

Fernwood House, 45/47 London Road, Cowplain, Waterlooville, Hampshire, PO8 8DH

Site and surroundings

Comprises a large two-storey building with a flat roof located on the corner of London Road and King's Road. It appears to date from the 1960s and the ground floor is commercial use with residential above. There is a large car park at the rear which has access from King's Road.



Figure 1. The frontage to London Road.

Relevant planning history

On 23 May 2014 conditional planning permission (LPA Ref: APP/14/00338) was granted for a second floor extension over approximately half of the flat roof to provide 4 apartments. This permission has not been implemented.

On 3 July 2019 it was confirmed that prior approval was required and granted (LPA Ref: APP/19/00533) to convert part of the first floor from B1(a) office use to C3

residential in the form of 8 single bedroom apartments. This approval is currently being implemented.

On 9 March 2020 retrospective planning permission (LPARef: APP/19/01230) was granted to retain 8 single bedroom apartments on the first floor including refuse/cycle storage and car parking.

On 6 December 2019 a planning application (LPA Ref: APP/19/01073) seeking permission for a second floor extension to form 8 flats including refuse/cycle storage and car parking was withdrawn. This occurred following issues raised by the case planning officer that mainly pertained to the first floor residential accommodation but also about refuse/cycle storage and lack of landscaping in respect of the new build accommodation.

Designations

The application site does not include any buildings that are either statutory or locally listed. The location is not a conservation area and there are no tree preservation orders covering the site.

The site is located within the Cowplain District Centre.

The proposal

This application is an alternative to that granted in 2014 for 4 apartments and seeks to extend over a larger part of the existing flat roof to provide 8 apartments in the form of 6 single bedroom and 2, two bedroom units. Car parking and secure cycle storage have been amended compared to the withdrawn planning application and landscaping has been incorporated by way of large planters within the forecourt area facing London Road.

Use

Residential use of the upper floors is considered entirely appropriate and has already been accepted in planning terms on this site by the previous grant of

planning permission. Furthermore, additional residential use on this site would be sustainable development which is supported by local and national planning policy.

Amount

All of the proposed apartments would comply with the National Described Space Standards for single and two bedrooms apartments. There is sufficient space and it is considered more logical to build over a greater part of the roof area, than was previously granted planning permission, in order to produce a more pleasing outcome in townscape terms. As such the quantity of development proposed should be seen as acceptable and appropriate in the context of improving the character and appearance of the area.



Figure 2. Taller building within the Cowplain District Centre.

Scale

Most buildings in the locality are two-storey in height with pitched roofs, although there is some more recent three-storey development further to the south along London Road. Consequently the development proposed would be seen as appropriate in terms of the existing built context. In particular this is a corner location

where a building of more substance than exists at present would help to define the junction in a more successful manner. It must also be acknowledged that planning permission has previously been granted for an additional storey on a significant part of the existing building and this was recognised by the Council as an enhancement to the application site and wider townscape.

Layout

A single internal corridor would provide access to all of the proposed apartments. There are two existing access points from ground floor level, the main one fronting King's Road and via an internal staircase. There is an existing external staircase which provides access to the flat roof and this would allow an alternative access to the proposed apartments via an extension to the existing internal staircase. All of the proposed apartments would be single aspect but with good levels of natural light and ventilation through large areas of glazing, including French doors.

Appearance

There is no established design precedent to follow in this part of London Road. However, it is considered that the setting back of the proposed additional storey from the edge of the existing flat roof would result in a pleasing appearance. Vertical grey in colour cladding would be utilised on the external elevations and the flat roof proposed would include a significant overhang to enhance the roof profile. Adding more bulk to the application building in the manner proposed would also result in an enhanced built form, and as a consequence, improved streetscene.

Landscaping

There is one tree on the site close to the western boundary and this would be retained. There is limited scope for additional planting within the car park. Hard surfaces would be improved including large planters within the forecourt fronting London Road to soften the townscape.

Access

The site occupies a sustainable location which is well served by public transport. The existing car park would be re-planned to provide a total of 19 spaces which

would equate to one space for each apartment, existing and proposed. In addition there would be a single allocated space for the commercial use and there is also a garage. The application site is located in a highly sustainable location where existing and future residents would be within very close walking distance of a range of facilities within and adjoining the District Centre, as well as a regular bus service . Additionally, there is a large public car park to the rear (west) of the District Centre, just to the north of the application site as well as on street car parking to the front of the District Centre, providing additional car parking opportunities for visitors and residents.

Secure cycle storage would be provided within the car parking area at the rear. The locations have been amended compared to the previously withdrawn scheme.

Adequate space would be retained at the rear for the servicing of the commercial units and to allow vehicles to leave the site in a forward gear.



Figure 3. Existing vehicular access from King's Road.



Figure 4. Large car park to the rear.

Residential amenity

All of the windows and doors to habitable rooms would face either the road frontages or to the south, well away from residential properties in King's Road. A passageway window would face west towards the nearest dwelling in King's Road, but this could be fixed and glazed with obscure glass. Overall it is not considered that nearby residents would suffer any loss of amenity as a result of the proposed development. In terms of additional bulk, the development proposed would be set in well away from the western boundary and therefore there would not be any loss of light or diminuation of outlook for residents.

Impact on nearby commercial uses

This is a mixed commercial and residential area. It is not thought existing commercial uses would be affected in any significant way as a result of the residential development proposed. Conditions could be imposed to ensure adequate acoustic glazing. Furthermore, the residential accommodation proposed is not directly above any existing commercial uses.

Flood risk

The application site falls within Flood Zone 1 and therefore is considered to be at low risk of flooding

Planning policy

The Council's adopted Core Strategy includes a number of policies that are relevant to this application, as follows:-

CS9 supports housing in sustainable locations and sets out a target figure for new homes during the plan period.

Policy CS16 refers to high quality design. It requires development to respond positively to historic and local character and to use characteristics of the locality to help inform the design of new development. Height, massing, materials and proportions of windows and doors are referred to in Paragraph 1.

Policy CS17 is about concentrating development in urban areas and CS20 sets out the transport and access strategy for the borough.

Policy DM13 concerns car parking and cycle storage for residential development.

Policy DM10 covers all situations where pollution may occur in respect of new development.

The Pre-Submission Havant Local Plan 2036 was approved by the Council in January 2019 and has some relevance to the application proposals but must be given limited weight as it is not yet an adopted plan. The following policies are pertinent:-

E1 – High Quality Design

Requires all aspects that contribute to design quality to be included in new development and in particular the existing character of the area should be taken into consideration.

E12 - Low Carbon Design

The need to reduce carbon emissions is at the heart of this policy. Furthermore, re-using existing building materials is encouraged.

E20 - Drainage Infrastructure and New Development

Re-using rainwater through a SUDS system can help to reduce water usage and consequently demand.

E22 - Amenity and Pollution

The need to reduce pollution and improve amenity for residents is a key part of this policy.

H1 - High Quality Homes

Well-designed homes with natural ventilation, adequate rooms sizes and proportionate gardens are encouraged in this policy.

H3 - Housing Density

Higher densities are considered suitable for accessible and sustainable locations.

It is considered that the proposed development, where practicable, would be in line with the relevant policies in the Adopted Core Strategy and the Pre-Submission Local Plan. The application site is within the urban area, car parking and cycle storage would be provided to the council's standards and the design of the proposed development would be compatible with the surrounding context. Although there is no specific amenity space allocated to the apartments, this has already been accepted for the 4 apartments approved in 2014. Furthermore, the units proposed are most likely to be occupied by single people and couples and not families with children.

It is considered the proposed development would be compliant with relevant advice in the NPPF which confirms a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The three dimensions to sustainable development are economic, social and environmental. The economic role should ensure there is sufficient land of the right type and in the right places to support growth and innovation. The social role supports strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing

required to meet the needs of present and future generations. It should also involve creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services to meet the community's needs. The environmental role should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. Furthermore, natural resources should be used prudently, waste and pollution minimised and climate change given a high priority by moving towards a low carbon economy. It is considered that the proposed development accords with this advice. Chapter 5 relates to housing and it is considered that the development proposed would be in accordance with guidance in this chapter and in particular Paragraph 68. This acknowledges that *small and medium size sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and are often built out relatively quickly*. Chapter 11 is about making effective use of land and Paragraph 118(d) promotes development of under-used land. Furthermore, Paragraph 118(e) is especially pertinent to the application proposals and states:-

Planning policies and decisions should:

Support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall streetscene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.

Chapter 12 is about good design. Paragraph 127 is most relevant to the application proposal as it requires development to optimise the potential of sites and create visually attractive development. It is considered that the application proposals would result in a good quality development delivering low cost/rent apartments aimed at single people and couples for which there is a need and demand in the Borough.

Planning obligations

The Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership would require a financial contribution based on the increase in the number of bedrooms proposed. Furthermore, a community infrastructure payment may be applicable.

Water quality

In respect of this issue, and specifically the European Site Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy, the applicant would be willing to accept a *Grampian* style planning condition to provide the necessary mitigation through a financial contribution.

Assessment

The proposed development, as amended, would be sustainable as defined in the NPPF and would result in a good quality apartments making more effective and full use of the application site.

The scale, design, layout and external materials would be appropriate for this location.

The additional storey proposed, over a greater part of the application site than previously granted planning permission, would result in a much improved built form that would uplift this part of the District Centre

The proposed apartments would provide good sized units with acceptable levels of light, ventilation and outlook.

The application proposals would not cause any significant amenity issues for nearby residents.

Car parking and cycle storage would be provided to the Council's standards and there is a safe and convenient vehicular access from King's Road.

Conclusion

It is respectfully requested that planning permission should be granted for this sustainable and appropriate development.