Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: **Recommendation – Approve**
AWDM/0910/13

Site: **Garage Block Britannia House, High Street, Shoreham By Sea**

Proposal: **Addition of first floor to existing garage block to create 1no. 2-bed flat. Demolition of 1no. garage to form entrance.**

Date of site visit: 13 August 2013

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The site is located to the north of Norfolk House on the riverside, to the south west of Britannia House on the south side of the High Street (A259), to the rear of a single-storey shop ('Tanfastique'), and to the east of The Bridge public house.

The existing garage block is a single storey flat roof structure comprising of 8 garages with vehicular access from the High Street. Norfolk House, to the south, is a three-storey double pitch-roofed vacant office block built in the 1960s. The garages form part of the parking provision for this building.

Britannia House, on the street frontage, is a three-storey building with shops and commercial uses on the ground floor facing the High Street with 8 residential maisonettes above. Parking for this building is directly to the rear and separated from that of Norfolk House by a metal tubular fence.

Planning permission was granted in 2012 for a complete remodelling of Norfolk House to create 8 four storey townhouses with a 9th townhouse attached to the east. As part of this scheme the block of 8 garages were approved to be demolished and replaced by a two-storey office building, with the offices on the first floor and the ground floor comprising 3 car parking spaces, bins and cycle storage, toilets and entrance lobby (AWDM/0871/11 refers and followed an earlier scheme ADC/0056/11 to redevelop the office block and garages with a 72 bedroom hotel). Conservation Area consent for demolition of the garages (ADC/0872/11) was granted in 2012. In 2012 an application for the redevelopment of the garage block to form two residential units was refused (AWDM/1504/12). The design was in the form of an almost identical building to the previously approved scheme and the layout comprised parking and storage at ground floor level and an entrance at ground floor leading to all of the living accommodation at first floor level. The reasons for refusal were as follows:

Having regard to the limited size, cramped layout, and lack of amenity space for the proposed flats and obstructed outlook from the living room of the one-bedroom flat, it is considered that the proposal would provide a poor standard of living accommodation detrimental to the amenities of future occupants. As such the proposal is considered contrary to saved policy AH2 of the Adur District Local Plan 1996 and Good Practice Guidance Note: Internal Space Standards for New Homes 2010.

The current application proposes the construction of a two bedroom flat at first floor level with the ground floor garages to remain except for the southern garage which would be demolished with the first floor cantilevered over at this end. White-coloured render is proposed for the walls with large aluminium-framed windows in its east side and light grey metal panels between the windows. An enclosed balcony area is proposed to its southern end with frameless glass balustrades on the east and west sides. This is a reduced footprint from the previous scheme with no connection to the building to the north.

One garage would be for the use of the new dwelling in addition to 2 parking spaces and storage for 2 bicycles is indicated on the plans. A bin storage area is also proposed on the north side of the building.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement by the architects, and a copy of an earlier Flood Risk Assessment report by Dixon Hurst Kemp Ltd.

Relevant site history
As above

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The **Highway Authority** have commented as follows:

A new application has since been submitted and appears to seek approval for the addition of a first floor to an existing garage block to form a 2 bedroom flat, including the demolition of an existing garage. The unit will have the benefit of 3 off-street car parking spaces, one of which being within a garage and the inclusion of secure cycle storage for 2 bicycles.

The building is situated in a sustainable location with a local train station and bus stops easily accessible by foot, therefore encouraging residents to use sustainable forms of transport. The ability to secure bicycles on site is envisaged to mitigate the need for a private car as well. However there is sufficient space for residents wishing to use a private car to park and turn on site, allowing them to exit on to the High Street in the forward gear.

I have checked the most recently available verified accident records, which reveals a number of reported road traffic accident in the vicinity of the access to the site. Having thoroughly checked this data, it does not appear to be relevant to the proposal.

Based on these comments there would be no concerns to this application from a highway safety perspective. If the LPA are minded to approve this application, a condition securing the parking and cycle storage should be included.

Adur & Worthing Councils:

The Environmental Health Officer has recommended a Full contamination condition and made the following comments:

The area of development just off the High Street has been identified by DEFRA as an area severely affected by noise. I would ask for an acoustic assessment to be undertaken to ascertain the exact noise exposure of the property including a scheme to protect the habitable rooms from excess noise. The standard to be achieved shall be British Standard BS 8233: 1999: Sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings.

British Standard 8233 Indoor Noise Levels

Room	*Good*	*Reasonable*
Living Room	*30 dB LAeq,T*	*40 dB LAeq,T*
Bedroom	*30 dB LAeq,T*	*35 dB LAeq,T & 45 dB LAmax,F*

As a minimum requirement I would expect the reasonable level to be achieved.

The scheme should recognize that the High Street is an Air Quality Management Area and any whole house ventilation scheme or forced air ventilation to habitable rooms should have the air intake at roof level to minimize the level of traffic polluted air blown directly into the property.

Environment Agency: No objection

Conservation Advisory Group: Approve

Representations
None received

Relevant Planning Policies
Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AP4, AB3-4 AB16, AH2, AH5 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No.2 "Space Around New Dwellings and Flats"
'Good Practice Guidance Note: Internal Space Standards for New Homes' (ADC 2010)
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is within Shoreham town centre and Conservation Area and close to the north edge of the river Adur. There is a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and the setting of listed buildings. Local Plan policy AB3 states that permission will not be granted for development generating a level of traffic or other activity likely to adversely affect the character of a Conservation Area. AB16 states that in order to protect the important amenity value of the river upstream of the Surry Hard, development adversely affecting views along and across the river will not be permitted.

In the Local Plan, the site is included within the area identified for mainly shopping and business use under policy AS1 (with office use also potentially acceptable under AE5 and AE6 provided it does not detract from the vitality and viability of the shopping area). AS1 states that permission will be granted for the development of land within the areas shown as subject to this policy for shopping and food and drink purposes provided that there will be no loss of residential accommodation at upper floor level, there will be no loss of amenity to nearby residents, access to the public highway is acceptable, and the development is of a scale and design appropriate to the locality.

Principle of Development

The Local Plan includes the site within the area identified for primarily shopping and also office uses under policies AS1 and AE5-6. However, the policy is worded in a way that only protects the vitality and viability of the shopping area. It does not prevent the loss of existing office floorspace or its associated facilities such as parking as would be the case here.

The site's location to the rear of the High Street and without a street frontage does not lend itself to shopping use. In assessing a previous application for a two storey office building, it was considered that some form of office or business use was desirable in this central location but there is no specific policy requirement for it.

The National Planning Policy Framework recognises 'that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres' and states that Local Planning Authorities should 'normally approve planning applications for change to residential use….where there is an identified need for housing in that area, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate'.

The principle of residential development is therefore accepted but this is subject to detailed consideration of the individual merits of the scheme proposed as is discussed below.

Visual Amenity and Effect on Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2008 recognises that buildings in the High Street are generally rather larger than in the rest of the Area and mentions that the 1960s Norfolk House and Britannia House are of little aesthetic quality and represent a redevelopment opportunity.

The garages themselves are not prominent features and although the proposed additional storey to form a two storey building would make the site more widely visible, the building would be set against the backdrop of surrounding townscape of mixed character and potentially screened from the riverside by the remodelled and extended Norfolk House if the previous permission is implemented.

The design merits of the proposed building were considered when determining the previous applications and the current scheme follows a similar form over a reduced footprint but with the ground floor garages mainly retained and some adjustments to the configuration of the fenestration and inclusion of a balcony. The simple 'cubist' form, with mainly white rendered finish was considered appropriate previously. The addition of an enclosed balcony adds visual interest and the variations to the fenestration in this application are acceptable and consistent with the overall design. There is an opportunity to uplift the appearance of the ground floor garages and although the blank expanse of brickwork at the rear would remain, the other walls would be rendered and the garage doors and framework replaced to provide a visually coherent appearance.

Residential Amenity
The impact on neighbouring occupiers was considered in detail as part of the previous proposal with the scale and form of the building having been considered to have no significant impact on residential amenity. The current application proposes a reduced footprint, with a space with parking to the north of the building rather than the link to the 'Tanfastique' building as previously proposed, and a slightly reduced height at 6.39 metres. The proposed development would not pose any significant threat to residential amenity in terms of loss of light, outlook or privacy.

It is not considered that the current design or that use of the first floor as one flat would have a significant detrimental impact compared with the commercial unit previously approved. A balcony opening is proposed in the west elevation (where previously a window was proposed) but given the enclosed nature of this balcony it is not considered to have any significant additional impact on the nearest neighbour, the Bridge Inn occupants, when compared with the previously approved scheme including a window.

Living conditions of future occupants
The Environmental Health Officers noise concerns could be dealt with by a suitable condition should planning permission be granted.

The Council's 'Good Practice Guidance Note: Internal Space Standards for New Homes' 2010 states that a two-bedroom dwelling should have a minimum floor area of 66m^2; with a minimum living, cooking and eating area of 24m^2 and sleeping area of 19m^2.

At approximately 79m^2, the proposed flat would exceed floorspace requirements, with living, cooking and eating, and bedroom areas also meeting the standard. The room layout with living accommodation at the southern end provides an improved outlook from the main living room compared with the previous scheme which proposed one flat with living room outlook directly towards the side wall of the adjacent building.

The Council's DC Standard No. 2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats' requires a minimum of 20m^2 of communal amenity space, however a balcony area providing 11.5m^2 of private amenity space is proposed which is welcomed.

The standard of living accommodation proposed is considered acceptable.

Accessibility and Parking
The site is in a highly sustainable location being in close proximity to town centre facilities and amenities, with very good public transport links by bus and train. The access to the site is via the existing entrance from High Street.

The proposals provide 1 garage and 2 other car parking spaces and cycle parking which the Highway Authority have considered acceptable and have raised no highway safety concerns in relation to the access and no objection to the loss of garages for Britannia House.

The expected level of demand for the development is 1 space and so the 3 spaces provided would meet this demand.

Given the town centre location close to facilities and public transport links, and in the absence of any objection from the Highway Authority, parking and access are considered acceptable. A condition is recommended if permission is granted to ensure cycle storage is provided.

Flood Risk
The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. The site is located within Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at risk of flooding, primarily tidal rather than fluvial.

Although an entrance is necessary from the ground floor, the remainder of the ground floor is limited to garaging and storage use with all habitable rooms at first-floor level (above 7.26m AOD). The Environment Agency raise no objection and so would be considered acceptable in relation to flooding on this basis.

Sustainable design
The site is in a sustainable town centre location. The submitted Design & Access Statement states that material choices will be made on the basis of low waste and low embodied energy, and local labour and skills would be utilised for the construction with the building being 'highly insulated and air tight' and fitted with 'water reducing and energy reducing appliances and fittings'.

Recommendation

Approve for the reason:-
The proposed development is within the built-up area and would help meet the need for additional housing without detracting from the existing local urban environment and conservation area. It can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the residential amenities of nearby properties and without detraction from highway safety. It would consequently not conflict with

the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AB3-4, AB16, AH2, AH5) and the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard time limit 3 years
2. Full contamination condition
3. Accordance with FRA
4. Drainage details
5. Acoustic assessment/noise protection scheme
6. Materials to be agreed
7. Construction parking etc
8. Parking and cycle storage to be provided
9. Bin storage
10. Permission relates to approved plans:
    Drawing number RSL-148-100 entitled 'Proposed Plans and Elevations' deposited 7 August 2013
    Drawing number RSL-148-001 entitled 'Location Plan & Proposed Site Plan' deposited 7 August 2013
    Drawing number 9688 entitled 'Topographical Survey' deposited 7 August 2013
    Flood Risk Assessment Report 42437 Issue 1 deposited 7 August 2013

Informative:

- The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Rebekah Smith Date: 1 October 2013

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 2 October 2013