

P/14/0818/FP

MRS LOUISE MOWL

TITCHFIELD COMMON

AGENT: THE MCANDREW
MARTIN PARTNERSHI

FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION AND CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDING TO FORM THREE FLATS AND CONVERSION OF EXISTING DETACHED GARAGE INTO ONE STUDIO APARTMENT WITH ASSOCIATED CAR & CYCLE PARKING AND BIN STORE

181 HUNTS POND ROAD FAREHAM HAMPSHIRE PO14 4PL

Report By

Richard Wright

Introduction

This application follows the withdrawal of an earlier outline planning application made in April this year. The previous application proposed the demolition of the existing dwelling and shop building at the site along with the detached garage, and the erection of a new building containing five new flats.

Site Description

The application site lies at the south-eastern corner of the junction of Hunts Pond Road and Lower Church Road. On the site is a two storey building comprising a vacant retail unit over part of the ground floor with the rest of the building currently used as a single, three-bedroom residential unit.

The retail unit has an entrance in the building's north elevation and two bay windows which are immediately adjacent the pavement. A driveway is located between the building and the adjacent dwelling at 4 Lower Church Road to the east.

The residential unit is accessed through a pedestrian gate in the north-western corner of the site with further vehicular access provided from Hunts Pond Road leading to a private driveway to the south of the building. In that area to the south of the building is also a detached double garage and garden space.

Description of Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the following:

- The erection of a first floor extension over the north-eastern corner of the main building (currently single storey)
- The conversion of the main building to form three separate residential flats
- The conversion of the existing detached garage to create a further residential unit
- Formation of car parking area to south of main building as well as associated cycle and bin storage
- The change of use of the tarmac covered forecourt to the north of the main building's curtilage to create a landscaped frontage area ancillary to the residential use of the site and enclosed by a 900mm high brick wall

Policies

The following policies apply to this application:

Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy

CS2 - Housing Provision

CS5 - Transport Strategy and Infrastructure

CS6 - The Development Strategy

CS9 - Development in Western Wards and Whiteley

CS15 - Sustainable Development and Climate Change

CS16 - Natural Resources and Renewable Energy

CS17 - High Quality Design

Approved SPG/SPD

RCCPS - Residential Car and Cycle Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document,

Development Sites and Policies

DSP2 - Design

DSP4 - Impact on Living Conditions

DSP15 - Recreational Disturbance on the Solent Special Protection Areas

DSP41 - Sub-Division of Residential Dwellings

Relevant Planning History

The following planning history is relevant:

**P/14/0302/OA PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING DWELLING AND
VACANT RETAIL SHOP TO CREATE A RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 5 NEW FLATS (OUTLINE
APPLICATION)**

WITHDRAWN 08/05/2014

Representations

Six set of comments have been received in objection to the application raising the following main points:

- Lack of parking space
- Effect on parking space for and access to 4 Lower Church Road
- Over development of the site
- Noise disturbance and loss of privacy from garage conversion
- Loss of light from proposed planting
- Increase in traffic and pollution
- Loss of pavement space
- Services will need to be relocated
- Unsightly bin storage
- Extended main building would be bulky and would obstruct light
- Consideration should be given to providing pedestrian crossing facilities

One person has written in support of the application with the following comments:

- It will maintain the character of the area
- It will provide much needed extra accommodation

- Without this development the building could fall into disrepair and become an eyesore

Consultations

Director of Planning & Development (Highways) -

To enable satisfactory turning space to be provided for the single, eastern car parking space, it will be necessary to provide a short, 2m wide turning stub in place of the adjacent, southern bank of cycle spaces and for these spaces to be relocated to the east.

It is noted that, after checking, the proposals to erect a low wall along the northern site boundary will not encroach upon the public highway, as defined by the Highway Authority. As expressed previously, a lamp-post, telecom cabinet and name-plate sign will need to be relocated onto highway land, should the erection of the proposed wall proceed. There is also a gully located in the forecourt area that may have been installed by HCC to drain the backward-sloping footway and adjacent low point. Should the forecourt be enclosed, it will be necessary to adjust the footway levels to avoid ponding on the highway.

Subject to the above matters being satisfactorily resolved and to the imposition of the conditions, no highway objection is raised to the application.

Director of Community (Environmental Health) -

Notwithstanding the garage being a little cramped to accommodate a kitchen, living room, bedroom and bathroom, as to its effect on the neighbouring property [4 Lower Church Road] through increased noise and disturbance problems are not foreseen.

Regarding road traffic noise, the applicant may be able to do away with the requirement for a traffic noise assessment by agreeing to a good standard of glazing with acoustically insulated trickle vents in the windows of the ground and first floor bedrooms fronting Lower Church Road. Given the development is for flats with communal gardens only, outdoor road traffic noise is less of a concern and it is presumed the development would be bounded by a 2 metre close boarded fence or brick wall for security reasons in any case and that will afford some noise protection to the outdoor living space.

Regarding air quality, in the absence of any quantitative data for the area I would recommend a Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DMRB) assessment which is basically a screening model to see if an air quality problem potentially exists and therefore a more detailed assessment is required.

Planning Considerations - Key Issues

This proposal involves the sub-division of the existing mixed use property, which is located within the urban area, into four separate residential units.

Although the property is not currently a single dwelling, with some of the ground floor space being given over to a commercial unit, the guidance contained within Policy DSP41: Sub-Division of Residential Dwellings of the emerging Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2 is still relevant. Paragraph 5.188 explains that "sub-division of existing dwelling within the urban area to two or more self-contained units will help to provide a supply of smaller units". However it continues by warning that such sub-division "may have detrimental impact on the character of the area or the amenity of local residents".

Policy DSP41 sets out that sub-division will be permitted provided that it meets three tests:

- 1) the proposal, or the cumulative impact of the proposal with other similar proposals, would not adversely affect the character of the area or have unacceptable environmental, amenity or traffic implications, particularly in Conservation Areas;
- 2) the resultant sub-divided units conform to the space standards and design requirements set out in the Core Strategy Policy CS17: High Quality Design and the Design Supplementary Planning Document; and
- 3) appropriate outdoor amenity space, bin storage and parking provision are provided.

The following paragraphs consider whether the proposal at 181 Hunts Pond Road satisfies each of those tests.

1a) Effect on the character of the area

The site is located on the corner of Hunts Pond Road and Lower Church Road. Both streets are characterised by mainly detached or semi-detached housing with some single storey but predominantly two-storey scale buildings. The space between buildings and the street is consistently reasonable and houses on average benefit from good sized rear gardens.

There are some examples of flatted accommodation in the area, notably at Belfry Court which is located a short distance north of the double roundabout junction where the application site lies. In that instance the extended and converted building has parking space to the front and a large communal garden area to the rear.

The proposal to convert the existing main building at 181 Hunts Pond Road to form three flats would, in itself, not be out of keeping with the prevailing pattern of development within the area. However, the proposed conversion of the existing garage into a studio apartment would result in a very small, separate unit quite unlike anything in the surrounding area. It would not be enclosed by a defined curtilage, would have no private garden space yet would sit separately from the main building where the other three flats would be. As a result this form of accommodation would be a clear departure from the established character of the area and to its detriment.

The applicant has compared the studio apartment in the garage to the one-bedroom residential annexe at 1 Lower Church Road permitted by this Council in July this year. Whilst both developments use an existing garage to create additional living space, the permitted annexe across the road will remain an ancillary part of 1 Lower Church Road, a single residential property within its established and defined curtilage and would not constitute a sub-division, physical or otherwise, of that unit.

Aside from the conversion of the garage, the proposal would also change the appearance of the property in other ways however these are not considered harmful. The proposed first floor extension is of a scale and design sympathetic to the existing building and other minor alterations to the building would not detract from its appearance.

Part of the proposal includes the change of use of the tarmac covered forecourt to enable it to be enclosed and landscaped. The forecourt is currently open and without any physical marking to distinguish it from the adjacent highway footpath (a strip approximately 1.7 - 2.1 metres wide which curves around the corner of the plot on the inside of the carriageway kerb).

The proposed enclosure of the forecourt area would not be detrimental to the overall appearance of the streetscene. The creation of a landscaped, enclosed and defensible space between the highway footpath and the front of the building would be beneficial to its proposed conversion so that ground floor windows to habitable rooms are not immediately adjacent to areas where members of the public would be walking. The proposed boundary wall is low at 900mm and would still allow views through the landscaped area that would be created. This would not be harmful to the overall spacious character of the streetscene.

At present the forecourt effectively widens the tarmac area over which pedestrians can walk around the corner. However it is not considered essential in safety terms, the actual extent of the highway footpath would be sufficiently wide by itself after the forecourt was enclosed and the boundary wall erected.

1b) Environmental, amenity or traffic implications

The proposed studio apartment has been the subject of concerns raised by neighbour's living immediately adjacent to the application site at 4 Lower Church Road. The existing garage building is just 7.5 metres from the rear elevation of the bungalow next door and is positioned so that its side flank extends across over two-thirds of the width of the neighbour's rear garden. There are two windows set in the rear (eastern) elevation which are proposed to serve a bathroom and a living area/kitchen once converted, however there are no windows set in the northern elevation facing the rear of the bungalow - only a door which is proposed to be removed and blocked up.

Notwithstanding the juxtaposition of these two buildings, the conversion of the garage to a studio apartment is unlikely to have a harmful effect on the living conditions of the neighbours at no. 4. The change in its use to a self-contained unit, although potentially increasing the intensity of use of the building, is considered unlikely to result in increased noise and disturbance to the neighbours. Whilst the studio apartment would be very close to the bungalow and its garden area this sort of relationship is little different to that of many adjacent properties around the borough. Any possible overlooking from the windows in the rear of the garage would be screened by a boundary fence but in any event a condition requiring those windows to be obscure glazed and fixed shut up to a specified height could be imposed to overcome any issues of that nature. Similarly, there are no other windows proposed as part of the development as a whole which would likely give rise to the overlooking of neighbouring properties or which could not be obscure glazed and fixed shut to prevent any such views.

The application site is located adjacent to a busy road junction. Nevertheless, Officers do not believe that the traffic generated from the proposed four residential units would be so great as to be materially harmful to the safe functioning and overall levels of congestion on the roads surrounding the site.

No road traffic noise assessment has been carried out and so the Council's Environmental Health Officer has recommended that appropriate sound attenuation measures be installed as part of the conversion. The officer has also suggested that a screening exercise be undertaken to establish whether an air quality problem exists in the area. Notwithstanding this advice, it is considered that, since the property is already in part residential use such an assessment is unnecessary on this occasion.

2) Space standards and design requirements

Policy CS17 of the adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy states that "new housing will be required to secure adequate internal and external space... to meet the requirements of future occupiers".

Research carried out by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 2011 identified the average floor space for a one-bedroom home in the South East of England to be 48 square metres. Space standards set by the Greater London Authority (GLA) set a minimum gross internal floor area of 37 square metres for a one-bedroom unit which is designed to be occupied by one person,

In this instance the proposed studio apartment to be created in the existing garage would have a gross internal floor area of just 28 square metres. This is insufficient to meet the needs of those who would be living in the apartment and the proposal is therefore unacceptable in that regard and contrary to the aims of Policy CS17.

3) Outdoor amenity space, bin storage and parking provision

Appendix 6 of the adopted Fareham Borough Local Plan Review sets out the expectation that where accommodation is provided in the form of flats, a landscaped communal open space or communal garden area of approximately 25 square metres per unit would be an acceptable alternative to each having their own private garden space.

The revised site layout submitted proposes the creation of three "amenity" areas around the site providing 148 square metres of communal space for the residents living in the four units. The quality of the space to be provided is considered poor. Amenity Area 1 (41 square metres) would be formed of what is currently the driveway between the main building on the site and the adjacent bungalow at 4 Lower Church Road. It would receive very little sunlight and would be overlooked and directly adjacent to bedroom windows for two of the proposed flats. Amenity Area 2 (58 square metres) would be located in the strip of land between the western flank of the building and Hunts Pond Road to which it would be immediately adjacent. It would be located immediately in front of the entrance doors to two of the proposed flats. Both of these amenity areas would, due to their long narrow shape, position and relationship to the adjacent road and buildings, offer very poor quality garden space. Amenity Area 3 would be located to the south of the main building. Whilst it is felt that this offers a better standard of garden space in what is currently the garden of the residential unit at the site, it is still directly adjacent to the car parking area for the development.

Having taken into account the nature of the garden amenity space proposed as part of this development, it is considered to offer an unacceptable standard of external space which would not meet the needs of future occupants and which would be contrary to the expectations set out in Core Strategy Policy CS17.

The Council's adopted Residential Car & Cycle Parking Standards SPD sets out what level of parking should be provided for new residential development. For a development such as that proposed, comprised of two 2-bed units and two 1-bed units, the expectation would be that a total of 4 unallocated parking spaces would be provided. Four communal cycle parking spaces for residents to use would be expected also. In these regards the proposal meets the required standards in terms of the amount of space created. However, it is considered that there is inadequate turning space available within the site to enable a vehicle parked in the space in front of the studio apartment to turn so that it may leave the site onto Hunts Pond Road in a forward gear.

The type and location of bin storage proposed is considered acceptable.

4) Other matters

An increase in the net number of residential units may result in a corresponding increase in recreational visits to the Borough's coastline, part of the Solent Coastal Special Protection Areas which are internationally designed sites of importance for nature conservation. Policy DSP15 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies explains any such 'in combination' effects may be satisfactorily mitigated through the provision of a financial contribution. Had this proposal been acceptable in all other regards a financial contribution would have been sought from the applicant at a rate of £172 per net additional unit.

Recommendation

REFUSE:

The proposed development would be contrary to Policies CS4, CS5 & CS17 of the adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy and Policies DSP2 & DSP15 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies and would be unacceptable in that;

i) the proposed studio apartment would constitute a form of accommodation out of keeping with the prevailing pattern of development in the surrounding area and harmful to its established character;

ii) the proposed studio apartment would fail to provide adequate internal space to meet the requirements of future occupiers of that unit;

iii) the development would fail to provide adequate external amenity space to meet the requirements of future occupiers;

iv) there is insufficient space within the site to allow vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave in a forward gear. In the absence of space to turn vehicles would either enter or leave the site in reverse gear to the detriment of the safety and convenience of users of the adjoining highway.

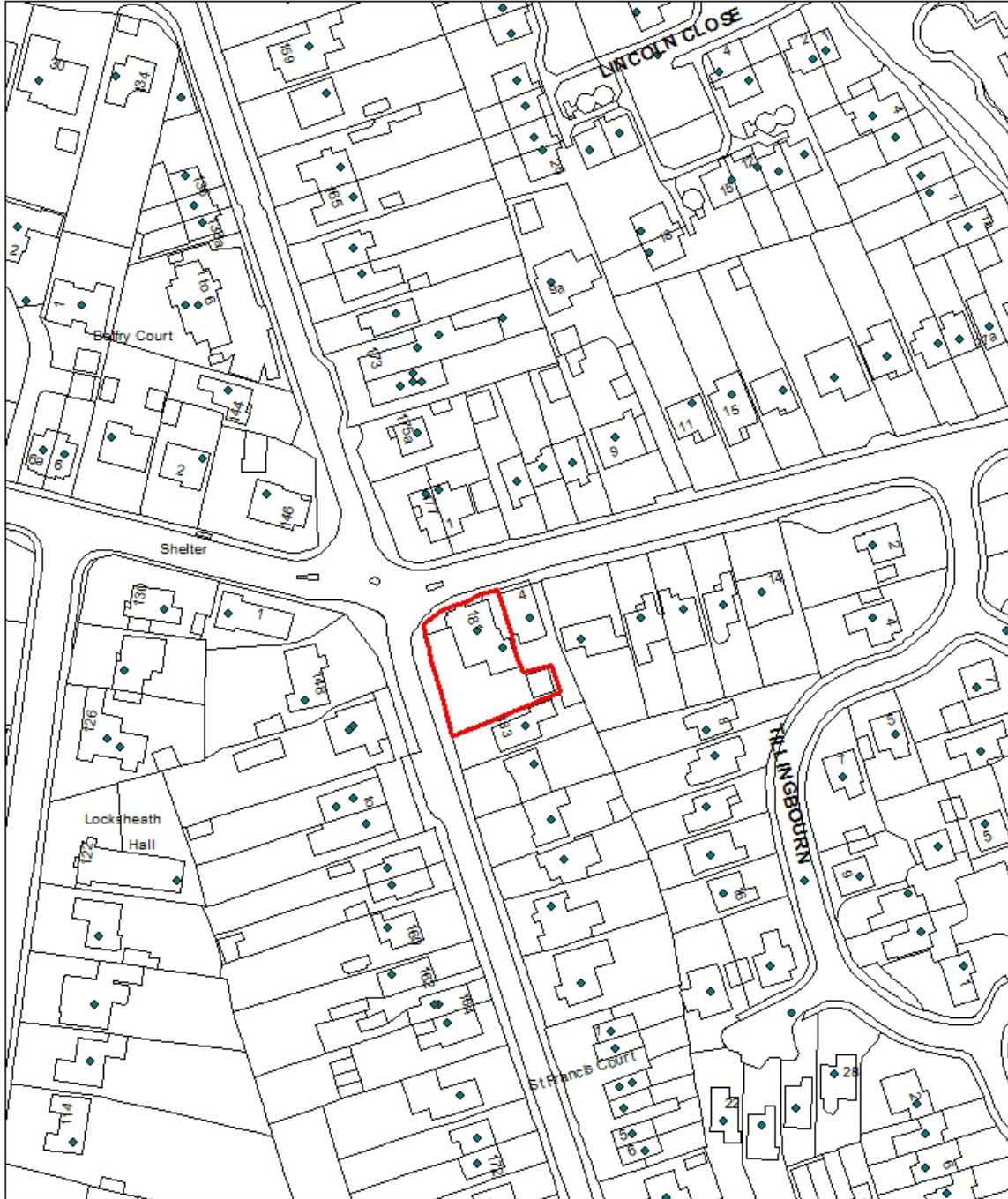
v) in the absence of a financial contribution, the proposal would fail to provide satisfactory mitigation of the 'in combination' effects that the proposed net increase in residential units on the site would cause through increased recreational disturbance on the Solent Coastal Special Protection Areas.

Background Papers

P/14/0818/FP

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



181 HUNTS POND ROAD
SCALE: 1:1,250

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence 100019110. 2014

