old Town Hall 142 Albion Street Southwick West Sussex BN42 4AX.

Malthouse Cottage is adjacent to the application site. While we recognise the aim of the applicant to improving the attractiveness of the flats by adding the balconies and increasing revenue from the site by the extra flat, we strongly object to the application. This representation sets out the planning grounds for objection.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the 'development plan' comprises the Adur Local Plan (ALP).

It is submitted that the proposal in the planning application is contrary to Policy 15 (Quality of the Built Environment and Public Realm), Policy 17 (The Historic Environment) and Policy 28 (Transport and Connectivity) of the adopted Adur Local Plan. Therefore, in accordance with planning law, the application should be refused.

The grounds of objection are as follows.

Conflict with planning policy

1. Policy 15 (Quality of the Built Environment and Public Realm) aims to ensure that new development "*respect(s) and enhance (s) the character of the site, and the prevailing character of the area*", does *"not have an unacceptable impact on adjacent properties, particularly residential dwellings, including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook" and has "acceptable parking arrangements (in terms of amount and layout).*

2. Policy 17 (The Historic Environment) indicates that *"Development in Conservation Areas will be required to be of a high standard of design and materials so as to respect, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of that area".*

3. Policy 28 (Transport and Connectivity) states that new development should *"Incorporate appropriate levels of car and cycle parking having regard to West Sussex County Council guidance, taking into consideration the impact of development upon on-street parking".*

4. The proposal conflicts with policy as follows.

Effect on character of area, which is within the Southwick Conservation Area

5. Both the Old Town Hall and Malthouse Cottage are identified in Appendix 2 of the Southwick Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy as being 'Unlisted buildings making a positive contribution to the area'.

6. The rear of the Old Town Hall is currently set back from the rear of adjacent Malthouse Cottage, and this staggered building line forms a pleasing entrance to Riverside. This is evident in the brick and render elevations of these buildings, the appropriate proportions of the rear windows, and the way the Old Town Hall is set back further than Malthouse Cottage from narrow Riverside at this point. We consider that for these reasons the Council have concluded that the Old Town Hall makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

7. The building out of the balconies from the existing rear of the Old Town Hall to the edge of Riverside would look cramped and be overbearing in the street scene. The staggered building line, which is an important feature of the conservation area at this point, would be lost. Riverside is narrow, and the balcony structures would tend to 'tower' over it, reducing what spaciousness there currently is between the Old Town Hall and the river itself. The historic rear wall of the Old Town Hall, with its pleasing window arrangement, would be hidden from public view.

8. There do not appear to be any 'Proposed Elevations' on the online file, but the floor plan indicates that the balconies would be supported by individual poles adjacent to Riverside, and the required railings or balustrade would suggest an appearance at odds with the character of both the Old Town Hall itself and historic Malthouse Cottage. We consider that the proposed balconies are unacceptable in principle, and that their detailed design could not overcome our concerns.

9. It is therefore submitted that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area and would be contrary to policy.



Pic 1: The attractive rear of the Old Town Hall and staggered building line



Pic 2: Balconies would extend out to the edge of the paved area, overbearing to Riverside

Effect on living conditions in Malthouse Cottage

10. Malthouse Cottage has three important side windows facing the site, which have significant amenity value to the property. Inside the Cottage an open spiral staircase is adjacent to the windows, which gives access to the upper floors. Behind the staircase the windows give light to a kitchen on the ground floor, the corridor giving access to the bathroom and bedrooms on the first floor and a living room on the second floor. These spaces are valued for their privacy.

11. The balconies to Flats 3, 6 and 7 would be built across and straight in front of the side windows, at a distance of 1m away. The outlook from the windows would be negated. This is a not a question of loss of a view, but the loss of direct outlook caused by an overbearing and obtrusive balcony structure.

12. It is submitted that use of the balconies would allow views into Malthouse Cottage from close quarters, including into the corridor serving the bathroom and bedrooms on the first floor. The privacy which we reasonably expect in these areas of our house would be wholly compromised by the balconies.

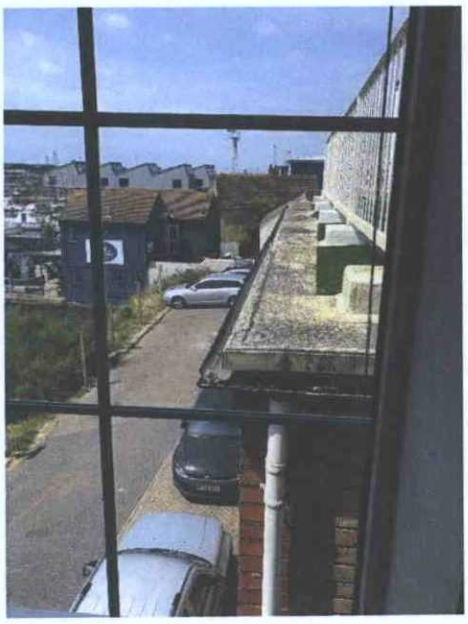
13. Adding privacy screens along the sides of the balconies would not be acceptable to us. Seen from the side windows, the screens would be a solid barrier obstructing any outlook from the windows, with the associated loss of light to the Cottage.

14. The balconies would cause a material loss of light to Malthouse Cottage. The side windows allow significant light into the house, and are the sole windows serving the corridors on the first and second floors. The orientation of the buildings means that loss of light would be most acute in the late afternoon/early evening, when direct sunlight would be lost. The proposal would make Malthouse Cottage an altogether darker and less pleasant dwelling.

15. It is submitted that the balconies would therefore unacceptably harm our reasonable living conditions, by reason of the loss of privacy, outlook and light which would result.



Pic 3: Overlooking through windows would compromise privacy of Malthouse Cottage



Pic 4: Direct outlook from windows would be lost

Parking

16. The application proposes a further flat, making the authorised total seven flats.

17. The original application NOTICE/0011/17 for six flats included the side car park (for about 12 cars) off Albion Street within the site and indicated (in the covering letter) that *"The property benefits from a car park to the east of the site which provides ample parking for the future residents."* In the current application this car park is edged blue and does not therefore form part of the application site. Parking for the flats is therefore now proposed only around the paved perimeter of the site on the west and south sides, adjacent to Riverside.

18. If the side car park is now not to be used for parking, it is considered that the proposal would lead to an unacceptable increase in pressure for off-site parking in the vicinity of the site, with an attendant increase in highway hazards.

19. The paved area around the perimeter hardly looks capable of accommodating the five cars shown on the site plan, without the cars overhanging Riverside. The erection of the balcony poles on the paved area would further restrict access to this area by cars, and it is suggested would be a serious hindrance to use of the space for parking.

20. It is considered that parking generated by the flats would therefore have to be off-site. The immediate vicinity at Riverside is narrow (single width) but is already used for parking in any space which is available. This is evident from the photos which show day-time congestion.

21. The pressure for parking by households in the Old Town Hall would be likely to worsen local traffic conditions. As well as giving rise to significant inconvenience to residents and other users of Riverside (including those visiting the moorings), it is likely that hazards would increase. Riverside has no footways, is narrow and the potential conflict between the additional traffic and pedestrians could be potentially dangerous. Furthermore, extra cars at the entrance to Riverside could cause significant difficulties to emergency vehicles getting into and out of Riverside, should the need arise. Existing parking further into Riverside is restricted by the Shoreham Port Authority (to licence holders only, such as those with a mooring) which puts pressure for parking at the entrance to Riverside.

22. In numerical terms the proposal appears to be deficient in on-site parking as set against the West Sussex CC Parking Demand Calculator. As the proposed accommodation includes 5 2-bed flats, car ownership within the building could potentially be at around 10+ cars. The proximity of public transport routes would not mitigate the potential car ownership of occupiers of the flats.

23. On a non-planning, but related, point, ownership of the paved area is being clarified in legal terms to confirm whether the use of this area for parking for the flats does not conflict with any restrictive provisions and would be feasible legally.

24. It is not considered that there are any considerations in support of the application which outweigh the reasons for refusal. The one additional flat would increase the district housing supply, but in no significant way, and this point should not be a determining factor in the application.



Pic 5: Existing daytime parking conditions and potential conflict with pedestrian users



Pic 6: Parking already causes local congestion at Riverside

Conclusion

25. The permission already granted allows the conversion of the Old Town Hall to 6 flats. The balconies would make the flats more attractive and the extra flat would add to the housing stock, but at the permanent expense of the conservation area, our living conditions at Malthouse Cottage and local parking conditions.

26. The application is unacceptable for the sound planning reasons summarised above and is contrary to the provisions of the Adur Local Plan. The Adur Local Plan is the development plan for the area and therefore, in accordance with planning law, the Council are respectfully requested to refuse the application.

Yours sincerely

C Sharpe