DELEGATED APPLICATIONS — ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION No./ADDRESS

WB/08/0174/FULL – 8 High Street

DATE INSPECTED

14th April 2008

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

5-storey block of offices with car parking at the rear. Within the Steyne Gardens Conservation Area and adjoined by local interest buildings in High Street and The Broadway, Brighton Road.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought to construct a ramped pedestrian access with handrail at the front of the building, utilising the existing double-door main entrance to the ground floor. It is further proposed to remove the existing projecting canopy over the ground floor façade and the existing cladding to the projecting bases of the first, second and third floor bay windows, and to install pastel toned, smooth-clad rendered panels between the pairs of the existing windows [to be retained]. In place of the existing ground floor canopy, a new canopy with toughened glazed units is proposed. This would be installed at an angle inclined downwards, towards the building, projecting 1100 mm.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

1973 – Permission granted for 5-storey office block (WB/863/73)
1981 – Permission granted for substitution of coloured render for defective slip tile clad edge beams on east/west elevations & provision of metal cladding to weather proof roof plant room (WB/200/81)
2000 – Designation of the Steyne Gardens Conservation Area, to include 8 High Street

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

Saved West Sussex Structure Plan 2001 – 2016: ERA1; CH4; DEV1; Saved Worthing Local Plan 2003: BE1

CONSULTATIONS

The Assistant Director (Health & Housing Services) raises no objections.

The Building Control Manager comments:

"The design of the ramp is restricted by the width available from the front line of the structure and the back edge of the highway (pavement). The gradient should not exceed 1:12. It is noted that an auto-opening door suitable for use by the disabled is proposed. In general terms, this proposal is an improvement to the existing unsatisfactory situation, and should be supported."

REPRESENTATIONS

The Conservation Advisory Committee raises no objections.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 8 (Right to Respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application. It is accepted that the proposal, is approved, would have some impact on the neighbouring properties. However, it is considered that the level of development or tree work involved would not cause undue harm in terms of additional noise, disturbance and loss of privacy and that, on balance, existing residential quality of life would not be adversely affected as a result of the proposal. Accordingly, it is considered that it is acceptable in relation to Article 8 and Article 1, respectively.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Under Policy CH4 of the Structure Plan, alterations and additions to buildings in Conservation Areas will only be permitted, where they would respect, in design, layout, scale, proportions, materials and detailing, those of the existing building and the surrounding area, so as to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

This building is a large imposing building, built in the 1970s. It is set amongst generally three and four-storey buildings dating from the early part of the 20th century, where the tone of light-red and creamy white predominate in a generally domestic scale and character above ground floor shops to the south (The Broadway), extending a short distance into High Street. To the north is The Church pub/restaurant.

The existing building has a very 'hard' and imposing appearance, with its drab-grey metal cladding on the projecting bays between the pairs of windows to the first, second and third floors and on its mansard roof. The building otherwise has a pleasant light-red, which works well with The Church, adjoining. Contrasting against this are horizontal narrow bands of [very drab] plain rendered masonry, which wrap round the building at first, second and third floor levels, on all sides.

The proposal would provide a much lighter treatment to the projecting bays. The use of a Sto-sure pastel-tone [such as cream/buttermilk off-white] artificial render cladding on the bays would give the building enhanced verticality, whilst harmonising much more closely with the pastel-toned rendered sections of The Church adjoining and the generally light-toned render of The Broadway, as well as the light-red brick façade that forms the main material. This is considered to be a major improvement in Planning/design terms and is an enhancement to the character and appearance of these buildings and the Conservation Area, where a number of buildings have recently undergone renovation.

Subject to detailed samples and colours of the rendered panels being agreed with the LPA before works commence, these areas of improvement on this building are acceptable, and should be supported.

There are no details of the design of the proposed canopy fitted above the ground floor entrance and window. It is not clear what purpose the canopy would serve, although it would provide horizontal division, connecting with The Broadway shops to the south, and, in principle, would be acceptable.

The proposed access ramp is a further welcome alteration to the ground floor façade. It would not only provide access for the disabled, but would also open up the frontage of the building, so that the ground floor glazed entrance doors and window have much more pronounced 'shop front' appearance, with less separation/isolation from the shops to the south that have open forecourts extending to the site. The proposed stainless steel handrail on a low retaining wall, in place of the existing quarry-tiledsteps, is a further improvement in design terms, provided that matching brickwork is used. The surfacing materials for the ramped path itself should be a charcoal grey non-slip, or natural stone, finish to give the building a welcome 'base' for the building.

In summary, the proposal would provide welcome improvements in design terms, subject to a schedule and samples of the materials to be used, and details of the design and construction of the proposed canopy, being agreed in writing with the LPA before works commence. On this basis, conditional permission should be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant permission, subject to:

1. C1ARev – Standard revised time limit – 3 years
2. Schedule of materials/finishes and samples for ramped footpath, retaining wall, cladding and canopies to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA before works commence. Thereafter, the works shall be completed in accordance with the agreed details.

IS RECOMMENDATION CONTRARY TO LETTER(S) OF REPRESENTATION? Yes/No

REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

Accords with the relevant policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan and the Worthing Local Plan

DELEGATED

Case Officer Sign..... Date: 14th April 2008

Authorising Officer Sig[redacted] Date: 21.4.08