

4.3 - SE/11/03288/FUL Date expired 13 February 2012

PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing shop and flat over (18 & 19 The Row) and construction of 4no new residential units with 3 parking spaces.

LOCATION: 18 - 19 The Row, Main Road, Edenbridge TN8 6HU

WARD(S): Edenbridge North & East

ITEM FOR DECISION

This application has been referred to Development Control Committee by Councillor Mrs Davison and Councillor Scholey on the grounds of loss of a retail unit and inadequate parking provision for the development.

RECOMMENDATION:

A) That subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement within 28 days from the date of this Committee, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

In pursuance of section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) No development shall be carried out on the land until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall be carried out using the approved materials.

To ensure that the appearance of the development is in harmony with the existing character of the adjacent terrace and surrounding area as supported by Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

3) The development shall achieve a Code for Sustainable homes minimum rating of level 3, and shall include at least a 10% reduction in the total carbon emissions through the on-site installation and implementation of decentralised, renewable or low-carbon energy sources. Evidence shall be provided to the Local Authority:

i) Prior to the commencement of development, of how it is intended the development will achieve a Code for Sustainable Homes Design Certificate minimum level 3, including a 10% reduction in total carbon emissions, or alternative as agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and

ii) Prior to the occupation of the development, that the development has achieved a Code for Sustainable Homes post construction certificate minimum level 3 and has achieved a 10% reduction in total carbon emissions, or alternative as agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

In the interests of environmental sustainability and reducing the risk of climate change

as supported by Policy SP2 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.

4) No development shall take place until details of revisions to the position of the proposed fence and gate to the north of parking space 2 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The revised position shall be designed to improve access to and from the gate in order to reduce the likelihood of such access being blocked by parked vehicles.

To ensure that suitable access is maintained to the rear of the site for occupants of unit 19B, and to provide suitable space for the passage of bins and bicycles, in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

5) No development shall take place until a detailed scheme for the removal of existing buildings from the listed boundary wall to the south of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include works to make good the boundary wall following any such removal.

To protect the appearance and fabric of the boundary wall, in accordance with Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.

6) Prior to first occupation of the development, the parking spaces as shown on the approved plan shall be completed and each parking bay shall be clearly marked out on site. Notwithstanding the approved plans, parking space 3 shall be increased in width to 2.7 metres. The area to the south of the dwellings, including the parking spaces, shall thereafter be maintained for access and the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles.

To ensure suitable parking provision is made, in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

7) No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall include

- planting plans, including trees and plants to be retained and details of new landscaping (including plant specifications and schedules).
- details of hard surfacing materials to be used in the development.

The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, or in accordance with a scheme of implementation agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years from the completion of the development, any of the trees or plants that form part of the approved details of soft landscaping die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased then they shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

To safeguard the visual appearance of the area as supported by Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

8) No fences, gates or other means of enclosure (other than those shown on the approved plans) shall be erected within the parking area for the development, as shown on the approved drawings.

To ensure that the land is maintained as an open area for ease of parking and the manoeuvring of vehicles, in the interests of highways safety, in accordance with Policy

EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

9) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 3167a10/01C, 02G, 03C, 04E, 06 and 07

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

10) No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded, in accordance with Policy EN25A of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan

11) No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide details of:- the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors - loading and unloading of plant and materials - storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development - wheel washing facilities

To ensure the adequate provision on a restricted site of facilities required in connection with construction of the development, in order to safeguard the amenities of the area in accordance with policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan and Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.

Or

B) That planning permission be REFUSED if the Section 106 Agreement is not completed within 28 days from the date of this Committee for the following reason:

1) The proposal would fail to make provision for an affordable housing contribution, contrary to policy SP3 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.

In determining this application, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to the following Development Plan Policies:

The South East Plan 2009 - Policies BE4, BE6

Sevenoaks District Local Plan - Policies EN1, EN25A/B

Sevenoaks District Core Strategy 2011 - Policies LO1, LO6, SP1, SP2, SP3, SP5, SP7

The following is a summary of the main reasons for the decision:

The development would be unlikely to generate additional levels of traffic or parking requirements in comparison with the lawful use of the site.

The development would not have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of nearby dwellings.

The scale, location and design of the development would respect the context of the site and safeguard the visual amenities of the locality.

Informatives

- 1) You are advised to contact the Post Office prior to demolition of the building to discuss removal of the post box.
- 2) You are advised that a S278 Agreement will be required from the Highways department at Kent County Council in relation to access works. You can contact Kent Highways on 08458 247800

Description of Proposal

- 1 This application seeks permission to demolish the existing building at 18-19 The Row, Main Road and to erect a replacement building containing 4 residential units.
- 2 The existing building is a two storey structure with single storey additions to the side and rear. It consists of a ground floor shop which has been vacant for some time and formerly operated as a local post office and store, with a flat above.
- 3 The proposal seeks to erect a two storey building fronting Main Road, containing 1 x 2 bed dwelling and 2 x 1 bed flats. A further 1 bed unit would be provided to the rear, attached to the back of the proposed dwelling. 3 x parking spaces would be provided to the side of the development.

Description of Site

- 4 The site is located within the built confines of Edenbridge within a primarily residential area. The application site is located at the end of a long terrace of dwellings fronting immediately onto the pavement next to Main Road. The properties to the south of the site, known as Fir Lodge and The Stables, are Grade II listed buildings.

Constraints

- 5 The site falls within an Area of Archaeological Potential
- 6 The site is adjacent to listed buildings.

Policies

South East Plan

- 7 Policies – BE4, BE6

Sevenoaks District Local Plan

- 8 Policies– EN1, EN25A/B

Sevenoaks Core Strategy

- 9 Policies– LO1, LO6, SP1, SP2, SP3, SP5, SP7

Planning History

- 10 None of relevance

Consultations

Edenbridge Town Council

11 Original comments -

Members object to the loss of employment in the Village area of Marlpit Hill. Additionally Members were extremely concerned that the proposal contained only two parking spaces. There are already routine issues due to a shortage of on street parking in the area that results in cars parking on the corner of The Brownings causing an obstruction and restricting the visibility splay.

Although Edenbridge does have two railway stations the bus service is limited with no evening services, it is likely that the occupiers would require a car. Members again stress the lack of parking in the proposal. The access to the development may reduce the available of on-road parking and the egress would be difficult due to the cars parked in front of the existing cottages. The shop on the other side of the road is a newsagent selling drinks and sweets and not a convenience store.

12 Further comments (22/05/12) -

Members restate their objection to the loss of employment in the Village area of Marlpit Hill. Additionally Members were extremely concerned that the proposal contained only two parking spaces. There are already routine issues due to a shortage of on street parking in the area that results in cars parking on the corner of The Brownings causing an obstruction and restricting the visibility splay. Although Edenbridge does have two railway stations the bus service is limited with no evening services, it is likely that the occupiers would require a car. Members again stress the lack of parking in the proposal. The access to the development may reduce the available of on-road parking and the egress would be difficult due to the cars parked in front of the existing cottages. The shop on the other side of the road is a newsagent selling drinks and sweets and not a convenience store.

13 Further comments (12/09/12) -

Members object as they still believe there is insufficient parking.

Conservation Officer -

- 14 The site adjoins two listed buildings at Firs Lodge and Eagle Lodge, which are both set well back from the road frontage. The redevelopment of the former post office/store as detailed would not have any adverse impact on the setting of the listed buildings. The listing includes the brick pier and wall along the boundary and the applicants should be aware that this should not be disturbed in any way and that the new cycle and bin store should be a totally free standing structure. This may mean bringing it further away from the side boundary.

Kent Highways

15 Original comments -

The proposed development does not provide adequate parking. At least four independently-accessible parking spaces would be required, as shown in Kent Design Guide Review IGN3 "Residential Parking".

There is inadequate room for additional on-road parking immediately adjacent the site, at least in the evenings and over night. Cars are already parked nose-to-tail along the front of The Row, and in Brownings right up to the road junction. Cars are also parked on Main Road south of The Row, and adding several more would reduce visibility for neighbours using the driveways here, increasing the risk of collisions.

The two off-road parking spaces proposed in the application cause highway safety concerns, as they would result in an increased number of vehicles reversing onto or off the B2026 at a point where visibility is reduced by vehicles parked in front of The Row and south of here. This visibility issue is likely to get worse with more pressure for on-road parking from the proposed development.

It is worth noting that the applicant appears to acknowledge the lack of suitable parking, as in the "Planning, Design & Access Statement" this is cited as one of the reasons the shop closed.

In conclusion, I must recommend that the application is refused planning permission on the grounds of inadequate parking and highway safety.

16 Further comments (03/07/12) -

To confirm, the main highways concerns are:-

1. the proposals provide only 2 of the 4 required off-street parking spaces;
2. the likely increase in on-street parking, combined with existing parking pressure;
3. inadequate inter-visibility with oncoming traffic for vehicles leaving the site;
4. inadequate inter-visibility with pedestrians on footway for vehicles leaving site.

Looking more closely at these issues:-

1. Off street parking. KCC's "Interim Guidance Note 3" on residential parking standards shows that a minimum of 4 spaces should be provided. The application provides two off-street parking spaces and indicates that the remaining two cars could be parked on-road in front of the property. Unfortunately, with the limited frontage, if two cars are parked in front of the property this restricts visibility and manoeuvring room for vehicles entering and leaving the site, raising highway safety concerns.

2. On-street parking. The road in front of the site is already used by other residents for parking. Signs were put up on the front of the shop saying that kerbside parking was for customers and should not be used for overnight parking due to early morning deliveries, however these had no legal basis and we do not know how the frontage was used for parking in practice. If the development goes ahead, it is likely there will be at least two additional residents' cars requiring parking spaces on-street. Moreover, KCC's Interim Guidance Note 3 advises that there is a requirement for a space for visitor parking on-street. There is little room for additional cars to be parked safely on-street close to the development site. This is clearly an amenity issue, but it could also become a highway safety issue if

cars are parked at the junction of Brownings and Main Road or close to the exits from neighbouring driveways.

3. Visibility of oncoming traffic. Drivers of vehicles leaving the off-street parking would have restricted visibility of oncoming traffic due to vehicles parked along the nearside of the road, raising highway safety concerns. The issue would particularly be a problem for drivers reversing out of the parking spaces. This may have been an issue with the existing access to the yard alongside the shop, however the proposed development is likely to result in an intensification of use.

4. Pedestrians. Drivers of vehicles leaving the off-street parking would have restricted visibility of pedestrians approaching on the footway, due to the high wall to the south of the exit, and the wall of the new apartments to the north of the exit. There would of course have been a similar issue with the existing access to the yard alongside the shop, however the proposed development is likely to result in an intensification of use.

The applicant's "Vehicle Movement Assessment" does not show how the above problems can be reduced or solved. Consequently, unless the proposals can be improved, I would still recommend refusing planning permission on the grounds of highway safety and lack of off-street parking.

However, I would recommend that the applicant is encouraged to improve the application, for example using the following changes:

1. Reduce the width of the vehicular access to the width required for one vehicle plus providing appropriate pedestrian visibility splays on either side (to be kept clear of obstruction over 0.6m height). The visibility splays should be as close as possible to 2 metres x 2 metres;
2. Amend the on-street parking to provide just one parking space at the property frontage and thereby improve the vehicular visibility splays at the access. The intention would be to achieve this by s278 works or Traffic Regulation Order funded by s106 agreement or undertaking. (The Traffic Regulation Order would require consultation and any s278 works may require a safety audit.)
3. By removing the "bin store", provide additional off-street parking spaces, or two off-street parking spaces if the scale of the development is reduced. These parking spaces should be independently accessible.

Further comments (25/09/12) -

- 17 This consultation response refers to the amended plans shown in drawing 3167a10/02 Rev G.

The proposals are for three one-bedroom flats and a two-bedroom house, with three off-road parking spaces. According to KCC parking standards this is a shortfall of one off-road parking space. At present there is a three-bedroom flat and a shop, and although there was the possibility of one off-road parking space this would be in a gated courtyard which would be inconvenient to use and it is not known if this was used very much for parking in practice. It can be argued then that the application provides three additional dwellings and three additional independently-accessible parking spaces. KCC parking standards SPG3 also specify the requirement for 0.2 on-street parking spaces per dwelling, i.e.

effectively totalling one space. In principle, this requirement would take the place of a customers' car previously parked near the shop.

Whereas the shortfall of parking is clearly unsatisfactory, given the previous use at this site it would not form a sufficiently robust reason to object to the application.

I therefore do not intend to raise any objection to the application substantially as shown in drawing 3167a10/02 Rev G, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant enters into a section 278 agreement with Kent County Council (Highways) to construct the widened vehicle crossover and to shorten by 2.5 metres the existing on-road parking bay in front of the site. Reason: Highway safety – to allow more visibility and manoeuvring room at the exit.
2. Three parking bays are to be marked on site, with dimensions 2.7 metres x 5 metres at the back of the site, and 2.5 metres x 5 metres at the front of the site; (Reason: to allow sufficient room for cars to reverse and car doors to be opened);
3. Standard condition for means to prevent mud, gravel or other material being deposited on the highway during construction.

I would also strongly recommend that the drawings are updated in respect of the gate and fence separating the car park from the back yard, to allow more room for residents to walk around the cars to the gate.

The required shortening of the parking bay is estimated to leave over 7 metres of parking bay remaining in front of the site, of which approximately 5 or 6 metres would probably be occupied by one car.

Southern Water –

18 No objection

SDC Archaeology –

19 The site is to the north of the main road that runs through Edenbridge where there have been a number of medieval finds and I believe there's potential for other items to turn up during excavation. Therefore a condition is required to secure a watching brief.

Representations

20 17 households have objected to the application on the following grounds –

- Insufficient parking
- Funding should be provided to improve parking on Main Road
- Loss of convenience / general store
- Loss of a post box
- On road parking is at saturation point

- More parking could be provided in the proposed garden area
- How will spaces be allocated between the properties?
- Lack of turning facility within parking area
- Lack of parking for construction traffic
- Impact on listed wall during construction
- Impact on character / appearance of terrace
- The shop should be retained as an amenity to the area
- The remaining shop in the area is a newsagent and does not fill the local need
- The existing shop has been allowed to run-down
- The number of units should be reduced if more car parking spaces cannot be added

Group Manager - Planning Appraisal

Principle of development

- 21 The site is located within the built confines of Edenbridge and policies LO1 and LO6 of the Core Strategy set out the suitability of the town, in principle, to accommodate new residential development. Policy SP5 of the Core Strategy states that new housing development should contribute to a mix of different housing types in residential areas and should include small units (less than 3 bedrooms) to increase the proportion of such units in the District's housing stock. This proposal would add to the mix of housing developments in the area and would provide 4 smaller units of accommodation in accordance with this policy.
- 22 The proposal would achieve a density in the region of 70 dwellings per hectare. Policy SP7 of the Core Strategy seeks for new housing developments to achieve a density target of 40 dwellings per hectare. This would make efficient use of land in density terms. However the policy also states that density figures should not compromise the distinctive character of an area, and that this consideration is overriding.
- 23 Therefore as a matter of general planning policy, I consider that the site would be suitable for residential development, subject to consideration of the following matters –

Loss of retail unit

- 24 The existing retail unit is vacant and has been for a considerable period of time. It is understood that shop was last used as an off-licence and general store. A number of objections received on the application have raised concern over the loss of the shop unit.
- 25 In policy terms the shop unit is not protected or defined as a local shopping centre under policy S3A of the local plan. Nor do any specific policies for Edenbridge that
(Item No 4.3) 9

are contained within the local plan offer protection for retention of the shop unit. Likewise, policy LO6 of the Core Strategy seeks to maintain retail uses in Edenbridge town centre that contribute to the vitality and viability of the town, although this does not apply to the application site as it is not within the town centre. Taking this policy position into account, I do not consider that the Council could require, as a matter of principle, the retention of a shop unit on the site.

- 26 Furthermore, the shop unit has been vacant since January 2010. The applicant advises that the unit was marketed for 20 months without success. Whilst no detailed information has been provided in support of this, the period of vacancy does suggest that there is a low prospect of retail interest in the unit, which adds weight to the policy position set out above.

Impact of development upon the character and appearance of the area

- 27 The area is mainly residential in character, with a mix of building styles. The site is flanked by a listed building to the south that was formerly one large dwelling and outbuilding and has been converted into three residential properties. The remaining terrace of dwellings lies immediately to the north of the site. A development of Georgian-style terraced houses is sited opposite the site.
- 28 The existing building forms part of the larger terrace of dwellings extending northwards from the site. This terrace is of late 19th / early 20th Century construction and of consistent design, following the same front building line adjacent to the pavement and a consistent roof line. There is some variation in door and window detail, and two dwellings have painted / rendered frontages. The existing building on the application site forms the end of this terrace and differs from it insofar that it includes a front gable roof feature, painted and part tiled elevations, and the shopfront with a flat above gives more of a horizontal emphasis to the property.
- 29 The proposed building would follow the same front building line as well as the existing ridge and eaves line of the terrace, and would be built to the same length as the existing building. The exposed flank wall of the building would be slightly deeper than the existing flank wall. Provided suitable external materials are used, I am satisfied that the proposed building would integrate well with the existing terrace.
- 30 The proposal would improve the appreciation of space between the site and the buildings to the south through the removal of existing single storey buildings and use of this area for open parking. This would preserve and enhance the setting of these buildings which are Grade II listed. The Conservation Officer has commented that care needs to be taken with regard to the boundary listed wall. It is noted that some of the existing structures on the application site are attached in part to the wall. However it is quite clear where these later additions have been attached to the wall, and I consider that it would be possible to remove these without harm to the listed wall – and this could be controlled via a planning condition.
- 31 Taking the above into account, I am of the opinion that the scheme has been well designed and respects the existing local character of the area, as well as the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings. In this respect, I consider that the development would accord with policies SP1 and SP7 of the Core Strategy, and policy EN1 of the Local Plan.

Impact of development upon the living conditions of neighbouring properties and future occupants

- 32 The site is surrounded by residential properties and I would assess the impact of the development on these as follows –
- 33 17 The Row – this is the closest dwelling to the proposed development, and proposed unit 18A would be attached to this property. Unit 18A is shown to be a two storey dwelling with a part single, part two storey projection to the rear. The neighbouring property at No. 17 also has a single storey rear projection next to the boundary with the application site. The proposal has been designed to step the two storey rear projection away from the boundary of No. 17, in order to maintain light and outlook to this property. The arrangement of a part single, part two storey projection to the rear of proposed unit 18A is also similar to the existing layout of buildings on the application site. Overall I do not consider that this element of the proposal would cause any undue harm to the living conditions of No. 17 when compared to the existing situation.
- 34 The proposal also includes the provision of a single storey building attached to the rear of proposed unit 18A, accommodating a 1 bed property. This would extend along the side boundary with No. 17. This unit would replace an existing large single storey building of much greater height and bulk than proposed. Although the new unit would project slightly further in length than existing, it would be materially smaller than the existing building on site. There would be no windows or openings facing towards No. 17 and overall I consider that this unit would result in a satisfactory relationship with this property, compared to the existing relationship between the site and No. 17.
- 35 Nos 6 and 7 Lynmead Close – these are sited to the rear of the site, and a minimum distance of some 30 metres would be maintained from these dwellings to the proposed single storey unit (shown as 19B), and some 40 metres from the two storey element of the proposal. I consider this to be a sufficient distance to protect the amenities of these properties.
- 36 The proposal would have a very similar impact as the existing building in terms of light, privacy and outlook on the properties on Main Road opposite the site, given that from the road the building would be to the same building line and length, with the same eaves and ridge height.
- 37 The listed buildings at Firs Lodge and The Stables are to the south of the site. The proposed development, particularly at two storey level, would be similar in scale and impact to the existing building on site. Whilst the rear facing windows would be more visible, these do not directly face these neighbouring properties, nor do they overlook any secluded space to these properties. As such I consider this relationship to be acceptable.
- 38 Policy EN1(3) of the local plan states that development should not cause an adverse impact on the amenities and living conditions of surrounding properties. Taking the above into account, I consider that the scheme would accord with this part of the policy.
- 39 Regard should also be given to the living conditions of future occupants of the development. In this respect, it is noted that there are some unconventional aspects to the development, particularly the way in which the single storey unit to

the rear is attached to the rear elevation of unit 18A, and also the window design of the rear single storey unit. However it is noted that the ground floor of 18A has been designed with the living accommodation to the front of the site and a bathroom and kitchen to the rear, where the need for an “outlook” is not normally a significant issue. It is also noted that for lighting purposes, it would be possible for a roof light to be installed in the single storey part of No. 18A, and this would allow daylight into the kitchen and bathroom area if desired.

- 40 The single storey unit to the rear has been designed with unusual angled walls to the front elevation, containing small windows. It is noted that the lounge also benefits from glazed doors to the rear and that as such this room would receive a good degree of light. The amount of light available into the proposed bedroom is more questionable. However again, it could be possible to improve this through, for example, the use of a roof light.
- 41 The units would share a communal garden space to the rear of the site. Whilst the design of the units would lead to a degree of human activity immediately to the rear of the units and outside proposed unit 19B, this would not be dissimilar to relationships between buildings and occupants in Mews type developments.
- 42 Taking this into account, I consider that the development would provide a suitable environment for future occupants, and in this respect would comply with Policy EN1(5) of the local plan.

Provision of car parking and impact upon highways safety

- 43 The proposal includes the provision of three parking spaces to the side of the property. This has been increased from the two spaces originally proposed as part of the scheme. Clearly, this would mean that each unit could not be allocated a parking space. The Council does not have any adopted parking spaces for new developments. However the Kent County Council Interim Guidance Note on residential parking recommends that in suburban town locations, a minimum of 1 parking space for 1 and 2 bed units should be provided. On this basis, the development would result in a shortfall of one parking space, and would not provide any visitor parking.
- 44 It is noted that the existing road is a well used main route in and out of Edenbridge, and that parking restrictions exist. A large parking bay is provided along the frontage of the terrace, and this appears to be well used to capacity by existing residents. As such any additional parking pressure from new development is likely to put further pressure on this bay and surrounding street parking.
- 45 On the other hand, in considering this application it is necessary to give weight to the level of parking likely to be generated from the existing lawful use of the site, and whether the proposed development would worsen highways conditions compared to this situation. In this respect, it is noted that although the shop is now vacant, when in use it would have generated vehicular activity from staff and customers. Whilst there is an existing gated courtyard next to the shop where, theoretically, a car could have parked – it is unlikely in practice to have been used for parking for the reasons specified in the highways officer’s comments. It is also noted that the 3 bed residential unit above the shop would have required two parking spaces under the KCC parking guidelines. Some objectors have pointed out that parking related to the shop would have been largely short term and

during the day, although I note that the shop was an off-licence and likely to be open during weekend and evening hours when on-street parking would be greater than during the weekday and, therefore there is no planning condition to restrict the hours it could be open to the public. In addition, any vehicle parking by occupants of the flat would not be short term.

- 46 The off street parking spaces are proposed to the side of the property. These do not include a turning facility and as such vehicles would need to reverse in or out of the space. Given the nature of the road, I consider that drivers would be more likely to reverse into the spaces, and exit the site in forward gear, although clearly this cannot be controlled. The layout of the spaces is tight, but subject to some minor changes to the exact siting of the spaces in relation to the proposed fence which would divorce them from the rear of the site (which can be required by a planning condition), Kent Highways consider that the layout would be acceptable.
- 47 Kent Highways have stated that the existing bay will need to be reduced in length by 2.5 metres in order to create suitable visibility from the access to the development. This would be secured under S278 Highways works, which will be highlighted as an informative. Kent Highways do not object to this small reduction in the bay.
- 48 Taking the above into account, it is accepted that street parking is at a premium in this location, and that the development would not be able to cater for all parking to be off-site. However, I do not consider that this shortfall would make the situation worse than would be the case if the flat and shop were occupied, and this view is supported by Kent Highways. Policy EN1(parts 6 and 10) of the local plan states that development proposals should provide suitable parking facilities , and should not cause unacceptable traffic conditions on surrounding roads. It should be remembered that the existing permitted use has no parking provision and a theoretically greater highway impact than the proposal. This scheme provides three off street parking spaces and should be considered as a highway betterment as improving the parking provision in this locality. Taking into account the fallback position of the existing lawful use of the premises, I would conclude that the development would not conflict with this policy requirement.

Other matters

- 49 The application would involve the removal of a post box within the wall of the building. Following contact with the Post Office, I am advised that such wall boxes are in the process of being phased out, and that there would be no requirement to replace the box, however its removal will need to be authorised by the Post Office. Therefore I have attached an informative highlighting the need to contact the Post Office prior to the post box being removed. The applicant has stated in writing that they would be willing to include a post box in the development (likely to be in one of the front walls / pillars), however from the Post Office reply this would not appear to be necessary.
- 50 As part of a residential development proposal, the applicant is required under Policy SP3 of the Core Strategy to make a contribution towards affordable housing in the District. The applicant has provided information to demonstrate that the contribution would be £25,656.50, although a S106 agreement has not, to date, been completed. Provided this is completed, the proposal would accord with Policy SP3 of the Core Strategy.

Conclusion

51 Taking the above factors into account, I do not consider that the development would conflict with local development plan policies and I would recommend approval, subject to the completion of a S106 agreement within 28 days from the date of this Committee. Alternatively, if the S106 is not completed within this timeframe, then I would recommend that the application be refused on this basis only.

Background Papers

Site and Block plans

Contact Officer(s): Mr A Byrne Extension: 7225

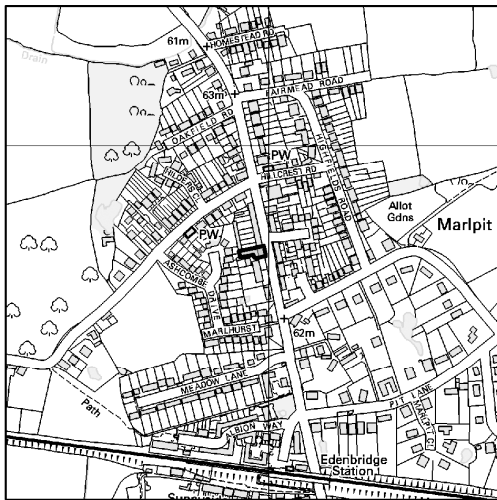
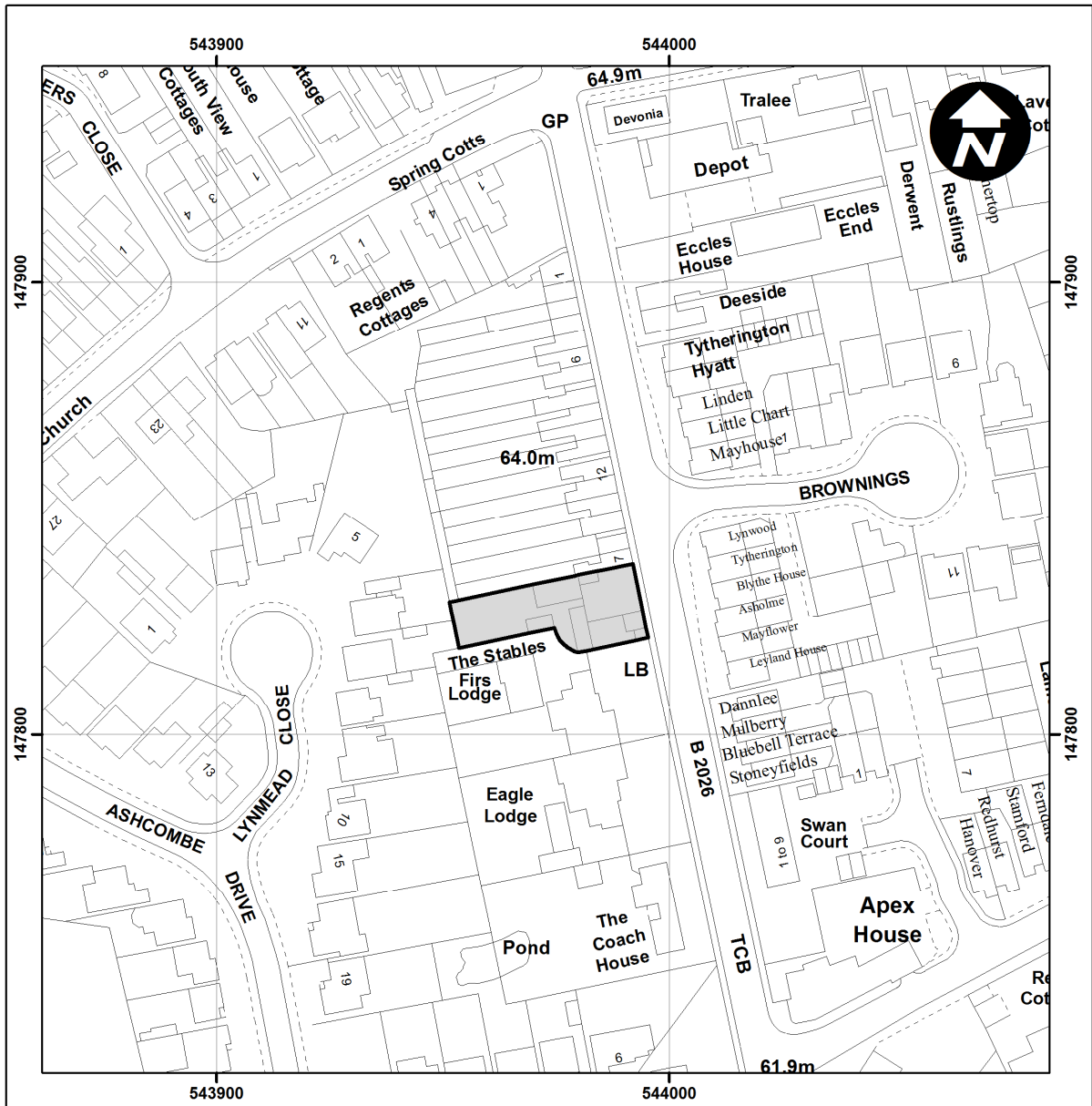
Kristen Paterson
Community and Planning Services Director

Link to application details:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=LWAEM1BK8V000>

Link to associated documents:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=LWAEM1BK8V000>



Site Plan

Scale 1:1,250

Date 06.09.2012



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Block Plan

