Dmgt Committee minutes 5/2/07 exp 14/2

Appendix A

Application Number: ADC/0468/06

Site: **Houseboat 'Sunshine', 29 Riverbank Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5YH**

Proposal: **Enlargement of cabin structure on existing pontoon (retrospective)**

Representations received and noted.

Further representations made at the meeting:-

Objector: None
Parish Representative: N/A
Ward Councillor: None
Applicant or Agent/supporter: Mr Ray Wicks

DECISION - APPROVED for the reason:-

The proposed development would not cause additional detraction from the riverscene, harm to the Adur Estuary SSSI or the 'strategic gap' separating built-up areas, or detriment to residential amenities of existing dwellings. It would not conflict with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AC1, AC4, AN1, AB16) and the West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (LOC2, CH1, CH3, ERA2-3, DEV1).

Subject to:-

1. C12Eii (External finish to be submitted and approved) (amended)

Application Number: ADC/0468/06 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Houseboat 'Sunshine', 29 Riverbank Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5YH**

Proposal: **Enlargement of cabin structure on existing pontoon (retrospective)**

The Application

The application relates to a mooring plot having a flat pontoon upon which is mounted a houseboat (with superstructure) plus a structure built directly onto the pontoon at its northern end. A new structure has recently been built directly onto the pontoon, over the houseboat. It is only marginally longer and, for the most part, only marginally higher but 2m wider. The pontoon is about 6m from the riverbank, separated from it by a platform with sheds.

The pontoon itself is 18m long, 6.5m wide and only 0.9m high. The structure at its very northern end was built directly onto the pontoon in 2001. It was permitted retrospectively (SU/230/01) and was shown on the plan as 3.6m wide, 5m long and 4m high.

The new structure comprises a taller section at its northern end, joined onto the above structure, about 3m long and 5.5m wide with a height of 3.7m above the pontoon. The remainder is a lower structure about 9m long and 5.5m wide (6.3m including roof overhang) with a height of 3.3m above the pontoon. The mineral felt-covered roof has a very slight curve.

The applicant states that the existing structure was in very poor condition both in respect of its roof and generally. Also, the top of the steel pontoon is suffering corrosion/rot. Rather than attempt a futile and pointless repair by patch and bodge, he felt building over it was the best solution.

Consultations and Representations

English Nature: No ~~comments received~~. obj

Environment Agency: No objection.

Director of Services: The EHO has no objection.

Third Parties: No comments received (NB. 7 notification letters were sent).

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC2, CH3, ERA2, DEV1
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AC1, AC4, AC10, AB16
Draft 'Good Practice Guide for Houseboats' (ADC Dec 2006)
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" (ODPM 2004)
PPS9 "Biodiversity and Geological Conservation" (ODPM 2005)
PPG20 "Coastal Planning" (DoE 1992)

Planning Assessment

The site lies within the Adur Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), of national importance principally because of its habitat for wading birds. It forms part of the 'strategic gap' of countryside separating built-up areas as defined in the Local Plan. There is a policy objection to new development unless there are compelling circumstances but, in previous cases, the view has been taken that, in principle, the enlargement of superstructures is acceptable to meet the needs of the householder concerned provided their scale is appropriate.

The present case is unusual as it involves a pontoon. Pontoons would have been resisted as being out of keeping but the present case has become 'established' by passage of time. It appears that original houseboat ceased to float and was put on top of the pontoon many years ago. There was no planning application. As stated above, a structure was later added at the riverward end and the amended retrospective application for it was granted (SU/230/01). Just recently, a further structure has been added over virtually the whole of the remainder of the pontoon, to replace the houseboat, and the present application seeks permission retrospectively.

The structure forming the subject of the present application involves a total building length of approximately 17m, which is 94% of the length of the pontoon. The Council's draft 'Good Practice Guide for Houseboats' states that superstructures should not exceed 12m long or 66% of the length of the boat. However, the length of the houseboat (with superstructure) it replaced was already virtually the same length. The significant difference is in respect of the width which is now 5.5m as compared to 3.5m. The new structure, however, leaves a minimum 0.5m either side, as stated in the Code, although the roof overhangs to moreorless the same width as the pontoon.

Essentially, the appearance is a flat-roofed 'box-like' building on a raft. Its appearance is considered to be of a low quality of design and construction and not at all 'nautical' in character. It clearly does not conform to the draft 'Code of Good Practice'.

Nevertheless, whilst larger in width and, to a more limited degree, in height than the houseboat with superstructure it replaced, its impact on the riverscene (at both low and high tide) is not particularly significant. The reason is that the pontoon is so low and the structures are not so tall as those of the houseboats either side and beyond. It sits in a fairly narrow gap between the houseboats either side and is not especially prominent from the riverbank path because of a shed and conifers on the boundary and tall fencing on the adjoining plot to the east.

With regard to the effects on the adjacent houses at Beach Green which back onto the river bank, these would not be overlooked.

It is concluded that, although it is not in accordance with the draft Code of Practice (which does not deal with pontoons), the particular circumstances of this case would make refusal difficult to substantiate because of the very limited effect on the riverscene. It is felt to be sufficiently unusual as not to set a precedent.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason:-

The proposed development would not cause additional detraction from the riverscene, harm to the Adur Estuary SSSI or the 'strategic gap' separating built-up areas, or detriment to residential amenities of existing dwellings. It would not conflict with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AC1, AC4, AN1, AB16) and the West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (LOC2, CH1, CH3, ERA2-3, DEV1).

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