

Units B and C, 4B Highland Parade, Waterlooville, Hampshire, PO7 7QH

Site and surroundings

Comprises a vacant lock-up shop unit located on the corner of Highfield Avenue and Burnside and within a short parade of commercial ground floor properties. The floor area is approximately 116 square metres. The upper floors comprise nine self-contained residential units which are accessed from front doors at the rear.



Figure 1. The vacant ground floor premises.

The proposal

To convert the shop unit into 2, two-bedroom self-contained flats with access from the rear. The full height windows and entrance doors at the front would be blocked-up in part and smaller windows installed. Cycle storage would be provided within a secure lobby.

Appearance

Changes are only proposed to the front elevation. These would involve blocking up the lower parts of the existing large glazed shopfront windows and doors in a render finish that would match that on the upper storeys. Smaller windows would be inserted in the upper parts of the existing apertures.

Residential amenity

The application proposals would not have any negative impact on the amenities currently enjoyed by nearby residential properties. In fact residential use would be likely to create much less activity than the retail use.

Access

There is ample parking within the service yard to the rear. Furthermore, secure cycle storage is also proposed. A bus stop exists almost immediately outside of the application premises.



Figure 2. Access to the proposed flats would be from the rear, the same as for all other residential properties in this block.

Planning policy

There do not appear to be any site specific policies in the council's adopted Core Strategy that refer to this property. However, there are some that have relevance to this application.

Policy CS 9 in the council's Core Strategy is about housing and amongst other things encourages a mix of dwelling sizes to be provided within the borough.

Policy CS 16 is about design and seeks to ensure good design is achieved on developments throughout the borough.

Policy CS 17 requires the concentration and distribution of development within urban areas, such as this part of WaterlooVille.

Policy DM 2 relates to the protection of existing community facilities and shops. Any development proposing the change of use or loss of any premises last used as community services, including local shops, will only be permitted where both the following criteria is met:

- 1. It has been demonstrated, through an active marketing process that the premises or land are no longer viable for their authorised use or any other use which would provide a beneficial facility to the local community.*
- 2. The facility is no longer required for a community use or that there is an easily accessible existing or new facility for the community it is intended to service.*

In respect of local shops, the premises must be marketed for at least six months and evidence must be provided to this effect. Please see separate letter from the marketing agents.

Policy DM 13 refers to car and cycle parking in relation to residential development.

It is considered that the proposed development would be fully in line with the relevant policies in the Core Strategy.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out 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 minimized and climate change given a high priority by moving towards a low carbon economy.

The proposed development accords with this advice. Paragraphs 47 to 55 relate to housing and, once again, it is considered that the application proposals would be in accordance with the guidance; particularly Paragraphs 49 and 50. Paragraphs 56 to 68 are about good design. Paragraphs 60 and 61 are considered most pertinent to the application proposals.

Paragraph 51 encourages the bringing back into residential use empty buildings where there is a need for additional housing in that area provided there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate.

The proposed development is consistent with the principles contained in the NPPF. It would certainly makes good use of this urban site by providing additional dwellings for which there are a need in the borough.

Assessment

This is a predominantly residential area except for this short parade of shops. It is clear that this larger unit is not attractive to retail of similar tenants. The previous use was as a convenience store and it should be noted that there is an existing store within this parade of shops.

The marketing has demonstrated a lack of demand for commercial use in this location and therefore it would be logical to convert the property into residential use for which there is a clear demand and need.

The external alterations proposed would provide a sympathetic and appropriate relationship with the remainder of the building that makes up Highfield Parade.

The flats would be a good size with adequate natural light and ventilation.

The entrances to all existing residential properties is from the rear and therefore it is appropriate to provide access to these two proposed flats from the rear.

There is plentiful parking within the car park / servicing area at the rear with dual access from Burnside and Meadway.

There is a demand for small residential units within the borough and this proposal would assist in a small way towards the Council's housing targets.

This is considered to be a sustainable development by re-using existing redundant floor space for a purposeful use, i.e. residential.