Expires - 12.12.08

Delegated Report

Application Number: ADC/0474/08 Recommendation - Refuse

Site: **Meadowcroft Rest Home 30 Buckingham Road Shoreham-by-Sea West Sussex**

Proposal: **Terrace of three (two bedroom) cottages (fronting The Martlet s)**

The Application

The application site is 486sqm (27m wide by 17.5m (max)deep) and forms a section of land previously part of the rear garden of 30 Buckingham Road, the 'Meadowcroft Residential Care Home'. The site is currently fenced off from the care home and is accessed from The Martlet s directly to the east.

The application is for a small terrace of three cottage style, two-storey dwellings. The terrace would be 16.4m in width and 8m – 6.1m in depth, the middle unit being stepped in at the rear. The overall height of the dwelling would be 7.5m. There would be three off street parking spaces, one-per dwelling, private garden for each dwelling and bin-store.

There is a history of piecemeal development proposals at the rear of the houses in this part of Buckingham Road, fronting The Martlet s. Planning Permission was first granted in the early 1980's for the matching pair of detached bungalows 'Bon Accord 'and 'Ambleside' to the rear of No's 26 & 28 with sole access onto The Martlet s. Permission was granted for a bungalow at the rear of No. 36 on appeal (SU/244/87), however this has never been implemented. Planning permission was granted for bungalows at the rear of No.38 (SU/228/00) in 2000, and No.32 in 2005, both have been built and are now occupied.

The applicant has also applied to renew the previous planning approval for a detached three-bedroom house (SU/210/00 renewed under SU/170/05).

The applicant has provided a Design and Access Statement which states, amongst other things, that: The majority of the development implemented on the west side of The Martlet s has been for bungalows. However, the site is a double width plot and contains two mature trees, and it is considered that a plot of this size would be able to sustain a development of this density without it appearing cramped within the site; the design is considered to complement the Sussex Village vernacular and to be in-keeping with its surroundings in terms of scale and design; the siting is designed to have a minimum impact on the neighbouring properties; on site trees are to be retained with two further trees planted in the gardens and planting beds along The Martlet s; given the location, close to the town centre and transport links, it is considered that three parking spaces is an appropriate provision.

Consultations and Representations

West Sussex County Council: The proposal is for three dwellings with access onto The Martletts via a new access point. From an inspection of the plans alone, there is no apparent visibility issue at the point of access onto The Martlets. The most recently available verified accident records reveal there have been no personal injury accidents in the vicinity of the existing point of access, indicating a low risk of highway safety issues with this proposal. Conditions requiring details of provision of storage of materials and plant to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development. A TAD payment of £2,640 would be required.

Adur District Council: The Assistant Parks Manager states that a suitable screening for the development could be to plant a number of Multi stemmed Evergreen Oak (Quercus Ilex). These are quite fast growing but not as quick to get out of control like Leylandii. Also as they can be drastically cut back and will re-grow unlike conifers.

Third Parties:There have been seven letters of objection to the proposals from the owners of 2, 4 & 12 The Martlets, No.28 Buckingham Road, the manager of Meadowcroft Residential Care Home and a joint letter from the 15 residents of the care home. The main points of objection are:-

- Parking problems in the area;
- Overlooking of the rear garden of the care home, and other adjacent gardens leading to loss of privacy;
- Potential loss of the remaining trees on the site;
- Loss of wildlife;
- The terrace of houses will look crowded and out of keeping with the other properties in the close;
- Only one bungalow should be permitted to accord with the current development;

The residents of the Care Home have concerns regarding the loss of privacy to the rear garden, loss of light to rooms, increase in noise/cars and pollution.

There has been one letter from the owner of 'Ambleside' the bungalow to the south who says that they feel the proposed terrace of three 2-bedroom cottage-type houses would be far more in keeping, that the proposed detached house (ADC/0475/08).

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, CH1, NE1, ERA1,DEV1, DEV3-5.

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AH2, AH5 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'.
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003 and ADC 2004)
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 ' Housing' (DCLG 2006)
Circular 11/95: Use of conditions in planning permission.

Planning Assessment

Policies

Structure Plan policies have an emphasis on making the best use of land provided that the impact on the character of the area and environment is acceptable (LOC1, ERA1, CH1); and new development being of high quality construction, layout, scale and appearance, taking into account the need to integrate with existing development and have regard to local context, including local character and distinctiveness, streetscape, views into and out of the site and materials and building styles (DEV1).

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 is now set out in Planning Policy Statement PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development'. Relevant paragraphs are 17, which refers to the commitment to protecting and improving the environment; 18 which states that planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design; and 34 which states that good design is indivisible from good planning and that design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area, should not be acceptable.

Government policy guidance in PPS3 encourages best use of urban land for housing development, particularly affordable housing and a mixture of types to create a balanced community, at higher densities (avoiding developments at less than 30 dwellings per hectare) and without rigid application of parking and amenity space standards. However, it also seeks to improve the quality and attractiveness of residential areas and urges imaginative designs and

layouts which make more efficient and sustainable use of land without compromising the quality of the environment.

Planning policy and Government guidance have not fundamentally changed to an extent that would warrant a refusal in principle in the developing of the site in the manner as approved previously.

Density, character and appearance

The character of the area is mixed with the eastern side of The Marlet s having being developed with semi-detached houses which are of a density of 42 dph, the existing developed bungalows on the west side of The Marletts are at a density of 34 dph. The proposed terrace of houses would be at 63 dph. Government guidance is that new dwellings should be at a density of 30-50 dph however this is dependant on the overall character of the area.

The sizes of the houses themselves would be small, the two end-of-terrace houses being 70 sqm and the mid-terrace house being 66 sqm. Each of the proposed houses would have a usable private garden area in excess of the Council's minimum standard of 50 sqm for a two-bedroom terraced dwelling. However the requirement for at least an 11m long rear garden would not be met, with the end-of-terrace houses falling well short at 7.9m.

The principle of a two-storey house in the double width plot has been established through the previous two permissions for the detached three-bedroom house, however it is felt that this was as a result of the significant amount of separation between the approved house and the north and south side neighbours, 5m and 10m respectively, and the setback from the road of 4.5m, which is similar to the other bungalows in the other back garden plots.

Due to the recent loss of a number of trees the site now has an open character without visual obstruction, other than for the two remaining trees in the extreme corners of the site. The rear of the Meadowcroft Care Home is dominated by a large metal fire-escape exiting at first floor level, and a high level rear dormer. The mass and bulk of the care home is clearly visible from The Martlet s.

In appearance terms it is felt that the design and use of materials of the terrace would in principle be sympathetic to the mixed character of the area, and that the bulk of the proposals would screen the cluttered appearance of the rear of Meadowcroft. However the scale and siting of the proposals are considered to be at odds with the other development in the road.

The proposed terrace would be sited within 1m of the highway, which is currently defined by a 1m verge in front of the actual road surface. The neighbouring bungalows 'Little Willows' to the north and 'Ambleside' to the south are both located 4.5m from the highway, and opposite the houses are set back at least 5m. It is considered that due to the height and width of the proposed houses and the siting being in close proximity to the road, that the

terrace of houses would have an overbearing and bulky appearance which would be detrimental to and out of keeping with the character of the west side of The Martletts.

Whilst the previous approvals for the two-storey three-bedroom house (SU/210/00 and SU/170/05) do set a precedent for a two-storey development, it is felt that the separation between the approved house and the surrounding properties and the screening provided by the trees that were conditioned to be retained would have ameliorated some of the visual impact that it may have had. The proposed terrace would not benefit from there being enough separation from the road to the front elevation of the houses and does not have any possible space to plant a natural screen to soften their appearance. It is therefore considered that the proposals should not benefit from the precedent previously set.

Trees
The site is very open with there only being two trees located in the NE and SW corners of the plot. A number of conifer trees which were subject to planning conditions on the permission granted for the three-bedroom house, were felled prior to the current planning application being submitted.
The loss of these large trees from the site has resulted in there now being space for the proposed three dwellings.

The remaining two trees are located at the extreme NE and SW of the site and are proposed to be retained, however it is felt that these alone would not offer adequate screening of the dwellings.

Due to the location of the proposed three hardstanding spaces either side of the houses, it would not be possible to plant trees or shrubs to the north or south with the hope that they may screen and lessen the impact of the development on the appearance of the street.

Residential amenity – overlooking
The proposed terrace of houses would have a stepped rear elevation with the central mid-terraced house being inset by 1.8m. The three houses are described as cottage-style with dormers front and rear which protrude by 1.7m above the eaves level.

There would be 18m between the front dormers and the properties on the east side of The Martlet s. It is considered that at the front of dwellings it is usual to have less privacy and an element of overlooking from the road and fronts of other houses, it is therefore felt that 18m would be an adequate distance to prevent any loss of privacy to the houses opposite.

The siting of the houses would result in the rear dormers being at their closest 25m from the rear patio doors of main section of the Meadowcroft care home, and 15m from the south side wing (an attached annex with rooms in the roof, north side dormer and east side door and window at first floor level). This distance would usually be an adequate distance to prevent direct overlooking as set out in the above Development Control Guidance 'Space around new

dwellings and flats', which states that a minimum 22m is needed to prevent loss of privacy. However it is felt that due to the smaller than average proposed rear garden of the houses and the more intensive use of the 'day room' and lounge that the care home would have, that in this case the dormers would result in an unacceptable level of overlooking of the rear garden and patio and upper floor fenestration in the east of the southern wing, which would represent an unneighbourly and overbearing form of development.

Residential amenity – loss of light

The proposed development would be directly to the east of the main bulk of the care home, and whilst the two-storeys would be apparent to the occupants, it is unlikely given the separation between the buildings that there would be any significant loos of direct sunlight.

The recently completed bungalow to the north has two small obscurely glazed windows in the south elevation, one serving a bathroom and one as a secondary window to the kitchen. Again it is felt the proposals would not have an unacceptable effect on the amount of natural daylight to these rooms due to the separation between the buildings.

Parking

WSCC Highways have re-examined the current application against their updated standards and have no objection provided there are planning conditions to ensure adequate cycle storage and provision for contractors plant and materials onsite. A TAD contribution of £2,640 would also be required, and a draft agreement has been submitted with the application.

Other issues

It is not considered that the proposals would result in a direct reduction in the amount of wildlife within the area given that there are a number of mature gardens in the vicinity.

Recommendation

REFUSE for the reason that:-

1. H18R – amended
   Having regard to the limited area of the site and its relationship to The Meadowcroft Care home to the rear, the proposal would give rise to an unneighbourly form of development which would be detrimental to the residential amenities and environment of the care home residents, resulting in loss of privacy and an overbearing effect which would conflict with the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AH2)

2. H21AR – amended

its terraced form

The proposed development, by reason of its excessive size and its proximity to the highway, would be out of keeping in scale and design with the existing dwellings in The Martlets and would be detrimental to the visual amenities and residential environment of the locality, thereby conflicting with the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (LOC1, CH1, DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH2)

PB 18/11/08

Case Officer:
Date: 18.11.08

Planning Services Manager:
Date: 20/11/08