Application Number: ADC/0221/08 Recommendation – REFUSE

Site: 'Hollies' 25 Cokeham Lane, Sompting BN15 9UP

Proposal: Two-bedroom bungalow at rear and subdivision of existing garage into 2 parking spaces for existing and proposed dwellings (within curtilage of listed building)

The Application

This is a revised application following the withdrawal of a previous application for a bungalow (ADC/0406/07).

The property is the northernmost of a pair of early-mid 19th century two-storey cottages which are Grade II listed (having been listed in the 1984 review). It is built of flint but with a rendered two-storey rear extension. There is a much larger two-storey rear extension on the attached cottage (No.27) to the south which has been very extensively altered with rendered walls and uPVC windows and doors.

The applicant's property (No.25) is located on a substantial plot with a relatively large rear garden approximately 30 metres long and 18 metres wide, with small trees at the rear (mainly bay trees and conifers up to about 5m-6m tall). On the north side of the cottage, is a gable-roofed double garage built in flint and brick materials matching the main cottage, and with a hardstanding in front. Permission was granted for this garage and a two storey rear extension in 1980.

The previous application ADC/0406/07 sought permission to demolish the existing double garage and create an access driveway to the proposed three-bedroom bungalow in the rear garden of the listed cottage. The present application differs in that it is proposed to retain the garage and subdivide it for the use of both the existing cottage and the proposed bungalow. In front, a hardstanding would, subject to widening the crossover and altering the boundary wall, provide parking for a second car for each dwelling.

The proposed new bungalow at the rear would be 14.3m long and 5.9m wide, plus small projections on either side. It would have a hipped roof with a maximum ridge height of 4.6 metres. The walls are stated to be of facing bricks and the roof of slate. It would be positioned 3m from the north side boundary with the rear garden of the neighbouring semi-detached bungalow (No.21) and a minimum 2.5m from the rear (east) boundary with the rear gardens of bungalows at No's 23 & 25 Greentrees Crescent.

The Design & Access Statement with the application states that the rear garden is oversized by modern standards and the applicant/owners are finding it increasingly difficult to keep it in reasonable order. They consider it

to be an underused resource, the practical solution being to develop the rear half with a small family bungalow, leaving adequate space for the listed building. They state an awareness of the need to protect the character of the cottage and state that they propose a dwelling resembling an outbuilding, with a low pitch roof and minimal span. It is proposed to enclose its remaining rear garden with 1.8m high walls. To protect other neighbouring dwellings, screen fencing and border planting is stated to be proposed for the perimeter of the whole site.

Applications for the erection of a bungalow on the north side of No.25 where the garage now stands and including the north half of the present application site were refused in the 1960s (S/87/60 & S/5/64).

Consultations and Representations

County Transport Planning Services: To be reported. Previously raised no objection, subject to completion of a section 106 Obligation to require a contribution of £1,463 to sustainable transport improvements in the area under the adopted Transport Contributions Methodology.

County Planning Services: To be reported. The Conservation architect previously stated that the scale, form and nature of the proposed rear bungalow would adversely affect the setting of the listed building (and the vehicular side access previously proposed would not positively contribute to the setting of the listed building).

Sompting Parish Council: To be reported. Previously stated no objection but requested that all the walls of the bungalow be built of flint to match the listed cottage.

Third Parties: 5 letters have been received of which 4 object. These are from local residents at No's 21 & 25 Greentrees Crescent, 20 & 21 Cokeham Lane and 12 Edwin Close. The objectors raise the following issues: -

- there is a duty to ensure the character of the listed building is not dimished, particularly as there is very little of old Sompting remaining and what is left must be preserved;
- the proposal is out of keeping in size and position with what is truly a unique house and one of the oldest in Cokeham; it would "shoehorn" a modern bungalow into the garden, taking away much of the charm and character of the cottage;
- it would be too close to the rear boundary (only 2.5m away) and too large in area and thereby intrude upon the properties to the rear in Greentrees Crescent;
- there would be loss of trees and shrubs including adjoining the rear boundary which also provide a much needed habitat for wildlife;
- there would be too much hardsurfacing of the site; drainage is needed after past floods;

- more development will add to the adverse effect on the area already caused by recent development;
- there would be much noise and dust during building; and
- query as to the reason the applicant purchased the property if he finds the rear garden too large.

The resident of No.21 Cokeham Lane, to the north, does not express an objection but raises concern about the lack of details regarding proposed screen fencing on the north side boundary of the site where there are currently mature trees/bushes 2.5m-6m in height; whatever replaces them needs to be at least 1.8m high and of a substantial standard as a proposed access path is shown alongside the boundary; and there needs to be a restriction to prevent any roof extensions without permission. He mentions that the applicant has not discussed the proposals with him; that the letters enclosed with the application should be disregarded as they do not relate to this application and queries whether a tree report has been carried out.

[NB. enclosed with the application are copies of letters from some neighbouring residents comprising No.23 Greentrees Crescent who state no objections provided the proposed bungalow is not altered or added to and the trees adjoining the rear boundary are reduced to no more than 3.6m high; from No.25 Greentrees Crescent who request that the trees at the rear are reduced in height and the wall rebuilt and fence repaired; and from No.27 Cokeham Lane who express the need for a separate drainage connection for the new bungalow because of blockage problems with the existing drain; for no vehicular access to it because of noise and air pollution; and for no future rooms in the roof because of loss of privacy].

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005) (saved policies): LOC1, NE1, CH5, DEV1, DEV4-5.
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AB11, AH2 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)
PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (DoE 1994) and Circulars 01/01 and 09/05

Planning Assessment

The proposal involves 'backland' or 'tandem' development. The main planning considerations are the effects on the setting of the listed building and on the

residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings; plus access and parking considerations.

Policies

Policy AB11 of the Local Plan states that new development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will not be permitted. It also requires that the design and materials of new development located within the setting of a listed building shall not adversely affect its setting.
AH2 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 and layout; respect for the natural features of the site, including trees, no unneighbourly effect on existing dwellings by loss of privacy, light, outlook or open amenity space; adequate access and parking arrangements and accordance with adopted standards (in this case the Council's DC Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats').

Structure Plan policy CH5 states that development should not be permitted unless statutorily listed buildings and their settings will be preserved and where possible enhanced.
DEV1, entitled high quality development, states that development should not be permitted unless the construction, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are of high quality taking into account the need to, amongst other things, integrate with and where possible enhance adjoining land uses and minimise conflicts between land uses and activities; have regard to context including site characteristics, townscape/streetscape, views into and out of the site and building styles/materials; give high priority to pedestrians and reduce dominance of cars; create a high quality socially-inclusive adaptable environment; protect and enhance biodiversity; ensure energy efficiency; and meet the needs of service providers.

Government policy in PPS3, in order to achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, improve affordability and create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities, generally encourages the maximisation of the use of previously developed land for housing development 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 states 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 and the way it functions, should not be accepted" (para 13).

It states "Careful attention to design is particularly important where the chosen local strategy involves intensification of the existing urban fabric. More intensive development is not always appropriate. However, when well designed and built in the right location, it can enhance the character and quality of an area. Successful intensification need not mean high rise development or low quality accommodation. Similarly, in Conservation Areas and other local areas of special character where, if proper attention is paid to

achieving good design, new development opportunities can be taken without adverse impacts on their character and appearance" (para 49).
"The density of existing development should not dictate that of new housing by stifling change or requiring replication of existing style or form. If done well, imaginative design and layout of new development can lead to a more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the local environment" (para 50).

Effect on the listed building and its setting

Policies AB11 and CH5 reflect the statutory duty placed on local planning authorities under section 66 of the Act which requires:-

"In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the LPA..... shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

The present application differs from the previous (withdrawn) application in that it is now proposed to retain the gable-roofed garage at the side, which is sympathetic to the design and materials of the listed cottage, rather than demolish it and open up the side of the property to form an access driveway to the rear garden. In so doing, the proposed bungalow would be shielded from public view from the street and thus it would not be seen by the public generally in direct juxtaposition to the listed building.

Clearly, the surroundings of the cottage changed totally from countryside to suburbia when the surrounding bungalows were built in the 1950s. Nevertheless, the cottage does still retain considerable rural character and charm and was considered worthy of listing in 1984 when the last review of listed buildings in the District was carried out. The existing rear garden is quite large and typical of the size and type of garden associated with many rural cottages. PPG15 states that setting, including a garden, is often an essential part of a listed building's character. The County Conservation architect advises that the proposed bungalow would detract from the setting of the listed building by its inappropriate scale, form and nature. It would truncate, by at least half, its mature rear garden and it is considered that it would impinge upon it to an excessive degree.

The applicant states that the bungalow is designed to resemble an outbuilding but it is considered that it would fail to achieve this because of its size (having a larger 'footprint' than the cottage) and form; it would appear more like an encroachment of the surrounding bungalow development. As for materials, although a slate roof is proposed, the walls would be brick, not flint.

The proposed access path with screen wall, taking account of its use as the sole means of access to the bungalow, would also add to the adverse impact on the character and environmental setting of the cottage. The proposal is 'backland' development and, whilst there is no automatic presumption against such development, in this instance it is considered unacceptable particularly

because it would spoil the setting and character of the listed building, not preserve or enhance it.

Effect on residential amenities

In terms of the effect on the residential amenities of the occupiers of the listed cottage itself, it would be left with a rear garden 11.5m-15m deep and an area of 170sqm. This is well in excess of the Council's respective minima of 11m depth and 85sqm area, and would be ample for the needs of the occupiers. However, the provision of the necessary shared access path at the side to the bungalow at the rear, although bounded by a proposed screen wall, would give potential for noise and disturbance, as well as being a intensive type of layout, out of keeping with the character of the cottage and the area.

The proposed bungalow itself would not have a conventional rear garden but would face southwards onto a garden area mainly 9m deep and 17m wide (150sqm). This would provide it with sufficient private amenity space and outlook from principal windows.
These principal windows would face southwards, towards the side boundary of the rear garden of the attached listed cottage (No.27 Cokeham Lane). The distance is mainly 9m but the kitchen-diningroom projection would have windows 7m from the boundary. There is no applicable standard and, on balance, it is not considered that there would be unacceptable loss of privacy or overbearing impact on No.27 provided the proposed boundary fencing and shrub or hedge planting is sufficient to provide a substantial screen.

With regard to the effect on neighbouring bungalows to the rear (in Greentrees Crescent), which have only short rear gardens, these are currently screened by small trees (mainly dense bay trees and conifers up to about 5m-6m tall). The end of the proposed bungalow would be only 2.5m away from the rear boundary and only 9.7m from the rear elevation of No.25 Greentrees Crescent at its closest. This compares to the Council's minimum of 11m for corner plot situations where one dwelling backs onto the side of another (where the latter is single-storey and has no facing principal windows, as in the present case).
Whilst there would be no overlooking windows and the end elevation is quite narrow with a hipped roof 4.6m high overall, it is considered that the proposed bungalow would impinge unduly on the outlook from the rear of No.25 because of its excessively close proximity. The existing trees to the rear of No.25 are likely to have to be removed.
No.23 Greentrees Crescent is offset to the south east and the proposed bungalow would be shielded from it by the existing garage and by conifers adjoining the boundary which could be retained although the neighbours feel they need reducing in height.

To the north, the proposed bungalow would run alongside most of the side boundary of the rear garden of the bungalow at No.21 Cokeham Lane. It would be 3m from this boundary (other than for a projecting porch 1.5m away). There are only secondary windows proposed on this side (which could be required to be obscure-glazed) and screen planting is also proposed but

the proposed bungalow would affect outlook at an oblique angle from the rear of No.21, with some degree of enclosure and loss of winter sunlight.

Access and parking

Parking would be provided at the ratio of 2 spaces per dwelling by subdividing the existing double garage and hardstanding. This would necessitate widening the pavement crossover and demolishing part of the existing front boundary wall (but replacing the parts either side with flint-facing to match the wall in front of the cottage). This provision accords with the maximum standard and is felt acceptable in this location from highways/transport and visual points of view.

Recommendation

REFUSE for reasons that:-

1. The proposed development would not preserve or enhance the existing listed building and its setting and, by reason of its proximity, disproportionate size and inappropriate wall materials, would detract from the character and setting of the listed building, contrary to the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH5) and the Adur District Local Plan (AB11)
2. The proposed bungalow would be excessively close to neighbouring bungalows and would constitute an inappropriate form of 'backland' development that would be detrimental to the residential amenities and out of keeping with the environmental character of the area, contrary to the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH2).

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