Application Number: ADC/0467/06 Recommendation – REFUSE

Site: **4 Old Shoreham Road, Lancing**

Proposal: **Demolition of existing house and erection of 6 two-bedroom flats and terrace of 6 three-bedroom houses (two storeys including 4 with rooms in roof) with 15 parking spaces and 3 garages, served by new access road off end of service road (outline with layout and access details)**

The Application

The proposal relates to a detached house situated on a very long plot (0.23 hectare) on the south-east side of the roundabout at the intersection of the A27 (Old Shoreham Rd) with the A2025 (Grinstead Lane). The property currently has its access directly onto the roundabout.

The proposal is to redevelop the site with a total of 12 dwelling units (6 houses and 6 flats). The existing access onto the roundabout would be closed and a new roadway (4.5m wide with 1.8m footway) constructed joined onto the end of the service road on the south side of the A27. The proposed road entails taking away the corner of the front garden of No.6 Old Shoreham Road (the owners of whom have been served with the necessary notice of the application). The new roadway would run 75m to a proposed turning head towards the southern end of the site. The new road would run alongside the house at No.6 Old Shoreham Road and behind the rear gardens of bungalows fronting Manor Way which lie on lower ground to the east.

On the frontage, to the north of the semi-detached pair of houses at No's 1 & 3 Grinstead Lane, would be a block of 5 flats, two storeys high plus rooms in the roof. It would be 7m-9.6m in width and 18.6m in depth, positioned 4.6m-5.4m from the south-western side boundary with No.1 and 0.5m-1.5m from the proposed footway alongside the proposed roadway.
Beyond the block of flats would be 6 parking spaces and then a block of 3 garages (7m by 10.8m) with a flat above (in the roofspace) and 9 parking spaces in front, opposite and to the south.
Beyond this, facing onto the turning head, would be a terrace of 6 houses (9m by 28m); these would be two storeys high, the 4 middle ones also having rooms in the roof.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement. This describes the context, constraints and opportunities for development. It refers, amongst other things, to establishing that access should be from the north west, extending the service road into the site (with adequate radii and sight lines) and providing a footway; retaining where possible existing trees and

hedgerows on the site boundaries with additional planting; providing a mixed range of dwellings; taking account of neighbouring properties to minimise overlooking by the orientation of new buildings and careful attention to design, etc.

Consultations and Representations

Highways Agency: Recommends refusal on grounds that the increase in intensity of traffic using the site, the resulting pattern of development and vehicular movement would adversely affect highway safety and would be unsustainable in planning terms. The proposed development would result in an increase in vehicles using a service road and access close to a roundabout on the A27T and result in an increase in the number of U-turns on the A27T (from traffic wishing to enter the site from the west). The proposal is contrary to Circular TD41/95, TA79/99 and PPG13.

County Transport Planning Services: To ~~be reported~~. rev. as ref.

Environment Agency: To ~~be reported~~. obj

Southern Water: To be reported.

Director of Services: The EHO comments that the proposed block of 5 flats, being located next to the roundabout on the A27, would be subject to high levels of traffic noise (probably NEC 'C' where dwellings are not normally allowed) and probably also breaking the air quality objective for exposure to nitrogen dioxide. Advises that both a noise assessment and air quality assessment are required.

Lancing Parish Council: Objects on grounds of access issues, overdevelopment of the site and unneighbourly position of the flats and their size.

Third Parties

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~~3~~ letters of objection have been received, from No's 10 Old Shoreham Road and No's 2 & 8 Manor Way. The main grounds of objection are:-

- all traffic from the west would have to use the U-turn on the A27, creating extra hazards.
- the additional traffic using the service road would cause more noise and pollution and add to parking difficulties.
- it would add to the danger of schoolchildren having to cross the road.
- it would aggravate existing flooding and subsidence problems in this locality, comment being made that Southern Water carried out work to alleviate the problem but, on occasions of extra heavy rainfall, a mobile pump still has to be put in Manor Way to pump out excess water from the sewerage system.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (2005): LOC1, CH1, NE1-2, ERA1, ERA4-5, DEV1, DEV3-5
Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (1996): AG1, AP3, AP8, AB23-27, AH1-2, AH5, AT12 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No.2 "Space Around New Dwellings and Flats"
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards & Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003 & ADC 2004)
Design Bulletin "Trees and Landscaping" (ADC 1996)
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 'Housing' (DCLG 2006)
PPG13 'Transport' (DTLR 2001)
PPG24 'Planning and Noise (DoE 1994)
PPG25 'Development and Flood Risk' (DTLR 2001)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is located within a residential part of the built-up area and the proposal constitutes redevelopment and infilling as provided for in both Structure and Local Plan policies. There is no objection in principle to infill development within the built-up area and, in order to meet the housing requirements of the approved Structure Plan and Local Plan, a significant proportion of housing development by way of development of 'unidentified' infill sites is necessary. However, the suitability of individual sites for development depends upon many factors including the adequacy of the means of access to the land, the character of the locality and the siting and configuration of existing and proposed dwellings.

Structure Plan policies give significant weight to making the best use of land through higher density development provided that the impact on the character of the area and environment is acceptable (LOC1, ERA1, CH1) and subject to policy DEV1 requiring high quality development. 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 a 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 explanatory text refers to a transport contributions methodology (now adopted as TAD payments to sustainable transport improvements).

Local Plan policy AH2 relates to new residential development (by way of infilling and redevelopment) and states that new dwellings should be designed so that their appearance, character and scale create a pleasant place in which

to live and are in keeping with and enhance the existing local environment with particular attention being paid to architectural form, height, materials, density, layout of buildings and hardsurfaced areas; they do not have an unneighbourly effect due to loss of privacy; daylight/sunlight; outlook or open space, incorporating adequate standards of residential amenity for the new dwellings in terms of amenity space, daylight, outlook and privacy; access and parking provision meets the adopted standards; and they accord with the Council's DC Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'.

Government policy guidance in PPS3 encourages optimisation of the 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 is also seeks to promote designing for quality.

Density, character and visual amenity

The character of this area is relatively low density; southwards from the site comprising detached and semi-detached dwellings with large rear gardens with trees and shrubs. The density of this existing development is only about 23 dwellings per hectare (dph) which is below the Government's recommended minimum 30 dwellings per hectare for new development. The houses and bungalows in Manor Way and Old Shoreham Road to the east are at a higher density of about 31dph and those to the rear in Hayley Road higher still.

However, No.4 Old Shoreham Road, the application property, has a particularly large curtilage and is at a far lower density than the other properties, being the equivalent of only 4dph. The greater part of the application site appears to be disused and has previously been the subject of enforcement action against unauthorised uses. It is clearly so large as to vastly exceed the need for garden space.

In comparison, the proposed dwellings would be at a density equivalent to 52dph. There is concern that the proposed erection of a block of flats and a terrace of houses could be unsympathetic in character. In particular, owing to the length and narrowness of the developable site, accentuated by the need to accommodate an access road, some of the buildings are relatively close to the site boundaries with neighbouring rear gardens. The environment of the proposed development would be dominated by the access road, which takes up much of the site area, with the buildings, other than the garages with flat above, being at either end and having little relationship with each other. Consequently, there is concern that the proposal would not achieve a high quality environment.

Residential amenity (including space standards)

Government guidance in PPG3 is that dimensional planning standards should not be rigidly applied and emphasis should be placed on the ingenuity of designers to achieve high quality living environments. However, for the basis

of comparison, it is relevant to set out how the proposal compares with the Council's minimum standards.

In terms of amenity space, the Council's DC Standard No.2 requires a minimum rear garden depth of 11m and a minimum area of 65sqm for each three-bedroom terraced house. The proposals show a 10.3m rear garden depth and rear garden areas of 43sqm for 4 houses, which is well below standard, but over 90sqm for the two end houses. For flats, the Standard requires 20sqm minimum amenity space per flat, giving a requirement of 120sqm for the 6 flats. The plans show an irregular area alongside the boundary with No.1 Grinstead Lane, about 3m-6m wide with a total area of about 180sqm, thus exceeding the minimum.

As regards distance between the proposed buildings and existing dwellings and whether this is sufficient to avoid overlooking, the position of principal windows can only be postulated. The greatest concern is that the block of flats would project about 14m beyond the rear wall of the house at No.1 Grinstead Lane and cause overlooking. Although the plan is denoted "limited windows to boundary elevation", it is difficult to see that windows in this long elevation could be avoided. Moreover, such a long wall, if blank, although 4.6m or more from the boundary, would appear oppressive, particularly because it is angled obliquely towards the side of the rear garden of No.1.

At the bottom of the rear garden of No.1 would be the garage block (with flat in its roofspace) positioned with its rear wall only 1.2m-2m from the boundary. However, a note on the plan states "no windows to boundary elevation" and, given the great length (33m) of the rear garden of No.1, it is not considered that it would be overbearing.

The block of flats would face across the proposed road to the side of the existing house at No.6 and its rear garden, at a distance of about 10m. This is relatively close and likely to result in overlooking of the garden as the majority of windows would need to be on this side, although there are trees and a hedge on the boundary to lessen the impact. The flat above the garages would face the ends of the rear gardens of the bungalows at No's 6 & 8 Manor Way being 11m-18m from the boundary and 24m-27m from the rear windows of the bungalows (cf. minimum standard of 22m).

With regard to the terrace of houses at the southern end of the site, the end elevations (denoted as having no windows) would be a sufficient distance from the rear windows of the nearest house to the west at No.9 Grinstead Lane (29m to the west). However, to the east, the bungalows at No's 8 & 10 Manor Way, being at an oblique angle towards the site and on lower ground, would be likely to suffer overlooking of their rear gardens and windows from the front first-floor windows of the proposed easternmost terraced house (the nearest bungalow being only 16m away). It is considered that the proposed houses are too close to the eastern side boundary and too close to the south side boundary (as stated earlier, the rear gardens of 4 of the houses are too small). To the south of the site is the garden of No.15 Grinstead Lane and a parking/garage compound off Hayley Road.

Effect on trees

The proposed layout indicates that most of the existing trees of widely varying types and sizes around the boundaries of the site would be retained. However, a large willow in the south-east corner and some others would be removed. The proximity of the proposed dwellings and road construction to some of the trees gives rise to concern that these trees might be lost either through direct impact of the works or through future desire of residents to fell them because of problems of overshadowing or potential damage to buildings, etc.

Flood risk

The site lies on the edge of the area identified as at risk of flooding by the Environment Agency. The advice of the Agency is currently awaited.

Traffic noise and air quality

The proposed block of 5 flats, being located next to the roundabout on the A27, would be subject to high levels of traffic noise, probably NEC 'C' of PPG24 (where dwellings should not normally be allowed unless there are no quieter sites available in which event conditions should be imposed to require adequate protection). Also, it would probably also break the air quality objective for exposure to nitrogen dioxide. The EHO advises that both a noise assessment and air quality assessment are required. The development would need to be designed to take account of the conclusions of such assessments. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the requirements of policies AP8 and ERA5 would not appear to be met.

Access and parking

It is acknowledged that the existing access directly onto the roundabout gives rise to serious concerns regarding highway safety and that an alternative means of access is desirable if a suitable one can be found. Nevertheless, although the present proposal entails closure of the existing access, it has given rise to objections from the Highways Agency.

The main reason for their objection is that the proposal would generate far more traffic than the existing single house. This traffic would join the westbound carriageway of the A27T a short distance to the east of the roundabout where there are frequent severe traffic queues.

In addition, because all vehicular access to the properties on the south side of the A27 is from the westbound carriageway, those arriving by car from the west have to use the U-turn facility 600m to the east. This not only increases the risk of accidents when carrying out this manoeuvre but also results in additional journey length which the Highways Agency consider unsustainable.

The advice of WSCC is awaited on the layout and design of the proposed new access road.

The extension of the service road immediately adjacent to the roundabout, resulting in traffic running in the opposite direction to traffic on the roundabout but separated from it only by a 4m-6m wide verge with a row of posts, must also be a significant concern. This is especially so during the hours of darkness when car headlights would be likely to cause dazzle and hence affect road safety.

Policy DEV4 of the Structure Plan and policies AH2 and AT12 of the Local Plan require safe and adequate access for development and the proposal is considered to conflict with these policies. Therefore, despite the general need to make better use of underused land within the built-up area and the reasonable distance of the site from local facilities, it is considered that, in this particular case, the vehicular access arrangements are too seriously deficient to be acceptable to serve 12 dwellings.

With regard to car parking, under the adopted standard, a maximum of 24 parking spaces are required (ie. 2 spaces per dwelling unit). Given that the site is within walking distance of local facilities, the proposed provision of 18 car parking spaces (including the 3 garages) is considered appropriate, subject to the views of WSCC.

If the proposed development were to be allowed, under the adopted Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology, a section 106 Obligation would be needed in which the owner undertakes to pay a contribution (calculated under the adopted formula) towards the improvement of 'sustainable' transport facilities in the area, to discourage car usage and mitigate the effects of the proposal.

Recommendation

Subject to consideration of the comments of WSCC Transport Planning Services and the Environment Agency, REFUSE on grounds that:-

1. The increase in the intensity of traffic using the site, the resulting pattern of development and vehicular movement would adversely affect highway safety and be unsustainable in planning terms. It would result in an increase in vehicles using the service road and access close to the A27 roundabout and increase the number of U-turns in the gap in the central reservation of the A27. As a result, the proposal would be contrary to the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (DEV3-5), the Adur District Local Plan (AH2 & AT12) and PPG13.

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3. On the information available with this outline application, the LPA is not satisfied that the proposed development would accord with the requirements of the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AH2), particularly in respect of

achieving a high quality environment, sufficient rear garden space for the proposed houses and adequate standards of privacy and avoidance of an overbearing effect on existing neighbouring dwellings.

4 In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the LPA is not satisfied that the proposed block of 5 flats would not be exposed to unacceptable levels of traffic noise and pollution, contrary to policies AP8 of the Adur District Local Plan and DEV1 & ERA5 of the West Sussex Structure Plan

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3. USCC