

AGENDA ITEM NO: 7 (a)

Report to: PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: 29 July 2015

Report from: Assistant Director of Housing and Built Environment

Application Address: Lower ground floors, 19 and 21 West Hill Road, St Leonards-on-sea, TN38 0NA

Proposal: Proposed conversion of existing 1 No. four bed flat (19 West Hill Road) and 1 No. 5 bed flat (21 West Hill Road) into 3 No. two bed flats and 1 No. one bed flat on Lower Ground Floors at 19 and 21 West Hill Road.

Application No: HS/FA/15/00408

Recommendation: Grant Full Planning Permission

Ward: MAZE HILL

File No: WE72019/021

Applicant: Lillybank Ltd per Elevations Design Ltd
Junction House 1 Sedlescombe Road South
St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex. TN38 0TA

Interest: Freeholder

Existing Use: Residential flats

Policies

Hastings Local Plan 2004: H4, DG1, DG2, DG3, C1,
Conservation Area: Yes - Grosvenor Gardens

National Planning Policy Framework:
Hastings Planning Strategy: DS1, FA2, SC1, EN1, H2, T3,
Hastings Local Plan, Development
Management Plan, Revised
Proposed Submission Version: DM1, DM3, DM4, HC1, HN1,

Public Consultation

Adj. Properties: Yes

Advertisement: Yes - Conservation Area

Letters of Objection: 3

Petitions Received: 0

Application Status: Not delegated - more than 2 letters of objection received.

Summary

This application is for the conversion of the existing lower ground floor flats of 19 and 21 West Hill Road from 1 x 4 bed and 1 x 5 bed to 3 x 2 bed and 1 x 1 bed flats.

The main considerations arising from this application are the impact on the amenity of the area. The use of the site as residential is not for consideration as the use already exists.

The Site and its Location

This application covers the lower ground floor of both Nos 19 and 21 West Hill Road. These properties form part of a Victorian terrace of six units all up to four storeys in height. To the side and rear of the buildings, there is a public footpath leading down to St. Leonards Parish Church on the Marina. Opposite the site is a registered residential care home and some 20m from the application site is the junction with Archery Road.

Details of the Proposal and Other Background Information

This is a fully detailed application. The proposal is for the conversion of the existing lower ground floor flats within No. 19 and 21 West Hill from 1 x 4 bed and 1 x 5 bed to 3 x 2 bed and 1 x 1 bed flats.

No major internal alterations are proposed as part of this development as the amended layout of the lower ground floors can be achieved, in the majority, by the use of partitions.

Previous Site History

- HS/FA/04/00060 Conversion of a single self contained flat into 2 x 2 bedroom basement flats - Withdrawn
- HS/FA/01/00365 Proposed conversion of existing nursing home into 7No. self contained flats - Granted - 02.08.2001
- HS/FA/91/00512 Erection of lift/enclosure from lower ground floor to second floor level - Granted - 01.10.1991
- HS/FA/87/00649 Change of use from residential flat to ancillary accommodation for adjoining rest home (No. 19) - Granted - 11.09.1987
- HS/FA/84/00678 Erection of lift enclosure from lower ground to second floor - Granted - 18.12.1984
- HS/FA/82/00321 Conversion of 2nd floor to 2 self contained flats including the provision of an extension at second floor level - Granted - 07.07.1982
- HS/FA/82/00320 Proposed alterations to form one double bedroom and one bedsit - Granted - 07.07.1982
- HS/FA/76/00286 Conversion of 2nd floor to 2 self contained flats with addition of an extension to form lounge to one flat - Granted - 02.06.1976
- HS/FA/74/00973 Change of use from self contained flats to a nursing home for old people - Granted - 04.12.1974
- HS/FA/74/00826 Change of use from self contained flats to students' hostel - Granted - 24.10.1974

Details of Consultations

As part of this application 160 neighbouring properties were consulted and a site notice was displayed. In response to these consultations, 3 letters of objection were received.

The Highways Officer has stated that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on the highway and do not wish to provide any further comments.

The Building Control Team have stated that the proposal will need to comply with Building Regulations.

Planning Considerations

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise".

Living Environment

DM3 of the Hastings DM Plan revised proposed submission sets out minimum internal floor areas for new dwellings. These standards for 1 and 2 bedroom flats are,

- 1 bed/2 person - 51m²,
- 2 bed/3 person - 66m²,
- 2 bed/4 person - 77m².

The proposed flats all meet these minimum requirements.

The Department for Communities and Local Government also recently produced technical guidance for space standards. Having assessed the proposed plans against these additional criteria, I am satisfied that the proposal complies and the resultant living accommodation is acceptable.

When originally reviewing the proposal, I had concerns about the potential level of daylight and sunlight entering the property due to the flats being at a lower ground level. Having now visited the site and viewed the internal floor layout, I am of the opinion that the levels of daylight and sunlight would be acceptable. To the rear of both of 19 & 21 there is an ample garden which it is proposed to partition off to provide each of the lower ground floor flats with outside space. These garden areas can be accessed directly from the living space of each flat.

Taking these factors in to account, I am of the opinion that the proposal would result in a good quality of living environment for future residents.

Impact on street scene/design

When visiting the site it is apparent that the whole property is currently under going major renovation. This follows on from investigation by the Planning Enforcement Team.

The proposed conversion of the lower ground floors involves one minor alteration to the exterior of the premises. This alteration involves the replacement of an existing window with a door to create the new entrance to flat 4 (No. 19). The window openings and the remainder of the exterior doors are to remain in the same position.

Due to the flats being set at a lower level to the highway they are, in the majority screened from the street scene. Taking this in to account, I am of the opinion that the proposed alteration to the exterior would not have an unacceptable impact on the existing streetscene or the wider Grosvenor Gardens Conservation Area.

Residential amenity and character of the area.

The subdivision of the existing ground floor flats will result in the overall reduction of bedroom spaces from 9 to 7. Although this could be seen as negative, due to the existing size and scale of the lower ground floor flats, they do not lend themselves to modern family living. Having visited the site I am of the opinion that the proposed floor layouts of the flats are of a

size and scale which are more in keeping with other properties found in the area and, as a result, are likely to be considered more desirable.

Parking and Highways:

Having visited the site, it is apparent that on-street parking is at a premium however, there is an area to the side of No. 19 which provides a parking area large enough for three cars. Although this parking area would not be solely for the use of the residents within the new flats, it does provide an area of parking on the site. The Highways Authority have stated that the addition of these new flats is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Highway. It should be noted that the site is also located within walking distance of independent shops along the sea front and the centre of St Leonards. There are also several bus stops and the West St Leonards train station within a short walking distance.

Taking these points in to account I am of the opinion that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the highway.

Sustainable Development

The NPPF sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14), which aims to boost significantly the supply of housing (paragraph 47) and encourages local planning authorities to identify the type and tenure of housing required (paragraph 50). Following on from this guidance the Planning Strategy identifies that there is need for additional family size dwellings across the Borough which has an unusually high number of flats (paragraphs 8.3 - 8.8, Policy H2).

I take in to account that this proposal would result in further flatted development however, due to the nature of the building, the applicant is limited to that form of residential use. When taking in to account the overall size of the units and the access to outside space, I am of the opinion that the units would be suitable for family use. It is, therefore, considered that the proposal does represent sustainable development and that it will help achieve the aims of both national and local planning policy.

These proposals comply with the development plan in accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The Human Rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues.

Recommendation

Grant Full Planning Permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The bathroom window shown serving flat 1 in No.21 West Hill Road shall be obscure glazed and remain as such at all times
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 15.665/01A and 15.665/02A

Reasons:

1. This condition is imposed in accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. In the interests of the privacy of the residential occupiers. (Hastings Local Plan 2004 Policy DG1)
3. For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Notes to the Applicant

1. Failure to comply with any condition imposed on this permission may result in enforcement action without further warning.
2. Statement of positive engagement: In dealing with this application Hastings Borough Council has actively sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, in accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. The applicant should consult the Building Control Section of the Regeneration & Planning Directorate with regard to the provision of adequate means of escape in case of fire and necessary fire precaution works.

Officer to Contact

Mrs E Meppem, Telephone 01424 783288

Background Papers

Application No: HS/FA/15/00408 including all letters and documents