

Design and access statement.

The Old Barn (Formally Mike Smiths Carpet shop)

Ferringham lane, West Sussex, BN12 5LL

Introduction and background

The former carpet show room ceased trading on the 1st of October 2009 and has been closed since that date. It is currently designated as a commercial building; however incongruously it sits in a conservation area and is surrounded by residential properties.

The property consists of two buildings. The original barn and an adjoining one story structure (the cottages) a later addition.

The premises themselves are run down both internally and externally and it is evident that very substantial investment would be needed to bring the premises back into effective use as a show room/ storage facility. It is considered that a full capital-expenditure scheme would be cost prohibitive and unlikely to provide a return on investment as the rents commanded (assuming the property could be commercially rented) would be insufficient to cover the refurbishment costs.

Strenuous efforts have been made to market the property since it fell vacant. Two agents have been used and widespread advertising has occurred using both the press and internet. Several prospective tenants have inspected the property but the age of the building and state of the roof and the general liability for a tenant means that no satisfactory offers for a letting of the premises have been forthcoming.

Additionally and significantly there exists strong local competition in the form of vacant office and shop accommodation.

Taking into account the local lack of demand for shop space, the costs involved in refurbishment and the location of the property it is not considered that it would be particularly suitable for alternative business use.

The property is, however considered to be acceptable for conversion to residential and, hence this application has been made. Such use is considered to be the most appropriate alternative use for the site and will provide the opportunity to up-grade the building and bring it into meaningful use. It will also make a useful contribution to the existing housing stock in line with government advice in PPG-housing.

With its conversion to residential there will be comparatively few changes to the fabric of the building. The building is grade 11 listed and sits within a conservation area. The buildings planned renovation will be of a high standard and thereby ensure its preservation. Additionally, Bolrush Developments Ltd the applicants, have significant experience in this type of conversion and were awarded a commendation from Arun in 2010 for its work on the Shoulder of Mutton and cucumbers.



In the past the building has been extended in an unsympathetic manner (especially the linkage annex between the two buildings) which the current application seeks to remove.

Amount of development

As mentioned above, comparatively little structural works are necessary to the fabric of the building to bring it into effective use for residential purposes. The works involved in the cottages will be minimal and involve refurbishment, the creation of new internal stud walls and a new roof. The Barn will require the opening of existing air vents, the creation of a selected number of windows, overall refurbishment, the creation of a first floor, new internal stud walls and a new roof.

Layout

The proposed accommodation will comprise a 4 bed roomed two storey dwelling (the barn) and two adjoining two bed roomed single storied properties (the cottages). The original Barn door opening will comprise the entrance to the two storey dwelling. The ground floor accommodations will compromise a hall, study, lounge, Kitchen and toilet. The first floor accommodation will comprise four bedrooms, one with en-suite and a family bathroom.

The two cottages will utilise the existing door openings and will each comprise of two bedrooms a kitchen diner and bathroom.

The front of the properties will undergo landscaping and the garden areas will be divided as shown on the submitted block plan.

It is proposed to build three garages for the three properties the location and design of which are also shown on the block plan.

Scale

As the proposal is for change of use of the existing building, there will be no change in scale.

Use

As mentioned earlier, residential is considered to be the most appropriate alternative use for the site. The site is in a conservation area and surrounded by residential properties. Any noise and disturbance previously experienced with the use as a carpet warehouse and storage unit will, of course be eliminated. There will also be considerably less traffic movements to and from the site.

Appearance.

As seen from the road the building will be significantly improved. New window openings will be required as indicated on the attached plan. The proposed new windows will be high specification Oak designed to fit the historic nature of the building (see attached). A new slate roof matching the materials of the existing dilapidated roof will be fitted and the the front of the buildings will be landscaped and significantly more pleasing on the eye.

The rear garden of the barn is currently covered by a semi permanent structure of scaffolding and corrugated iron. This will be removed and landscaping will be undertaken.

Landscaping.

There are three trees on the site which remain unaffected by this proposal. These are noted on block plan submitted with the application. Further planting will be carried out in due course to take account of the sub-division of the garden and to enhance the appearance of the site. The applicant would be happy to accept a planning condition requiring a landscape scheme to be submitted.

Access

There will be no change to the existing arrangements.

It is important to note that the proposed change of use to residential involves a substantial de-intensification in terms of potential traffic movements as not only will there now not be a steady flow of customers but neither will be the noise associated with regular lorry arrivals and departures. This reduction in future traffic movements to and from the site is appositive step in terms of highway safety. This is an important material consideration in favour of the application proposal.

Appraisal of context

The site lies in the Ferring conservation area. It is considered that the proposal achieves a sensitive sub-division of the listed building. The works to achieve this are small and would be no harm to the listed status of the building or to the present character or visual amenities of the area. Very importantly the building will be preserved and greatly enhanced in appearance.

As such, it is considered that the proposal accords with local and strategic planning policy considerations and to government guidance Note 15-Planning and Historic Environment (PPG-15).

In respect of the change of use of the carpet showroom, it is noteworthy that PPG 15 states that new uses may often be the key to buildings preservation. Controls over land use and other planning matters should be exercised sympathetically where this would enable a historic building or area to be given a new lease of life. This guidance continues that patterns of economic activity inevitably change over time and it would be unrealistic to seek to prevent such change of use by planning controls.

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