Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1043/23 **Recommendation: Approve**

Site: **Land and Buildings West Of 19 To 25 Underdown Road, Southwick**

Proposal: **Conversion of the existing buildings to create a two-storey studio (Use Class C3) and workshops (part retrospective)**

Date of Site Visit: 1 November 2023

Neighbours Checked: **Y**

Additional neighbour notification: **N**

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

The application site lies at the rear of Underdown Road and Cross Road and contains a number of single storey garages plus a two storey building, and is accessed between 25 and 27 Underdown Road.

The two storey building was previously in use as a workshop. It is believed to have been a laundry originally. Its use as a dwelling commenced about 2.5 years ago according to the applicant and this application seeks retrospective permission to retain the residential use. It is known as 25A Underdown Road.

The two storey building is in use as a 1 bed flat over two floors containing an open plan living room and kitchen on the ground floor with a bedroom, bath and toilet in a single open space above. The floor area measures 47m2.

Attached to the building are a number of single storey buildings which are currently being used for storage. The plans show a workshop at the south eastern end of the line of the buildings but at the time of the site visit it was in storage use and appeared to have been used occasionally as sleeping accommodation. The proposal is to use this building as a workshop.

There is a garden/patio area on the eastern boundary which is used by the applicant in connection with the residential use. Opposite the site are a row of garages which are understood to be used by a construction firm rather than for parking.

The site backs onto the rear of dwellings in Cross Road and there is a path access which runs between the site and those houses in Cross Road.

Planning History:

No history has been found

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council: The Highways Authority has no objection.
Access
The site is accessed via an existing vehicular access point from Underdown Road, the access is a narrow route between two properties which leads back for approx 30m into the site. There are no passing places along this access, however the access has been in use for some time serving the workshops and has done so for some time with no known highways safety concerns or recorded injury/accidents to flag an existing concern with its operation.
Parking and Sustainability
This site has 4 associated parking spaces which serve the existing workshop, these spaces have not been shown within the associated plans however the Local Highways Authority (LHA) appreciate that this is an existing arrangement.
The site is located within a highly stainable part of Southwick, with local bus routes serving the A270 to the north of the site and Southwick Railway station a 12 minute walk south from the site. These are considered to be viable alternatives to the use of a car.
The LHA do advise that secure covered cycle storage is conditioned on any planning consent of this application, in order to further promote sustainable travel alternatives.
The Local Planning Authorty (LPA) may also wish to assess the implications of any on street parking that may increase in the surrounding area as a result of this application.
Trips
It is considered that an existing workshop use would generate a higher rate of vehicular movements than a C3 dwellinghouse use, and this Workshop appears to have functioned in the past with no recorded or existing highways safety concerns.
Refuse collection has not been specified by the applicant, however the Waste and Recycling Authorities should be contacted in order to assess the suitability of the refuse collection methods within this location. Under no circumstances should refuse or recycling bins be placed in the highway or in any way to cause obstruction to the public highway.
Should the LPA be minded to approve this proposal, a condition securing cycle parking is advised.

West Sussex Fire and Access: Evidence is required to show that all parts inside the dwelling are within 45 metres of the location of a fire appliance in accordance with Approved Document B (AD-B) Volume 1 B5 section 13. The width of the access

route to these properties is less than that required for a fire appliance to gain access, therefore the appliance will need to attend from the main road.

The distance from the fire appliance to all parts inside the dwelling is to be measured along the hose lay route, not in a direct line or arc measurement. Any areas not within the 45 metre distance will need to be mitigated by the installation of sprinkler or water mist system complying with BS9251 or BS8458 standards.

Adur and Worthing Councils: Public Health: No comments received

Private Sector Housing: The development is described as a two-storey studio and relies on designating the first floor as a mezzanine floor - the floor areas of the first and ground floors are practically the same and so this designation is inaccurate and misleading. The GIA of the building is therefore deficient.

The only access to the first floor sleeping accommodation is through the open plan kitchen living area and so the bedroom is an inner room

Southern Water: Standard advice

Representations

7 objections received from the occupiers of 18, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28 Cross Road, 5 Woodland Close (Hove):

- Overlooking, loss of privacy
- Loss of light
- Overbearing
- Increased noise and disturbance
- Increased smells
- Traffic and parking problems
- Too close to other properties for new 2 storey building to be built

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 15, 18, 22, 28, 34
'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Management Standard No.1 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'
Sustainable Energy SPD (August 2019)
Adur Planning and Climate Change Checklist (June 2021)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)
Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (DCLG 2015)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The relevant issues are the effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers and the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Visual amenity

The buildings are already present on site and no external alterations are proposed with this application. The patio/garden area covers a relatively small area and, being a backland site, is not visible from the wider area.

Residential amenity

The objections from neighbours appear to relate to a misunderstanding that a new 2 storey building is to be constructed, rather than to the conversion of the existing building. The application property has no windows in its rear elevation so there is no direct overlooking of properties in Cross Road. There are windows at either end of the building, the south east window by the bathroom area is obscure glazed but the northwest window serving the bedroom area is clear. This allows views across the roofs of the storage buildings attached to the property and oblique views of the rear of Cross Road. On balance, the level of overlooking is not considered to be harmful and this window can remain as clear glazed.

The garden area abuts the rear of properties in Underdown Road but does not result in overlooking.

For the occupier of the property, the accommodation at 47m2 is below the minimum floor area recommended for a 1 bed flat over 2 floors (58m2) but it does meet the requirement for a 1 bed 1 person flat over 1 floor (39m2). As it falls in between these two figures, it is considered, on balance, that the standard of accommodation is acceptable. Some internal alterations are required in order to meet Building Regulations and Private Sector Housing requirements but these are not considered to be insurmountable or sufficient reason to withhold granting planning permission if it is acceptable in all other respects.

The workshop would be for the applicant’s use only and by its nature would not cause harm to neighbouring amenity.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Removal of PD Classes A-E
3. Workshop use to be Class E (iii) only
4. Workshop and stores to be ancillary to use of residential accommodation hereby permitted

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation Y

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.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 14 November 2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 14 November 2023