

NEIGHBOUR LETTERS SENT:-

The Occupier: 5, 9 - 13 Highwood Park; 3, 36 Chevening Close

REPLIES RECEIVED:-

1 letter of representation received supporting the use of the building for residential purposes however raising concerns on the following points:

- the impact of the proposed planting along the rear boundary of numbers 9 – 12 Highwood Park;
- clarification on the boundary fencing and gates adjacent to Highwood Park and the lighting proposed.

THE APPLICATION SITE:-

- 1.1 The property is a Grade II listed building dating from the 1830's and constructed as a residence. The building is 2 storey in scale with a low pitched Welsh slate roof with some accommodation in the roof. The front of the building faces east towards the lake and has a central curved bow feature at ground and first floor including a curved veranda which extends onto the south elevation of the building. The main entrance to the building is from a door in the north elevation
- 1.2 The property has a more modern single storey detached 'L' shaped building to the west of the main house which is now linked via fencing. Vehicular access to the property is from a tree lined driveway which links to the A23. Parking for the site currently along this access road and an area to the north of the building.
- 1.3 The property occupies a prominent location within a parkland setting (designated as an historic garden) on a site where the land slopes down towards the east and southeast. The site also occupies a higher level when approaching the building from the north. While screened from the main views (A23) to the north and east the property is located to optimise the natural site levels and setting to the surrounding Broadfield Park, the building benefiting from unobstructed views of the lake to the east and parkland to the south. The parkland a mix of landscaped lawns and a variety of ponds and meadows and is managed as a nature reserve.
- 1.4 The site has been used for office accommodation for a number of businesses, it is currently part occupied as the building is currently being vacated.

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-

- 2.1 The application is for the conversion of the building from offices to 12 residential 1 and 2 bedroom flats with parking provided for 15 cars. The conversion would involve primarily internal works to the listed building (the subject of related application CR/2008/0608/LBC).
- 2.2 The physical external works to the building consist of:
 - the removal of an external fire escape;
 - creation of a balcony on the first floor (east) elevation with new double doors;
 - creation of new entrance porch on north elevation;

- 2 new windows in the south elevation;
 - new window in the west elevation;
 - two new dormers (in the west and south elevation);
 - removal of existing security lights.
 - new window in outbuilding (unit 6).
- 2.3 The application also seeks to extend the existing parking area to the north and west of the building and reconfigure the roadway and access to the front of the building. A new maintenance access would be created to the east of the site. The site is also proposed to be enclosed by a new 1.5m boundary fence which serves to enclose the building and provided a gated 'in and out' access arrangement to the development.

PLANNING HISTORY:-

- 3.1 The site has a long planning history and has been in use as office accommodation since the 1960s. Various alterations to the interior have taken place over the years to accommodate the office use mainly introducing additional partitioning, security measures on the windows and fire escape.
- 3.2 An application for conversion of the building to 12 residential units and is associated listed building works was withdrawn earlier this year (CR/2008/0128/FUL and CR/2008/0129/LBC).

PLANNING POLICY:-

National Policy Guidance

- 4.1 PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment reminds authorities to consider planning applications and listed building applications which involve works which affect the character and setting of listed buildings and the desirability of protecting the setting. This relates not just to buildings within the application site but also the impact of the works on the wider area, in this case the setting of building within Broadfield Park which is a designated historic garden.
- 4.2 National Planning Guidance PPS3 'Housing' seeks to secure a high standard of design, dwelling mix whilst making the most efficient use of urban land. The general guidance in PPS1 and PPG13 is also of relevance to this proposal.

West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016

- 4.3 Policies CH5 and CH6 set out the requirement that any development should preserve and where possible enhance historic parks and gardens and the landscape setting, architectural and historic interest of any listed building within such areas. Policy CH7 seeks to protect archaeological heritage.
- 4.4 Policy DEV1 seeks high quality development, DEV2 encourages mixed use development where it makes the best use of land and promotes vitality and diversity, and reduces the need to travel. DEV3 seeks to secure infrastructure requirements of any development are met and DEV5 deals with parking provision.

- 4.5 Policy LOC1 gives priority to the use of previously developed land, NE3 seeks to ensure suitable housing provision which meet local needs, ERA1 seeks to make the best use of land through higher density development.

Crawley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007

- 4.6 Policy EN5 seeks to ensure all development is based on a thorough understanding of the context, significance and distinctiveness of its site and surroundings and of high quality design. Policy EN4 seeks to ensure that landscaping proposals are an integral part of new development schemes.
- 4.7 Policy H3 seeks to ensure sustainable housing development in appropriate locations. H4 deals with housing and seeks to ensure development is of an appropriate density (usually not below 30 dwellings per hectare) and H5 sets out a requirement for 40% affordable housing on sites of 15 dwellings or more, H6 seeks to ensure an appropriate dwelling mix including small dwellings.
- 4.8 In respect of transport Policy T1 ensures development is comprehensively and sustainably integrated with transport infrastructure and encourages new and more intensive development in accessible locations. Policy T3 seeks to ensure new development makes appropriate provision for parking in accordance with the Council's agreed parking standards.
- 4.9 Policy E3 seeks to protect all employment sites unless it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for employment purposes due to location or impact on its surroundings, or the loss would result in significant regeneration, social or environmental benefits for the wider area, or the site cannot be marketed for employment purposes.
- 4.10 Policy ICS2 requires development contributions or on-site provision for infrastructure to meet the justifiable needs created by the new development.

Crawley Borough Local Plan 2000 'Saved' policies

- 4.11 Of particular relevance to this application are the general policies including policy GD1 deals with the normal requirements of all development, GD2 which seeks to ensure development is sympathetic to its surroundings and GD3 which seeks to ensure the operational requirements for a site are met.
- 4.12 With regard to listed buildings and the built / natural environment Policy BN11 states that proposals for new development including extensions, alterations or changes of use affecting a listed building or its setting will only be permitted if there is no adverse impact on the building's architectural or historic interest; the scale, form and internal layout of the building are respected; appropriate materials are used; and, the archaeological implications of the proposals have been fully considered. Policy BN14 encourages the maintenance and continued use of listed buildings and supports proposals that bring a building back into use provided there is no major conflict with other policy objectives. Policy BN18 states that proposals for development that would adversely affect any significant features including trees of a park or garden of special historic interest will not normally be permitted.
- 4.13 Policy H16 provides guidance on house conversions and is broadly applicable in relation to the size of the accommodation proposed. In respect to other design aspects policies H20 and H22 require development of a good size and

standard with adequate outdoor space for future occupiers. Transport policies T27 and T28 deal with cycle provision.

- 4.14 Other relevant policies are GD5/ GD6 and BN21 relating to landscaping of new development which seek to retain important and protected trees whilst affording them sufficient room to thrive. Policy GD8 deals with safety and security, GD9 seeks to ensure appropriate lighting in public communal areas and GD10 seeks to address through development design the needs of people with disabilities and mobility problems.
- 4.15 Policies GD35 and GD36 seek to ensure that development will be only be permitted where the infrastructure required to service it can be made directly available at the appropriate time and that satisfactory provision can be made for infrastructure and community facilities the need for which arises as a consequence of the development.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 4.16 **SPG2** – provides guidance on residential accommodation standards created by subdivision
SPG4 – provides guidance on private outdoor space standards
SPG13 – provides guidance on landscaping.
Supplementary Planning Document – ‘**Planning Obligations and S106 Agreements**’ - sets out the parking standards for the Borough and transport contributions methodology. It also sets out the nature and extent of other infrastructure contributions of relevance to this application including open space, libraries and fire services.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:-

- 5.1 The relevant considerations in this case are:
- The principle of residential development;
 - Impact of development on the exterior character of the listed building;
 - Impact on trees / landscaping and setting of the listed building;
 - Parking and operational requirements of the site;
 - Adequacy of the accommodation for future occupants;
 - Effect on the amenities of adjoining occupiers;
 - Other matters.

The principle of residential development (and loss of employment space)

- 5.2 The principle of conversion to residential use is considered acceptable and does not conflict with policy E3 which seeks to protect against the loss of employment floorspace. In this case, the building was originally a residence and the community benefit of additional housing and environmental benefits of refurbishment of the listed building and landscaping of the grounds surrounding the building are considered appropriate exceptions under this policy.

Impact of development on the exterior character of the listed building;

- 5.3 The works to the exterior of the building are listed in paragraph 2.2. It is not considered the additional windows or dormers would detract from the character and appearance of the listed building. The details provided indicate that the

new windows can be replaced in a design and profile that would complement the original listed building. While the overall design and form of the porch and dormers is considered appropriate further details are required on the exact method of construction and detailed finish, this could be secured via an appropriate condition.

- 5.4 The most significant visual change to the building is the introduction of a first floor balcony on the east elevation which would alter the character of the listed building. The structural alterations required are detailed in the listed building application however, it is considered that this alteration has been carefully considered and in design with the landscaping detailing surrounding the building and is appropriate addition to the property given its intended use.

Impact on trees / landscaping and setting of the listed building

- 5.5 The proposal involves the removal of a number of trees to create additional parking, the formation of a new maintenance access into the park and section of new roadway. A survey plan and garden design strategy has been provided to support the application. It is considered that the loss of the trees to the northwest of the building are justified as these are in poor health and the limited clearance of shrubs on the northeast side to provide parking and a new access maintenance access drive to the park can be supported. The garden strategy demonstrates that there is sufficient space to replace any specimens lost within the site curtilage.

- 5.6 The building is proposed to be enclosed by a 1.5m iron railings with entrance / exit gates on the vehicular accesses. The layout and landscaping around the building has been considered in the submitted garden design strategy. The approach shown on the strategy is considered adequate in respect of the protection of the setting of the building from key views to the south and east, the fence line and planting reflecting the contours and features of the building as a backdrop and the historic parkland setting.

- 5.7 The overall parking layout and landscaping to the north of the site is considered acceptable in principle however further detailed consideration of the layout and in particular the landscaping and boundary treatments along the Highwood Park boundary would be necessary. It is considered these details could be successfully addressed through a condition.

Parking and operational requirements of the site;

- 5.8 15 parking spaces are provided for the 7 x1 bed and 5 x 2 bed flats. The Planning Obligations and S106 Agreements SPD requires a maximum standard of 12 spaces per 1 bed unit and 1.5 spaces per 2 bed unit, a total maximum requirement of 16 spaces. 12 secure cycle spaces are provided in line with adopted standards. A secure refuse area is also provided within the existing building.

Adequacy of the accommodation for future occupants;

- 5.9 The accommodation provided varies in size, depending on the room sizes with some units having generously proportioned rooms (in the eastern part of the building) and smaller units in the central and western part of the building. 2 of the 1 bedroom flats are 4m² below the recommended standard of 48m²

and one unit measures just 39m². Given the constraints of the accommodation being converted it is considered in this case that the shortfall in the floorspace of these 3 units is acceptable. The layout of the building has a number of potential storage areas at ground floor which could be assigned to these units if necessary.

- 5.10 The layout as proposed has very limited amenity space around the curtilage of the building and it is not clear given the proposed fencing arrangement how readily accessible any amenity space around the flats would be to access. The proposed flats are set in parkland and while private amenity space is limited, it is considered given the location that the residents have the benefit of the adjoining parkland and a refusal on this ground could not be warranted.

Effect on the amenities of adjoining occupiers;

- 5.11 The nearest residential properties are situated in Highwood Park to the northwest of the site. It is not considered that the proposal would result in any loss of amenity through increased overlooking / loss of privacy or through increased traffic movements given the current office use of the building. None of the new windows proposed would directly overlook adjoining residents and the separation distance between existing windows in Broadfield House and the neighbouring gardens is in excess of 23m and these do not directly face each other.

Other matters

- 5.11 A Section 106 Agreement would be required to secure an open space contribution of £7,659, library contribution of £1,242 and fire contribution of £1,371 and TAD contribution of £3,960.
- 5.12 However, in the event that the Section 106 Unilateral Agreement is not completed within the 13 week time period which expires on the 2nd January 2009 and unless there are exceptional reasons for the delay, the Head of Planning be authorised to refuse planning permission for the following reason:

An agreement is not in place to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure provisions to support the development and the development is therefore contrary to policies GD3, GD35 and GD36 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2000 and contrary to policy ICS2 of the Crawley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 16 Parking Standards and Transport Contributions.

CONCLUSIONS:-

- 6.1 It is considered that the principle of converting this listed building back to residential use can be supported and would provide a development of a suitable standard of accommodation for new occupiers, would not detract from the setting or character of the listed building and would not conflict with the employment policy objectives.