

ADDENDUM TO WORTHING PLANNING COMMITTEE AGENDA

MEETING DATE - 1st April 2015

The following agenda item has updates to the original Committee report.

Application Number: AWDM/1805/14

Site: Land South Of 6 Grand Avenue West Parade Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings at 25-26 West Parade and 4 Grand Avenue and residential redevelopment in the form of a block of 35 flats (including 7 affordable homes), arranged as 3 storeys tall and rising to 6 storeys in the northern part of the site; 7 storeys in the east and 11 storeys tall in the south west corner of the site, together with associated 34 car parking spaces (including 26 in basement), new accesses and landscaping.

The updates comprise the following;

1. Revisions and supplementary information
2. Representations
3. Policy referencing

1.Revisions and supplementary information

Revisions to the application were received on 24th March 2015. The applicant's covering letter states;

I am writing to you with regard to some amendments we have made to the scheme, which we feel have enhanced both the architecture of the proposal and reduced impact on amenity.

The principle amendments to the scheme are as follows;

-Reduction of units from 36 to 35

-Loss of 3^d floor of affordable block (1 x 2 bed unit) and amendments to plans/elevations to reflect this; The changes have significantly improved the stepping up in height of the development viewed down Grand Avenue, introducing also further articulation to the northern elevation of the building. (Rendered images of this view will be available for Committee on 1 April)

-Revisions to the set-back unit at 5th floor level to introduce more glazing and lighten visual appearance, particularly when viewed down Grand Avenue.

-Revisions to the northern elevations of the scheme to introduce more visual interest through further fenestration and detailing.

-Revisions to the rear of the development to reduce the visual impact of development, including the introduction of glazing to the rear stair core of the affordable block and further fenestration/detailing to the north facing elevations of the development.

-Revised Affordable housing offer due to loss of 2 bedroom unit. This will be offset through additional financial contributions to revise the overall affordable housing offer as follows;

Affordable Housing		
	Unit Type	Financial Contribution (£)
On-Site Affordable Housing Provision	4no. One Bedroom Flats	£0
	3no. Two Bedroom Flats	£0
Sub-Total	7no. Affordable Housing Units	£0
Off-Site Affordable Housing Provision	1.75no. One Bedroom Flats (£58,650)	£102,637.50
	1.75no. Two Bedroom Flats (£75,900)	£132,825
Sub-Total	3.5no. Affordable Housing Units	£235,462.50
Total Affordable Housing Provision	10.5no. Affordable Housing Units	£236,462.50

Figure 14 - Affordable Housing Contribution (amended March 2015)

Due to the loss of the unit the overall scheme now provides for a total of 10.5 units or equivalence to meet the Councils 30% affordable housing requirement. Therefore, whilst the on-site provision has reduced, the off-site contribution has increased by **£47,092.50**.

I trust that these amended plans will be considered in the formal determination of the application.

For your information also a wind study will also be issued prior to Committee on 1 April.

The revisions have been published on the web and the description of the development amended accordingly, as set out above.

Assessment

The revisions were not invited by officers and have arrived so late in the process that there is insufficient time to reconsult interested parties on the revisions.

There is no legal duty on the Council to accept the revisions but officers consider that acceptance of the revisions is the most appropriate course of action. Principally, this is because, although, the changes materially improve the scheme in terms of design and neighbour amenity impact, the changes are not so significant that they would make the proposal acceptable in planning terms. The recommendation of refusal on design and neighbour amenity impact, therefore, remains fundamentally unchanged. Even were the revisions not accepted, it is likely that they would be entertained by an Inspector should the application be refused as recommended, and, subsequently appealed.

However, should the Committee be minded to approve the application with the revisions, it would be appropriate to defer any such determination until formal reconsultation had occurred and the proposal reconsidered in the light of the outcome.

Turning to the re-assessment of the scheme with the revisions, the removal of the top floor from the four storey *link* block does reduce the height of this element of the scheme.

The changes to the fenestration also improve the appearance of the north elevation.

However, the proximity of the 5 and 6 storey *shoulder* and 11 storey *tower* elements to No 6 Grand Avenue remain unchanged and the rear projection (stairwell) to the *link*, also remains, albeit now 3 storeys rather than 4 storeys.

The amenity impacts are, certainly, lessened, but, overall, the effects on outlook of No 6 Grand Avenue, combined with the effects on the other neighbours to the north of the site, continue to be unacceptable.

As no remodelling of the effects of the revisions on overshadowing has been undertaken by the applicants, it is not possible to definitively say that harm to the rear gardens of No 6 is unchanged. Nonetheless, this remains a legitimate issue of concern and failure to demonstrate no unacceptable harm to this neighbour compounds the above concerns on outlook/design.

In townscape terms, the changes do improve the relationship between the proposal and the low rise suburban house to the north. Whether the overall composition is improved materially is questionable, however, as the height reduction also serves to

emphasise the differentiation between the tall *tower* and the *link*, and, arguably, the tower's assertiveness.

Whatever, their merit, the other architectural revisions are cosmetic and inconsequential given the fundamental objections to the scheme in terms of height and massing.

The reduction from 36 to 35 dwellings does not materially affect the acceptability of the principle of residential development but the deletion of one affordable rented flat is regrettable in dwelling mix terms/social inclusion terms and The Social Housing Officer, again, raises concerns. The commensurate increased offer of a financial contribution towards off site provision does help mitigate this.

The parking and traffic pressure from the development would be marginally reduced.

The decision to commission the required wind study is welcomed and the report is awaited. Members will be updated.

No other impacts would be materially changed.

There is a typographical error on page 62 of the substantive report and the penultimate paragraph should refer to *No 6 (Grand Avenue) enjoys excellent seaward views.*

2. Representations

A further 22 representations have been received, all objecting to the proposal but raise no new material issues. In total, the number of objections stands at 810.

The Worthing Society has complained that only an edited version of their 2 page covering letter was incorporated in the Committee report and their 6 page fuller statement was omitted.

It is not the general practice to reproduce in full all representations received and it is considered that the edited version captures the essence of the Society's views and the more detailed issues raised therein are largely covered elsewhere. All received representations are, of course, published on the web site, in any event. However, for convenience, the full representation is reproduced in the appendix.

3. Policy referencing

Saved Local Plan Policy CT3 is referred to in the report but, by omission, is not referenced in the second reason for refusal. This policy reads;

Development will be permitted provided that it:

(i) respects and, where possible, enhances the appearance and character of the seafront environment;

(ii) has regard to existing sea views;

(iii) is appropriate to its location in terms of density, scale, height, massing, appearance, orientation, layout and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views to the sea.

It is proposed to correct this in the revised recommendation below.

Conclusions

The revisions to the scheme do not fundamentally alter the substance of the proposal and the scheme remains unacceptable in design and neighbour amenity terms.

Changes to Recommendation

That the application be **refused** for the following reasons;

1. The proposal would by reason of the siting, height, massing and design of the building harm the outlook of the occupiers of 6 Grand Avenue and residents to the north of the site. The proposal has also failed to demonstrate that unacceptable overshadowing of the back garden of 6 Grand Avenue would not result. This would be to the detriment of these neighbours' living conditions and contrary to Saved Local Plan H18 and the National Planning Policy Framework and Practice Guidance.
2. The proposal would by reason of the siting, height, massing and design of the building appear unduly assertive and bulky and out of character with the surrounding development and fails to achieve the high standard of design expected of a tall building. This is to the detriment of the appearance and character of the area and is contrary to Core Strategy Policy 16; Saved Local Plan Policy CT3; Tall Buildings SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework and Practice Guidance.

Worthing Borough Council, Director for Economy

31st March 2015

Appendix 1 : Worthing Society Representation in full .

The buildings of this proposed development would vary between three and eleven storeys in height, and all the buildings would be of a rectangular, boxy form. Their height, bulk, shape and materials would create an appearance that would not relate sympathetically to the existing buildings in the immediate vicinity. Indeed, their appearance would seem incongruous, because there would be no element of their appearance that would coincide with that of the existing buildings in the vicinity. The contrast in appearance is greatest with Dolphin Lodge, directly opposite the site, which is on the Local List of Buildings of Interest; and with the houses in Grand Avenue to the north of the site. The two storey houses in Grand Avenue would also be dominated by the new building. At 11 storeys it would be higher than the eight storey Dolphin Lodge and the nine storey Marine Point, opposite the site. This difference in height would create an unbalanced appearance for the southern end of Grand Avenue, rather than creating architectural interest. The impact of the development would be increased because the buildings extend in front of the building line on both the West Parade and Grand Avenue frontages.

The proposal fails to respond positively to the important aspects of local character; is not appropriate to its location; and does not respond positively to its context. There is no good reason to make the new development higher than Marine Point. The proposal therefore conflicts with the provisions of the Core Strategy, the Guide for Residential Development SPD and the Tall Building Guidance SPD. Its detrimental effect on the setting of Dolphin Lodge conflicts with the policies towards heritage assets in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conformity to relevant policies

Core Strategy

Strategic Objective 6 emphasises that new development should respect the character and local distinctiveness of the borough.

Policy 16 states that new development should show good architectural design and use of materials that take account of local characteristics and respond positively to the important aspects of local character. Designs and materials should take account of local physical, historic and environmental characteristics.

Saved Policy CT3 states that development on the seafront should be appropriate for its location in terms of density, scale, height, massing, appearance, orientation, layout and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views to the sea.

Worthing's policy on buildings of local interest has long been that development which would be detrimental to interesting features, character, appearance or setting of a local interest building should not be permitted.

Comment: The appearance of the proposed development would conflict with that of the adjoining buildings, because the new buildings would be sharply rectangular in form and largely faced with brick, while the adjoining buildings are more rounded in form and largely faced with rendering and would dominate the adjoining buildings in Grand Avenue because of their height and bulk. The contrast would be especially strong with Dolphin Lodge, with its rendered facade and Dutch gabled roofline. The height and position of the proposed building, which extends south of the present building line, would overshadow and obstruct views of Dolphin Lodge from the seafront. The development would therefore be detrimental to the setting of this Local Interest building. The development would not therefore respect local character, take account of local characteristics, protect the setting of a Local Interest building or be appropriate to their location in terms of height, massing, density and appearance.

Guide for Residential Development SPD

This guidance also emphasises that new developments should take account of local physical, historical and environmental characteristics. It should display a good quality of architectural composition and detailing and respond positively to the important aspects of local character. Developments should be designed to respond positively to their context and should relate well to their surroundings.

All new development should accord with car parking and cycling standards. New development needs to accord with the guidance on parking provision published by West Sussex County Council in September 2010.

Comment: The proposed development does not represent good architectural composition and detailing. It would create a bulky and boxy building that would not improve the low quality of the existing buildings on the seafront. It would not relate well to the more interesting buildings nearby in Grand Avenue, notably Dolphin Court.

The amount of parking space provided on the development does not conform to the WSCC guidance. This guidance produces a need for 46 parking spaces, but Roffey proposes to provide only 34 spaces. It considers that any excess demand over this provision can be met by on-street parking. The supply of only 34 spaces would be a direct breach of Worthing's planning policies and should not be accepted.

Tall Building Guidance SPD

Several elements of this guidance are relevant to this proposal. It emphasises that:

The impact of tall buildings on the skyline and on heritage assets is particularly relevant to Worthing.

There is an over-arching need to take account of environmental, physical and historical characteristics

The design of tall buildings needs to fully consider the potential impact on each historical asset adjoining, or in close proximity to, the proposal site.

Tall buildings should be appropriate to the existing built environment and not appear bulky, dominant or overpowering.

Tall buildings should create a high degree of interest at ground level and integrate visually with the streetscape.

Tall buildings are more likely to be considered appropriate in or near Worthing town centre, because they are more likely to contribute to regeneration in such places.

Comment

The proposal fails to meet any of these guidelines. It is inappropriate in its design, materials and scale for a building close to the heritage asset, Dolphin Lodge; its design does not take account of the historical characteristics of the area; it would appear bulky, dominant and overpowering, especially in relation to the houses to its north; and it does not create a high degree of interest at ground level. It is a purely residential development, which creates no activity at street level and would make no contribution to regeneration objectives.

National Planning Policy Framework

One of the Core Planning Principles is that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate for their significance.

Paragraphs 128-136 emphasise that in determining planning applications, planning authorities should consider the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets; and should take account of the effect of the application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset.

Comment

The applicant has commented on the effect of the development on local heritage assets, including Dolphin Lodge. This report claims that the setting of Dolphin Lodge would be improved by the proposed development. We disagree. The new development would be seven to nine storeys higher than the existing buildings opposite Dolphin Lodge and in an aggressively contrasting style and materials. The effect would be to cut off views of Dolphin Lodge and create a building that contrasted sharply with the style and materials of that building. The effect could only detract from the effect that Dolphin Lodge now has on the local streetscape.

Conclusion

This proposal is incompatible with the relevant planning policies of Worthing Borough Council and of the National Planning Policy Framework. Planning permission should therefore be refused. The applicant could redesign the scheme to create a building

that relates sympathetically to the adjoining heritage assets and other adjoining buildings. The height should be reduced from 11 storeys to 9 storeys, to match the height of Marine Point. The form of the building should eschew the present boxiness and could draw inspiration from the block recently built near Marine Gardens. The materials used to face the building should reflect those used in neighbouring buildings, especially Dolphin Lodge. The building should follow the present building line in West Parade and Grand Avenue.