

TSP317

3, Spencer Street, Bognor Regis

1.00 Site Context-

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL				
No.	BR	117	10	
Received	18 MAY 2010			

The site is situated at 3 Spencer Street which is within the Bognor Regis Town Centre within easy walking distance of the railway station, bus routes and main shopping area. Currently, the site has a two storey office building on it, which sits against the back edge of the footpath and has facing brick walls and a pitched slate roof.

Other properties within Spencer Street vary in size and use between single dwelling houses of terraced, semi or detached construction and also industrial units.

Therefore there is a variety of buildings of different styles, ages and design and indeed a variety of plot sizes.

The plot to the north has recently been developed with a block of 24no. flats and 2no. retail units over 2½ storeys.

The application site sits wholly within the defined built-up area for Bognor Regis where there remains a presumption in favour of residential development.

The current proposal comprises a detailed planning application where consideration has been given to the proposed form of the block and the architectural style, taking into account the site's location and planning policy considerations and criteria.

2.00 Amount of Development Proposed:-

The development proposes the demolition of a two storey general office building and the construction of 9no. studio apartments within a single 3 storey block for the private rental market. There is no on site parking but secure covered cycle storage is to be provided. The studios are approx. 28m² (301 ft.²) in size and are single aspect. The site has an area of 0.018 Hectares and so the development equates to a density of 500 units/hectare.

3.00 Policy Background:-

Taking into account the contents of the planning application it is considered that the merits of the proposal should be assessed against the following policies of the Arun District Local Plan together with its attached criteria:-

Policy GEN1 Sustainability

The principal objective of Policy Gen1 is to ensure that future developments do not compromise those of future generations, conserve energy and enhance the area.

The proposals are to reuse a brownfield site which has a building of low visual amenity located within the town centre close to all services. By providing residential accommodation on this site additional people will use town centre shopping facilities, not those out of town, and could do so in a sustainable way by using the public transport routes available. This therefore does not destroy a Greenfield site on the outskirts of town and also cuts down on car journeys needed to get from this to use the services.

It is therefore considered that the application proposal fully accords with the principal aim of Policy Gen1.

Policy GEN2 Built up Area Boundary

The principal objective of Policy Gen2 is to ensure that future developments are within existing conurbations close to established services.

The development is proposed within the established boundaries of Bognor Regis town centre and it is therefore considered that the application proposal fully accords with the principal aim of Policy Gen2.

Policy GEN4 Location and Travel Demand

The principal objective of Policy Gen4 is to consider the development proposals effect on the demand for transport.

Located within the town centre, facilities and services are close allowing easy access by walking or short journey by bus. Further distances can be travelled using the railway, from the station situated within one hundred yards. Car ownership is discouraged by not providing on site parking but secure cycle storage.

It is therefore considered that the application proposal fully accords with the principal aim of Policy Gen4.

Policy GEN5 Provision of New Residential Accommodation

The principal objective of Policy Gen5 is to meet the needs of the District in accordance with Government requirements relating to the number of dwellings to be provided in the District in a manner which meets the Council's aims for sustainable development.

The development provides nine high quality purpose built studio apartments which are for the private rental market. Although recently Bognor Regis is undergoing regeneration with many developments of flats, few if any, are for the private rental market. The majority of rental flats within the town centre area are within house conversions or bedsits at the lower quality end of the market. Local people who are unable to buy but are not eligible for social housing are therefore being given the option to have a good quality home within their area.

It is therefore considered that the application proposal fully accords with the principal aim of Policy Gen5.

Policy GEN7 The Form of New Development

The principal objective of Policy Gen7 is to ensure that development proposals display high quality design and layout and take into account the characteristics and context of the surrounding area.

The policy is subject to eight criteria:-

Criterion One requires that development proposals make efficient and effective use of land or buildings within the defined built-up area boundaries and that new residential development achieves densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. The proposed development is far in excess of this requirement and therefore Criterion One is complied with.

Criterion Two requires that development responds positively to the identified characteristics and resources of the site and creates an attractive place, respecting and enhancing local distinctiveness.

The proposals, as stated previously, have been derived from the principal objective of maintaining and enhancing the character of the area and the architecture. Removal of the unsightly office unit and replacement with the proposed development would have a positive effect on the surroundings.

The building, is proposed to be constructed of materials common to the area and following the theme of the street which has similar properties. On this basis criterion 2 is therefore met.

In respect of Criterion Three the application site sits within the defined built-up area and is within walking distance of the public transport facilities of both bus and railway. Cycle storage facilities are incorporated into the design to encourage people to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car.

Criterion Four requires that new development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on adjoining occupiers of land or property and where relevant facilitate the development of adjoining sites.

The new building is visually better than the current office site therefore adding benefit to properties within Spencer Street. Adding landscaping to the frontage will give a more residential feel to the southern end of Spencer Street which is still dominated by various industrial units.

The proposal should also reduce traffic movements as the development actively discourages car ownership in both its design and location where previously cars and vans would have been visiting the site. This provides a safer pedestrian route along the footpath.

On the basis of the above, we believe criterion four is met.

Criterion Five requires that any development takes account of any unacceptable, adverse impacts which may arise from adjoining land uses or property. To the north is a new flat development and several recent developments together with various low rise industrial units, including a small car service centre. Opposite is a large builder's yard, and all of these have limited opening hours, particularly with regard to evenings and on Sundays which would disturb future occupiers.

The site has no open space or wooded areas and so does not currently make a material contribution to the local environment and therefore Criterion Six is complied with.

Criteria Seven and Eight require that development allows for the safe movement of pedestrians and vehicles and that vehicle parking accords with the Highway Authority's standards.

Parking is not provided on site and therefore the maximum parking standards are complied with. Car use is actively discouraged by the town centre location and easy accessibility of public transport. The nature of the development being studio apartments, would mainly appeal to single people with employment in the local area who could use public transport to get to work. On street permit holder residential parking is provided along Spencer Street with additional voucher parking.

In summary therefore it is considered that the proposal has strong regard to local context, will create a building displaying high quality design and architecture thus increasing the character of the local area.

It is therefore considered that the application proposal fully accords with the principal aim of Policy Gen7 together with the requirements of its criteria.

3.00 Layout:-

The development proposes the demolition of the poor quality two storey office building situated along the western boundary.

This then allows the new studio apartments to be situated more central on the plot when viewed from Spencer Street.

The building will be 3 storeys in height to match the adjacent development. With regards potential overlooking the windows to the eastern side are to bathrooms and are obscured & are further away from the rear of London Road properties, thereby improving this situation.

4.00 Scale:-

The proposed building is 3 storeys the same as the adjoining flat development recently completed to the north. With regards to the overall scale of the building it has been kept as low as possible to blend in with the established residential properties to the north.

Compared with the existing industrial units to the south, these have a lower ridge height, but are much more dominant on the street scene of Spencer Street.

5.00 Landscaping:-

The site currently does not have any soft landscaping, it is covered in the building footprint and concrete courtyard typical of an industrial setting.

However the aim will be to soften the perimeter with boundary planting and metal railings to Spencer Street as elsewhere with new developments along Spencer Street. Ground floor flats will have private patio areas.

6.00 Appearance:-

The materials are to blend in with the adjacent properties, the vernacular being facing brickwork with detailing, slate roofs and white windows..

The proposed building is designed to become part of the street scene.

7.00 Accessibility:-

There is no proposed vehicular access to the development but provision has been made for secure cycle parking to the rear. This will encourage the use of readily available public transport of buses and railway within a few hundred yards. The majority of facilities are available within Bognor Regis town centre which is a short level walk away.

The development will comply with the requirements of the current Part M of the Building Regulations with level access to the building and fully accessible studios.

Vertical circulation will be provided by an ambulant disabled staircase to the first and second floors. Switches outlets and controls are located at a height to comply with Part M and each flat is provided with an accessible bathroom.

8.00 Conclusions:-

In conclusion therefore we believe that the scheme is in accordance with all national and local planning policies and provide much needed high quality rental accommodation within an established town centre location