Beach Crescent

Design and Access Statement & Planning Supporting Statement

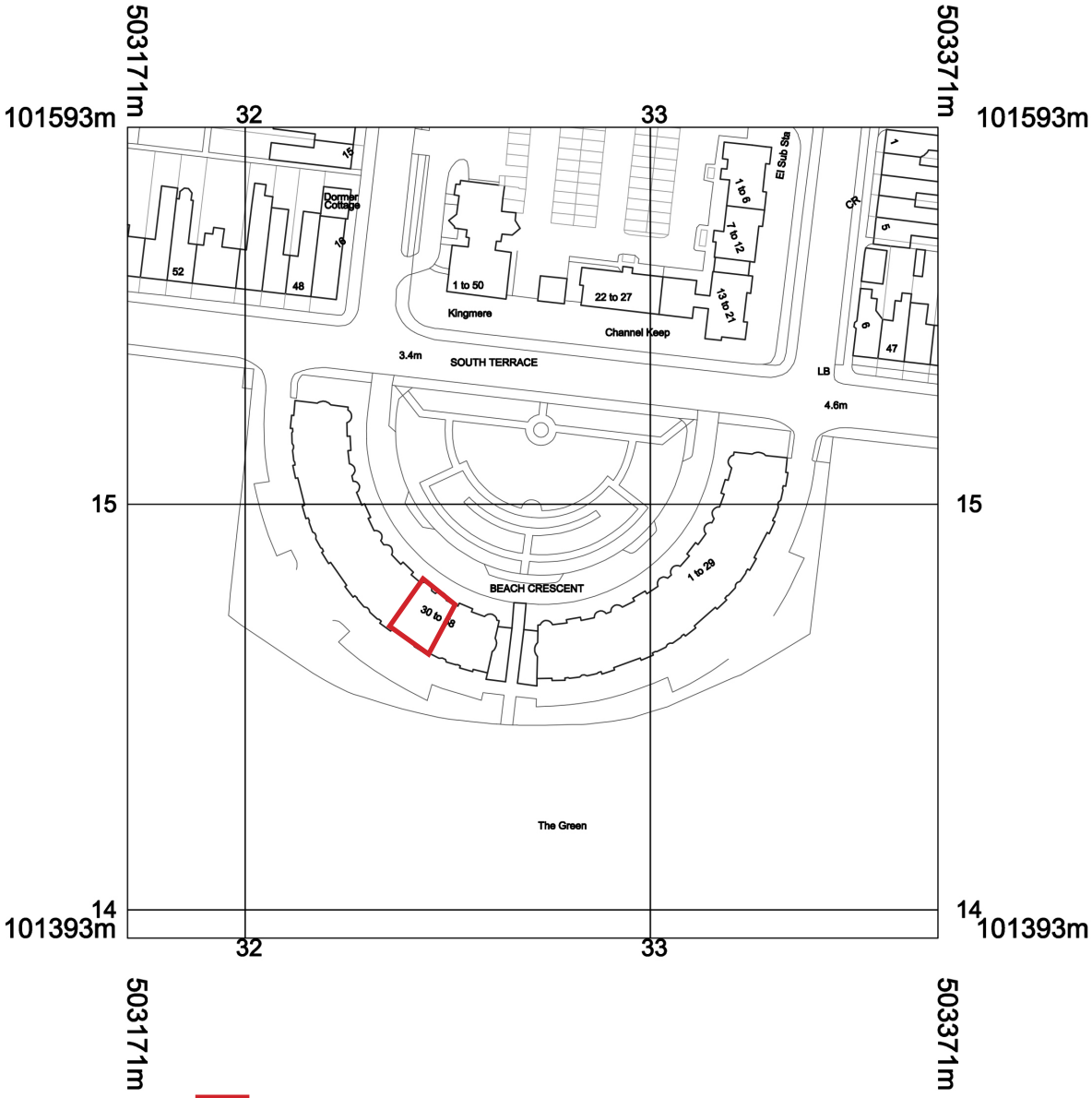
Site Address: 43/37 Beach Crescent, Littlehampton, BN17 5NT
Scheme: Alteration to glazing

AR DESIGN STUDIO

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement references a proposal to replace and enlarge elements of glazing to the rear of 43/37 Beach Crescent. The property comprises two flats on the top third floor which have received planning permission approved to be combined into one.

This document has been prepared by AR Design Studio on behalf of the client for a planning application.



Location of Flat No 37 and No 43

Site Analysis

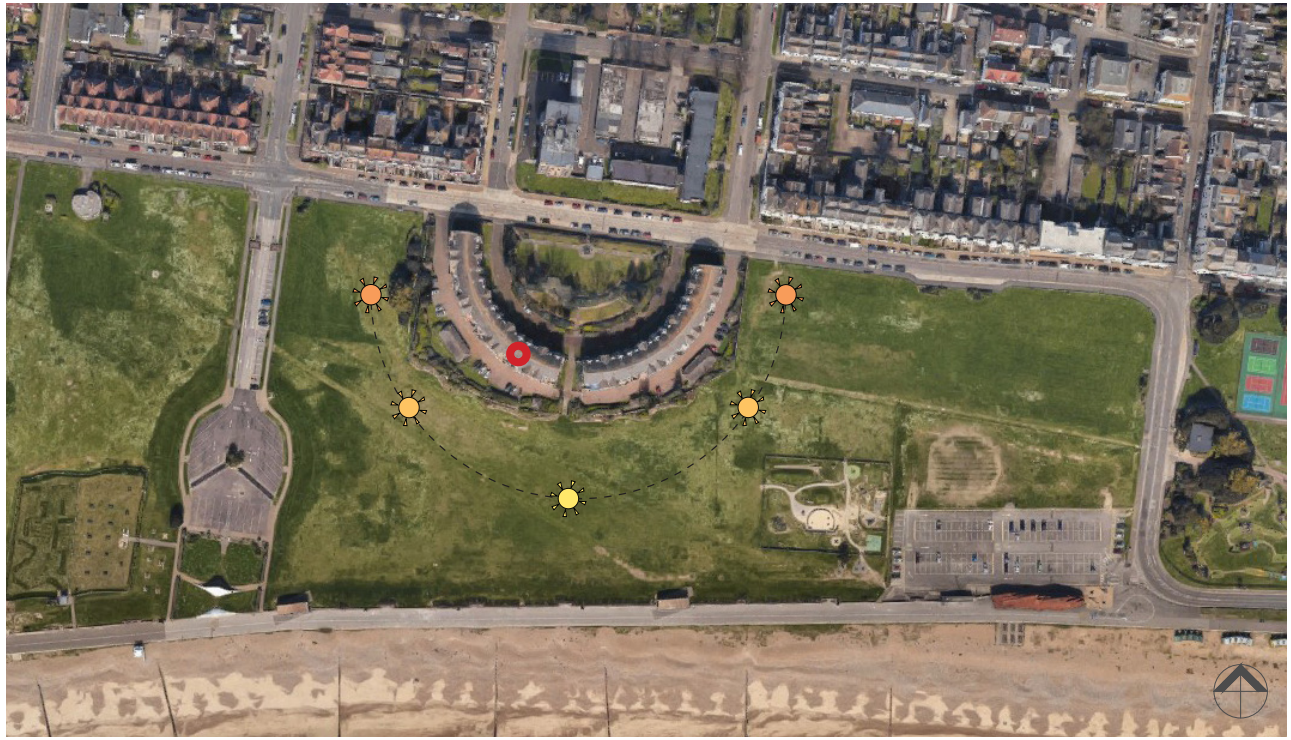
Context

Beach Crescent consists of two separate buildings, which were built by Roffey Homes in 1997/8 on the site of the former Beach Hotel. The buildings sit in a crescent shape on the Littlehampton sea front overlooking the coast. The external appearance of the buildings is London Stock Yellow brick, with a pitched roof unifying the top floor flats. The façade of the top floor flats consists of three elements, two that directly front the building and a mansard set back 2.48 m and 1.5 m from the balcony edge.

The two fronting elements consists of a set of French doors with two adjacent side vertical sash windows. These are the primary ventilation of the flats from the south west. A recessed mansard between the two protruding elements includes two inset additional separate sets of French double doors. These French doors open outwards to the balconies. It is these doors which are the subject of this application.

Opportunities & Constraints

- South-west facing property, advantageous for solar gain and ventilation from the south-west prevailing wind
- The strongest effect of the prevailing winds are felt from this aspect and height
- Views over the beach and sea
- No public access road to the rear
- The site is not within the South Downs National Park
- The building is not listed
- No further designations



Location plan showing approximate location of 43 & 37 Beach Crescent pinpointed in red

Views overlooking the East Beach from 43 Beach Crescent

External view of the Beach Crescent building from East Beach Green

Planning History

Full Application LU/341/19/PL

Approved March 2020

Planning permission was approved to combine the two flats and to remove the dividing wall between the two balconies. The application originally included a proposal to alter the glazing to the maximum possible extent. To receive approval and to facilitate commencement of works this aspect was withdrawn and consent was received under LU/341/19/PL in March 2020.

Pre-Application PAA/155/18/

Revised feedback issued Feb 2019

Prior to this, a pre-application was submitted, PAA/155/18/ describing the full extent of the works proposed, including the increased area of glazing. The following extracts have been taken from feedback issued on the 15th of February 2019;

"The mansard roof above sliding doors would need to incorporate the rhythm of the existing individual mansards by the use of features, in the roof and white vertical features which are set by the doors below. The demarcation of the individual mansards roofs would need to be reflected in the overall design of the new mansard roof. "

'*consideration would be made that the incorporation of large south facing sliding doors would improve the quality of the apartment from the point of view of the inhabitants and in terms of increasing the solar gain to the apartments.'*

Current Proposal

In granting permission in March 2020, the Local Planning Authority referenced the need to accord:

"..with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework"

This application develops this requirement. The applicants wish to ensure that in carrying out works to combine the flats they comply with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Climate Change Act 2008, the Energy Act 2013 and the specific climate policies in Arun's Local Plan Strategic Objectives. Specifically, the project should reduce the use of energy, use energy more efficiently, ensure a move to energy from renewable/passive sources (including sunlight), reduce carbon emissions and demonstrate the ability to cope with rising temperatures for the projected climate change scenario.

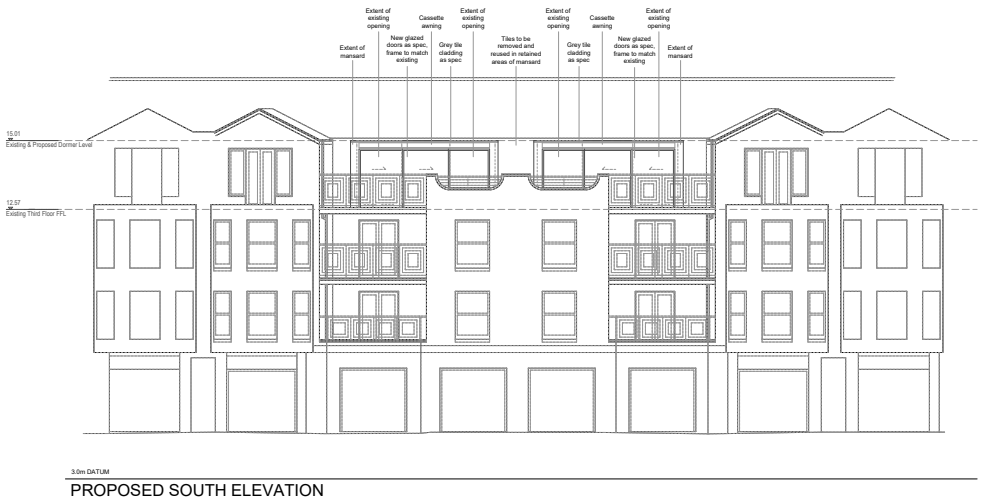
Methods to achieve compliance, such as solar panels and air source heat pumps have been rejected as too visually intrusive. This leaves maximising the benefit of the south west coastal aspect and the use of passive solar gain with natural ventilation as the compromised and viable solutions to achieve compliance.

As such, the application seeks consent to enlarge the area of glazing encompassed in the four sets of French Doors set back from the balconies. The enlarged fenestration will increase passive solar gain thereby using natural energy more efficiently whilst reducing both the carbon footprint and the reliance upon fossil fuels.

Awnings within concealed cassettes will allow the passive heating to be controlled and to accommodate the ability to cope with rising temperatures in the projected climate change scenario.

The existing French Doors open directly into the strong prevailing wind and cannot be latched open. The difficulty of opening the doors and their inability to provide adequate ventilation are hazards for older and less physically able people. The existing vertical sash windows in the sitting rooms are insufficient to provide ventilation across the flat. Their position is also insufficient to deal with kitchen odours.

Replacing the French Doors on the balcony with sliding doors will permit safe opening, closing and ventilation. Their installation will ensure the use and control of natural ventilation in all weather conditions and the proper moderation of the temperature across the flat. They will satisfy Arun's Planning Policies which require housing to meet the needs of older and less physically able people.



Proposed South Elevation as part of the current application

Design

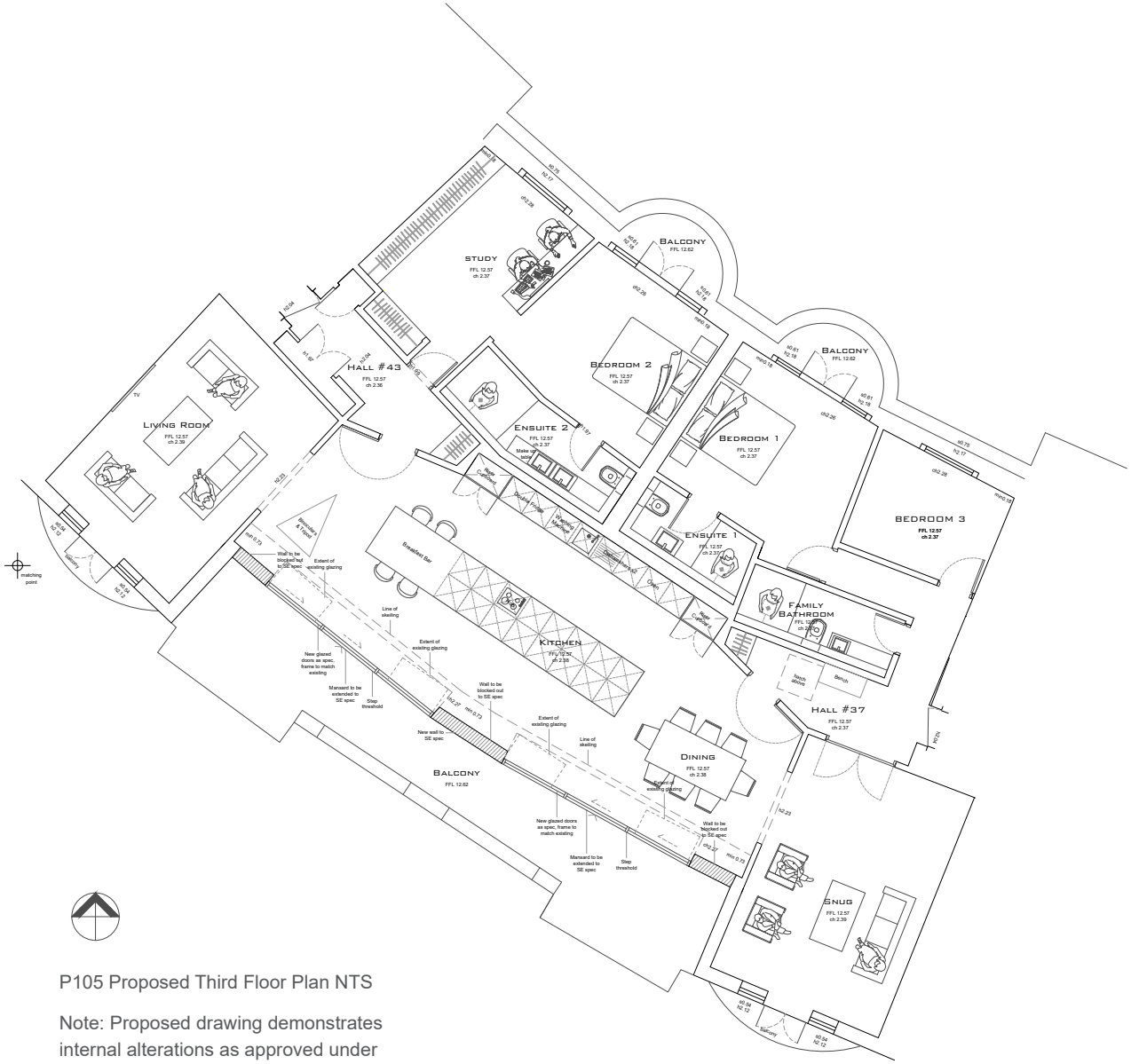
We are proposing to alter only the extent of glazing on the south-west facade set back from the balconies at the rear of the property. The considerations and benefits are evaluated below:

Compliance with Sustainability

The modest enlargement of the existing fenestration is an innovative yet appropriate design response as required by the NPPF, the Local Plan and SPD Policy Objectives and Guidance for innovation and energy efficiency by proposing to use the south west aspect and to increase the area of the existing glazing to maximise the capture and use of passive solar gain. The heat gained will be controlled safely by sliding the doors which will permit cross ventilation. The additional use of retractable awnings will control the solar gain during the predicted hotter summer months. The design also ensures the reduced use of gas and electricity for heating and cooling, therefore conserving natural resources and increasing energy efficiency leading to a reduced future carbon footprint.

The south-west facade of the Crescent faces directly into the prevailing wind. This is frequently persistent and strong, as evidenced by the building of the Rampion Wind Farm.

The existing French Doors open outwards, only to 90 degrees and directly into the wind pressure. They cannot be latched open. The wind helps with natural ventilation and climate control, but this does need to be used safely and with the needs of an aging population



P105 Proposed Third Floor Plan NTS

Note: Proposed drawing demonstrates internal alterations as approved under LU/341/19/PL

in mind as required by the Local Plan. Reversing the door hinging would result in their intruding into and compromising the interior space, permitting the ingress of weather and again offering no latching or means to safely control ventilation. The doors would still have to be closed into the prevailing wind which would again compromise safety.

The scheme therefore proposes that the existing hinged doors are replaced with sliding doors which may be used safely and easily to control ventilation and egress.

The proposal satisfies the requirements for sustainability in line with the Local Plan, also considering its further requirements to make efficient use of land while remaining sympathetic to the existing structure and reflecting the characteristics of the site and that of the local area.

Aesthetics

The scheme proposes to maximise the glazed area within the constraints of the geometry of the existing building.

The advice from the pre-app and subsequent discussions with the planning officer have been incorporated into the design in that the proposal acknowledges the character of the building and ensures that the mansard roof above the sliding doors is respected and retains the rhythm of the existing mansards.

The finished glazing bars will be white to match the colour of the existing glazing units. The use of white vertical features matches those in the rest of the Crescent.

The extent of the proposed glazing line follows those of the floors below, retaining uniformity to remain sympathetic to the building's existing geometry. The mansard surrounds the glazed area, clad in tile to match existing.

Flats seen from the Green with extent of proposed glazing demonstrated

Extent of flats seen from service road demonstrating the existing French doors set back from the balcony edge and as such cannot be seen from the rear service road

Impact

The impact of the proposal has been observed from multiple aspects:

Within the block:

The proposed changes do not intrude on the privacy of any other dwellings and will not visually impact any occupier in the Crescent.

Within close proximity:

The scheme does not propose any changes to the front (north) elevation nor to the French Doors in the sitting rooms which form part of the rear façade.

Neither the existing French doors which are to be replaced nor the proposed new sliding doors on the balcony can be seen upon approach to the Crescent, from the front of the building in the Beach Crescent access road or from the public South Terrace road. As such the changes will not be visible from the grounds of Beach Crescent.

Wider context:

The proposed changes will be made to the rear of the building which has no street vision or uniformity of street scene. Due to the curvature of the building, the Crescent and all the top floor flats cannot be seen holistically. As such, no rhythm is perceived and the overall rhythm of the building is not disrupted.

From the promenade, any view is interspersed with gaps between the mature trees and Tamarisk bushes.

In addition, as expected of a seaside location the enjoyment is in the beach and sea views. This is reflected in the cafés and furniture on the green and along the promenade and as such users are directed away from Beach Crescent.

Beach Crescent block seen from South Terrace (West)
No perception of symmetry due to the curvature and the dissimilarity of the end unit and its adjoining neighbour.

Beach Crescent block seen from the Green (East)
There is no symmetry as the end top flat on the far right differs in design from its adjoining neighbour as a single unit.

Beach Crescent block seen from the promenade
Gaps in between the Tamarisk bushes which permit views in Spring after they have been cut back hard but in summer follow regrowth the view is obscured.

Due to this impact analysed, design aesthetics should be considered subservient to the prime sustainable policies of both National and Local Government for the development to respond pro-actively to its environment.

Access

- Existing access will be retained
- There are no proposed changes to parking

Materiality

- The flat block is constructed of London Stock yellow brick. The glazed mansard openings comprise of white frames and grey cladding.
- The proposed glazed extension will also use white frames and grey cladding in line with existing.
- Two retractable awnings are proposed externally above the sliding doors for solar shading.

Compliance with Planning Policy

- The proposed changes to the glazing are minimal and meet the Strategic Policy Objectives and specific policies of the Arun District Local Plan 2011 – 2031 and of the SPD with specific reference to the following points:

D DM1 Points 1. Character: Within the limited opportunities available, the scheme proposes to make the best use of the available frontage to enhance the internal space in a continuous character of the existing

D DM1 Point 3. Impact: The scheme does not look to impose a loss of sunlight to other residents or compromise their privacy and outlook.

D DM1 Point 8. Solar Gain: Increasing the glazed area to maximise natural light, passive solar gain and passive ventilation

- The section of mansard between the new glazing is preserved to continue the existing rhythm and sits subservient to the existing roof as per **Policy DM4**. The proposed changes remain within the extents of the existing French doors and roof line.
- From a distance, the existing French doors present vertical white glazing frames. The proposed replacement sliding doors will similarly present vertical white glazing frames in line with formal façade arrangements as outlined in the council's new **SPD, section J.04**.

This scheme provides the opportunity for the existing building to meet the council's future environmental objectives.

Precedent

In formulating our design, the precedent set in 2014 by the approved application for the second floor flat, number 27, in Beach Crescent (LU/21/14/) was considered. This application proposed external alterations to the Beach Crescent building. Permission was given to enclose the balcony entirely by re-locating the balcony French doors to the front of the balcony.

The case officer stated, *"the two additional glass door panels will be recessed back due to the design of the existing balcony and with the second floor rear location of the apartment they will not be especially prominent and as such will not cause significant visual harm".*

The proposal subject of this application is consistently compliant with relevant Development Plan policies in that it would have no materially adverse effect on the visual amenities of the locality or the residential amenities of the adjoining properties, nor would it have an adverse impact upon the established character of the surrounding area."

The approval of this application was based on Policy Gen7 'The Form of the New Development', part of the Local Plan dated 2003. This local plan has been superseded and Gen7 is now reflected in policy D DM1 "Aspects of form and design quality" of the Local Plan 2011-2031. The scheme at No 27 can therefore be seen as precedent for acceptable external alterations to the building under policy D DM1.

Flat 27 is a second floor flat. Consequently, the changes to flat 27 would be visible from the rear service road at Beach Crescent.

Flats within the Beach Crescent block seen from the Green (South west)

Flats within the Beach Crescent block seen from the Green (South)

The changes to flats 37 and 43 will not be visible from the service road. The balconies for the first and second floors are symmetrical and do have an immediate and obvious rhythm with their adjoining blocks. In comparison to the proposed scheme, the approved proposal at flat 27 is a more immediate interruption to rhythm and symmetry than to dissimilar flats on the top floor and where the alterations are set back and far less prominent.

This application is proposing alterations on the same facade as flat 27, and is also further recessed from the main elevation than that approved at flat 27. The changes proposed in this application are therefore less visually apparent than the changes which were approved for flat 27.

Planning Policy

Throughout the pre-application consultation and subsequent planning application, the policies contained within the Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 have been integral in informing the design:

Arun District Local Plan 2011/2031

SDSP2 Built-up Area Boundary
SDSP1 Sustainable Development
HDM1 Housing mix
DSP1 Design
DDM1 Aspects of form and design quality
DDM2 Internal space standards
DDM4 Extensions and alterations to existing builds (res and non-res)

Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan 2014

Policy 1: The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy 2: A Spatial Plan for the Town

Planning Policy Guidance

NPPG & NPPF

Additionally, the Arun District Design Guide Supplemental Planning Document (SPD) was released for public consultation on 20 December 2019. Although the consultation recently ended, the SPD will soon be considered relevant and in the spirit of forward thinking, this application and the objections to it should considered against this on the premise that it will be adopted.

Sustainability

Arun's Local Plan Strategic Objectives thoroughly describe their policies for sustainable development, including a reduction in energy use and/or improved energy efficiency, ideally through innovation and to take account of and use solar gain, shade, cooling and ventilation.

Specifically:

- **Policy SD SP1:** "…the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the **presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework**."
- **Point 13.5.7**: "The Council will support proposals which contribute to both mitigating and adapting to climate change and to meeting the national targets to reduce carbon emissions."
- **Point 13.2.13**: "Innovation is an important design element as it raises the standard of a development scheme by enhancing its performance, quality and aesthetics, resulting in its desirability, longevity and status. Innovation does not have to be limited to one-off developments or modern districts of cities, by utilising sensitive and intelligent design new and old can co-exist without disguising one as the other"
- **Policy ECC SP1 (c)**: "The development must be designed to take account of the following issues: c. Shade, cooling, ventilation, solar gain"
- **SPD K.01:** "All new development including conversions, extensions and changes of use must be designed to reduce energy demand and carbon emissions in line with national and local standards including the Arun Local Plan."
- **SPD M.01 page 116:** "Proposals should seek to minimise energy consumption and improve the environmental performance of the building through integrated materials, insulation, air tightness, avoidance of cold bridges, and opportunities to upgrade heating, lighting and ventilation systems."

Passive Heating

The design responds to the **Local Plan and SPD Policies, Objectives and Guidance for innovation and energy efficiency** by proposing to increase the existing glazing to maximise the capture and utilisation of passive solar gain through the proposed sliding doors. The additional use of retractable awnings will control the solar gain during the predicted hotter summer months, meeting the requirements of **K.06** on page 109 of the SPD: "Providing building users with flexibility and choice, including some control over heating and cooling is critical."

Within close proximity to the site is a new sports complex, the Littlehampton Wave with the same orientation and aspect as our site. This building uses its glazing as a tool to maximise the sea view and passive solar gain. The same approach is proposed for this scheme to optimise the opportunities of the space, site and its location.

Passive Ventilation

37 and 43 Beach Crescent are situated on the top floor of the building facing the prevailing wind direction. Therefore they are subject to both high levels and velocities of wind. Ventilation to the property is a key source of passive temperature regulation. Only two existing windows in each sitting room can safely permit ventilation through latched glazing. The hinged French doors cannot be latched and therefore pose a risk to elderly residents. This extent of ventilation is not considered sufficient for the requirements of the space.

As such the proposed sliding doors will be used to safely permit cross ventilation in the strong prevailing winds, providing our clients greater control of the natural temperature throughout the flat in accordance with **K.01** page 102 of the SPD. The proposed sliding doors also meet the objective of **Policy H DM1** that the dwelling must meet the needs of older people.

Energy Consumption

This design response ensures a reduced use of gas and electricity for heating and cooling, conservation of natural resources and reduced future energy consumption.

The modest enlargement of the existing fenestration should be considered to be an appropriate innovation and response to the Policy aim to conserve natural resources. This follows the intention of the Policy objectives in **13.1** and specifically paragraph 13.1.4 which states, inter alia that the **Local Plan Policy should promote: "appropriate innovation and new technologies**"

There is also the opportunity to install glazing panels with an improved thermal efficiency and possibly triple glazing, both of which will help to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.

A south-west aspect and occupation of the top floor does offer the opportunity to use solar panels. Installing these would create an obvious tension between meeting the Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan and SPD of improving energy efficiency and any intrusion on the roof. The recent storms and gales also lead us to question the safety of such rooftop panels, particularly as our as roof slates are regularly lost during the winter gales. The use of solar panels has therefore been discounted to meet the objectives of the Local Plan and the SPD.

Summary

Permission has previously been granted to combine the two flats and for external alterations to other units. The proposed design continues to meet the National and Local Policies and Objectives through both sustainability and design. The scheme will be energy efficient and reduce the future carbon footprint, implementing the required policy of innovation to utilise passive solar gain and natural ventilation to achieve these aims. The proposal also offers a considered sympathetic approach both to the existing site conditions and the clients' brief. The design solution follows planning precedent in the Crescent and acknowledges planning policy and as such a consistent outlook should be taken.

This application will ensure that the site is developed in a sustainable manner and in a way which minimises its impact on the environment for future benefit.