

**P/15/1060/FP**

CROWNPLEX LIMITED

**PORTCHESTER EAST**

AGENT: HOLMAN READING  
PARTNERSHIP LLP

FIVE X 2-BED APARTMENTS & FOUR X 1-BED APARTMENTS CREATED BY  
CONSTRUCTING AN ADDITIONAL FLOOR TO THE FRONT OF THE PROPERTY &  
TWO ADDITIONAL STOREYS TO THE REAR PART OF THE PROPERTY.

21 WEST STREET PORTCHESTER FAREHAM PO16 9XB

***Report By***

Peter Kneen - Direct Dial 01329 824363

***Site Description***

The application site is located within the existing defined urban area of Portchester, and within the defined Portchester District Centre. The site lies on the northern side of the pedestrian precinct and presently forms part of a ribbon of existing 1960s commercial and residential development set over two floors, with shops at ground floor and flats above. To the immediate north of the site lies a private car park (owed by the West Street Management Company for which the applicant is a shareholder) with the A27 wrapping around the northern perimeter of the District Centre.

The existing flats are accessed via a communal staircase located to the north western end of the terrace, with each of the flats accessed via individual external doors from a communal flat roof to the rear of the block.

The application site comprises an existing two storey property extending back beyond the line of the other properties into the car park, comprising the existing Superdrug and Sue Ryder Charity Shop units at ground floor level, two flats front West Street Precinct at first floor and a separate first floor area to the rear of the unit used for storage and staff areas for the ground floor shops. Above the flats is an existing mansard roof, with the rear part comprising a flat roof, with a single lift shaft block to the northwest corner of the building.

***Description of Proposal***

This application seeks planning permission for the construction of nine flats at second and third floor levels, with the third floor proposed to be set within the roofspace. The flats would be accessed via the communal stairwell to the northwest corner of the block, and a new internal staircase and floating passageway within the area of 21 West Street.

A separate, secure internal bin storage area is to be provided at ground floor level in the northwest corner of the existing storage area of the Superdrug store room. No specific provision for car parking has been provided to support the proposal, although the applicant has rights to allow future occupiers to make use of the existing private car park that wraps around the site.

The scheme has been subject to a number of significant alterations since its original submission, including the re-design of the whole scheme to better compliment an extant planning permission for sixteen flats permitted in 2007 across the whole of the frontage of the West Street Precinct. The current proposal allows for the integration of the proposed development with the extant scheme, and indicative drawings have been provided to demonstrate the integration of the two schemes.

## ***Policies***

The following policies apply to this application:

Adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy

CS2 - Housing Provision

CS3 - Vitality and Viability of Centres

CS5 - Transport Strategy and Infrastructure

CS6 - The Development Strategy

CS11 - Development in Portchester, Stubbington & Hill Head and Titchfield

CS17 - High Quality Design

CS18 - Provision of Affordable Housing

Adopted Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies

DSP1 - Sustainable Development

DSP2 - Environmental Impact

DSP3 - Impact on Living Conditions

DSP4 - Prejudice to Adjacent Land

DSP15 - Recreational Disturbance on the Solent Special Protection Areas

DSP34 - Development in District Centres, Local Centres and Local Parades

DSP36 - Portchester District Centre

Other Documents:

Fareham Borough Design Guidance: Supplementary Planning Document (excluding Welborne) December 2015

Residential Car Parking Standards 2009

## ***Relevant Planning History***

The following planning history is relevant:

P/07/0042/FP Erection of Second Floor comprising sixteen flats over existing ground floor shops and first floor flats

APPROVED 03/04/2007 Application implemented by construction of bin store and stairwells

## ***Representations***

Seven residents have objected to the proposed development. The key matters of concern raised were:

- Overlooking/overbearing;
- Loss of privacy;
- Car parking;
- Visually unattractive;
- No lift to be provided;
- Dominate the character of the surrounding area.

One letter of support has been received from the applicant to the 2007 planning permission highlighting their intention to implement both proposals concurrently.

## ***Consultations***

## INTERNAL

Highways: Initial comments - additional car parking could be achieved in the West Street car park through the rationalisation of the existing parking layout. However, until the requisite number of parking spaces are available, a holding objection is raised.

Further comments - Following further discussions with Planning Strategy and Hampshire County Council, whilst it is acknowledged that there could be capacity in the car park, and further rationalisation of the parking spaces could be achieved, given the limited control of the applicant over the car parking, the objection would be maintained.

Recycling Co-ordinator: Initial comments - external bin storage promotes fly-tipping, which is already a problem in the area. Lockable secure bin storage would be required.

Further comments - Following submission of amended plans showing an internal bin store, the objection was removed.

### ***Planning Considerations - Key Issues***

The following matters represent the key material planning considerations which would need to be assessed to determine the suitability of the development proposal. The key issues comprise:

- Principle of the development;
- Visual appearance of development;
- Car parking;
- Affordable Housing;
- Living conditions of neighbouring occupiers;
- Ecology.

Principle of the development:

The site is located within the defined urban area of the Portchester, and is therefore considered to be a highly sustainable location for the provision of additional residential accommodation. The site is immediately adjacent to local services and facilities together with regular bus services along the A27 and through Portchester, and within easy walking distance of Portchester Railway Station, linking Portchester to Portsmouth and London to the east and Fareham and Southampton to the west. Further residential development in the District Centre is therefore considered acceptable, subject to the consideration of other material considerations.

Visual Appearance of the Development:

Planning permission was granted in 2007 for the provision of 16 flats at second floor level above all the existing flats fronting West Street. This planning permission remains extant having been partially implemented with the provision of the bin store and second staircase within the car park area. Two of the 16 flats are sited on the two front flats of this current proposal, and those flats would be subsumed into this proposal. The design and appearance of the current proposal has evolved during the application timeframe, and the current scheme now largely reflects that of the extant scheme, through the provision of a mansard roof, incorporating the top floor flats.

It is acknowledged that the rear section of the proposed development, being four storeys

high will be visually prominent in the surrounding area. The design of the scheme has been amended to give the appearance of the top (third floor) being wholly situated within the roof space. However, the height of the building would be seen in isolation of other developments, and would appear out of keeping with the largely two and three storey developments in the District Centre.

Whilst longer distance views of the proposal would be obstructed by vegetation further to the east and west of the site, it is considered the scale and height of the proposal in this part of West Street should be limited to those properties fronting the main street, with any further development on the rear part of the properties limited to only two or three storeys.

The scheme is further exacerbated by the isolation of the proposal. Whilst the scheme accords with the design parameters of the extant 2007 planning permission, and would enable the extant scheme to be essentially 'tagged' on at the sides, in isolation, the development would appear out-of-keeping and incongruous with the more traditional two and three storey developments in and around the District Centre. This matter is further exacerbated by the lack of any control over the ability to bring forward the further implementation of the extant scheme.

The design and appearance of the proposal seeks to reflect the architecture in the precinct and mirrors the styling along the southern elevation (shop frontage) of West Street. The mansard style roof ensures the ridgeline is kept low, whilst also efficiently maximising the use of the available space. The loss of the flat roof would ensure an overall improvement to the existing appearance.

The proposed flats would not enjoy any specific private amenity space, although the two fronting West Street would include small balconies overlooking the street scene. The existing residents also do not benefit from private amenity space, which is not an uncommon situation within an established urban setting. Residents would have access to the communal first floor roof space, and Portchester as a whole has good access to public open spaces and other areas of public amenity. Additionally, in practice, the absence of resident's amenity space, which whilst preferable, is not considered to be a compelling grounds to refuse an application in such a central location where there is a wide range of facilities.

A new internal bin store would be provided at ground floor level within the existing underutilised store room for Superdrug, and would provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the waste and recycling bins for the 9no. flats.

#### Car Parking:

The application site is located within the designated urban area, in close proximity to local services and facilities, including shops, schools and community facilities, including a health centre. The District Centre is well served by public transport, with regular bus services along the A27 and through Portchester, and the site is within close walking distance to Portchester Train Station. Government advice highlights the importance of providing new residential development in the most sustainable locations, where the provision of non-car modes of transport should be promoted.

The site benefits from direct access to a privately owned car park, although the spaces are available to residents, shop owners and staff and their customers. In light of this 'shared use' arrangement availability varies, and no spaces are reserved specifically for residents.

There is a highway objection from the Council's Transport Planner to the lack of specific allocated car parking for the proposed development. Notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that rationalisation of the parking areas could generate sufficient additional spaces in the car park to accommodate nine additional spaces, however the ability to do this is beyond the control of the applicant. The car park is owned by a management company for which the owners of the shops and flats on the northern side of West Street are all shareholders. Furthermore it is likely that demand for the car park by the residents of the flats is likely to be at times when there is no or limited demand from shop owners and their customers.

In light of the foregoing it is considered the existing capacity of the car park is appropriate for a development of this size.

#### Affordable Housing:

The application proposes the provision of nine additional flats, which would as such generate the need for affordable housing based on the policy provisions of the Adopted Core Strategy, Policy CS18. However, a Court of Appeal decision (*Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government v West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council* [2016]) raised the national policy threshold for the provision of affordable housing on developments from five or more units (as stated in Policy CS18) to ten units or more. The raising of the threshold sought to reverse the significant decline in number of small-scale developments coming forward since the 2008 recession. The decline was attributed to the increased burden on developers to make financial contributions or provide affordable housing on small sites making many smaller developments financially unviable.

The Court of Appeal judgement therefore supersedes the Adopted Policy of the Core Strategy and therefore there is no affordable housing requirement for this development proposal.

#### Living conditions of neighbouring occupiers:

This planning application proposes the construction of part second floor and part third floor apartments comprising a mix of one and two bedroom flats. The scheme would see additional residential development built on the rear part of the existing shops. No third party comments have been received from the existing occupiers of the flats or the shops, with the six letters of objection being received from the occupiers of the properties to the north of the A27 in The Leaway.

The three flats at the northern part of the site would be situated approximately 60m from the rear elevation of the nearest property along The Leaway, and almost 41m from the bottom of the rear garden, adjacent to the boundary with the A27. Given the level of separation, and the existing boundary vegetation along the A27, it is considered that the proposals, whilst clearly visible to the occupiers of The Leaway, would be of a sufficient distance away not to result in a material loss of privacy. The level of separation accords with the principles of the adopted Design Guidance SPD.

#### Ecology:

The Solent coastline provides feeding grounds for internationally protected populations of overwintering birds and is used extensively for recreation. Natural England has concluded that the likelihood of a significant effect in combination arising from new housing around the Solent cannot be ruled out. Applications for residential development within the Borough

therefore need to propose measures to mitigate the direct impacts of their development on the Solent SPA. This can be done by the provision of a financial contribution of currently £176.00 per dwelling. The applicant has made this payment and therefore is considered to have satisfactorily addressed the mitigation concerns.

### Conclusion

In summary, it is considered that the proposed construction of additional residential accommodation would contribute towards the viability and vitality of the District Centre, whilst also providing much needed additional small accommodation. However, the provision of two additional storeys at the rear part of the site, which if permitted could be brought forward in isolation (there is no guarantee of the extant permission being implemented) would result in an incongruous form of development which would appear out of keeping in scale, height and massing to the prevailing two and three storey developments in the rest of the District Centre.

It is acknowledged that the site is situated in a sustainable location, where access to public transport is good and the existing capacity of the car park is appropriate for a development of this size. It is also acknowledged that the development would not have a significant impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers (levels of separation according to the Design Guide Standards) and that the design and appearance of the building has been amended to accord with the design principles of the extant scheme. However in isolation, the development would not be capable of being supported in this case due to the increased height of the development at the rear part of the site.

Based on the above it is considered the proposal fails to accord with the relevant policies of the development plan and therefore the application is recommended for refusal.

### ***Recommendation***

REFUSE:

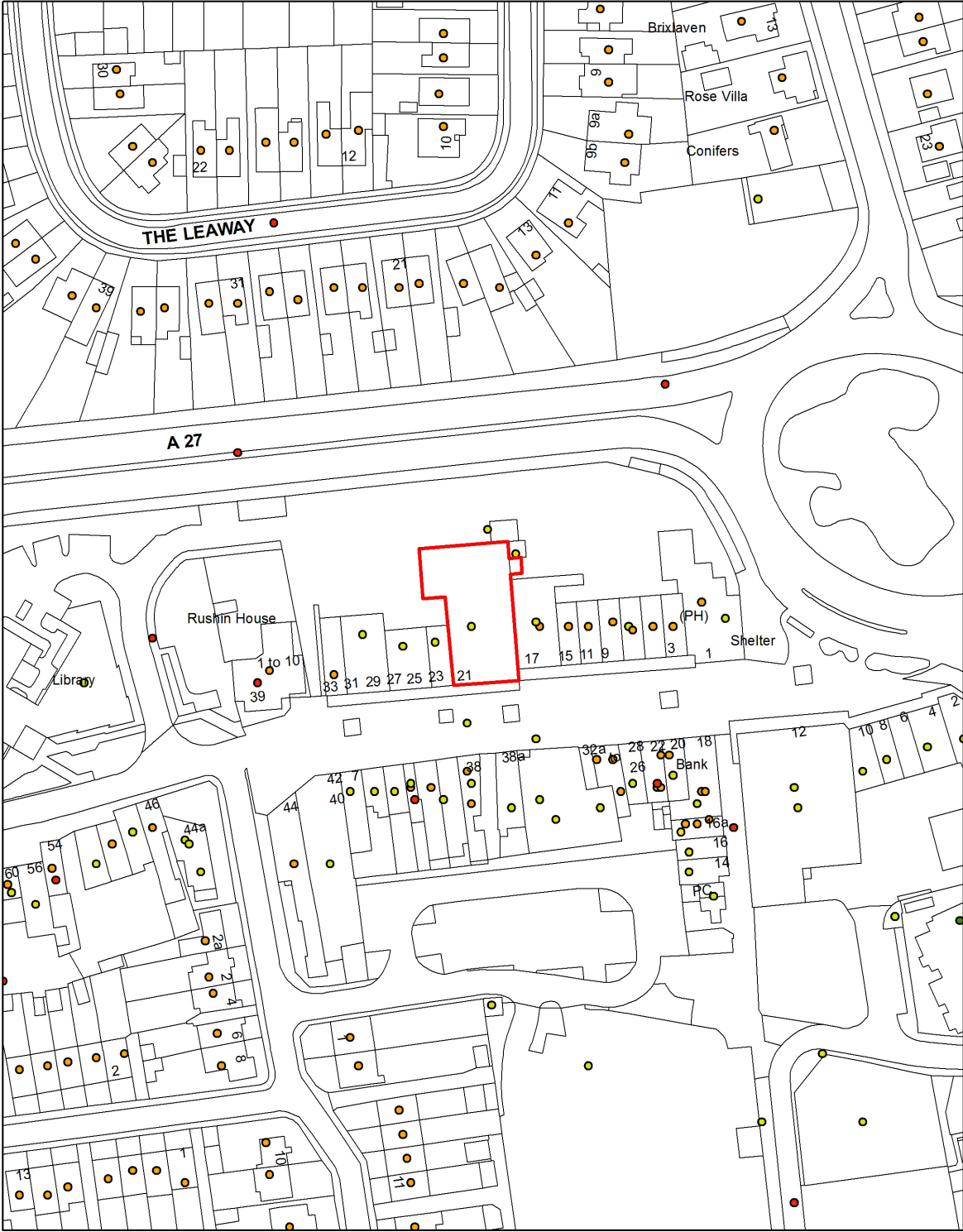
The development, by reason of the overall height, scale, siting and massing of the scheme at the rear of the site, would result in an incongruous development that would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the area. The development fails therefore to accord with Policy CS17 of the Adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy, and Policy DSP4 of the Adopted Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2: Development Site and Policies.

### ***Background Papers***

See Planning History above.

# FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



21 West Street  
Scale 1: 1,250



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