

A03

F/TH/16/1387

PROPOSAL: Change of use from retail to 2No semi-detached 3 bedroom dwellings, including alterations to the shop front, erection of a
LOCATION: single storey rear extension and addition of two dormers to the rear roof slope.

2-6 Station Approach BIRCHINGTON Kent CT7 9RD

WARD: Birchington South

AGENT: Mr Sam Edwards

APPLICANT: Mr Aaron Prowse

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

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.

GROUND:

In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Purchase Act 2004).

2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted drawings numbered 172_02 Rev 02 and 172_03 Rev 02 received 18 January 2017.

GROUND:

To secure the proper development of the area.

3 Prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby approved the garden areas defined on drawing number 172_02 Rev 02, received 18 January 2017, shall be provided for each dwelling and thereafter maintained.

GROUND:

To secure a satisfactory standard of amenities for future occupiers of the dwellings in accordance with Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan.

4 The external materials and external finishes to be used in the development hereby approved shall be of the same colour, finish and texture as those on the existing property.

GROUND:

In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan.

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site lies within a group of properties that are commercial at ground floor with residential above. The application site is a double fronted shop that has been vacant for a considerably long period of time. The site is close to Station Road which is the local centre for Birchington. Station Approach comprises a row of commercial properties and No. 2-6 is located at the end immediately adjacent to residential properties in Alpha Road.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

F/TH/02/0669 - Change of use of rooms on ground floor from museum and gift shop into residential accommodation reverting the building back to one dwelling GTD 29.11.2002

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is to change of the use of the property from retail to 2No semi-detached 3 bedroom dwellings, including alterations to the shop front to remove the large shop windows and replace with bay windows either side of an entrance door that would give the property a more residential appearance. Above the window and door to Property 1 it is proposed to add a mono pitched slate roof. To the rear it is proposed to remove the existing extensions and erect a 3 metre flat roof extension and add two flat roof dormer extensions to the rear roof slope. Each garden would have its own private garden.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Thanet Local Plan 2006 (saved policies)

H1- Housing
H4 - Windfall Sites
TR12 - Cycling
TR16 - Car Parking Provision
D1 - Design Principles
SR5 - Play space
TC8 – District Local Centres

NOTIFICATIONS

Neighbour notification letters were sent to properties directly surrounding the site and a site notice was posted near the site and no letters of objection have been received.

CONSULTATIONS

Birchington Town Council - raise no objection.

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation - no comment.

COMMENTS

This application is brought before the Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Alan Howes to allow members to consider the loss of the retail use, and its impact upon Birchington's business community.

The main issues raised by this proposal are the effect of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the impact upon the living conditions of future occupiers and occupiers of nearby residential properties and the effect upon highway safety.

Principle

The application site is on the edge of an existing district centre. Policy TC8 that covers district centres relates to new retail development only and does not prevent a change of use from retail to other uses.

Within the preferred option Draft Thanet Local Plan document, Policy E06 relates to district and local centres and states that residential accommodation will be permitted in District and Local centres where this would not fragment or erode the commercial frontages of such locations to a degree that compromises footfall or otherwise undermines the function of the centre.

Concern has been raised that the loss of this property from retail use to residential would be detrimental to the viability of Station Road's business community. In this instance there are no specific policies in the adopted Local Plan retaining Station Approach for commercial use but Policy E06 of the Draft Thanet Local Plan Policy supports residential accommodation in district centres where this would not fragment or erode the commercial frontages to a degree that compromises footfall or otherwise undermines the function of the centre. Whilst there is a row of shops along Station Approach the main shopping area of Birchington is in Station Road which retains a vibrant mix of commercial units. The application site is a property at the very end of this group of commercial properties and is immediately adjacent to residential dwellings. The property has been empty and an eyesore for a long period of time and it is considered that its change of use to residential would not fragment or erode the commercial frontages to a degree that would compromise footfall or undermine the function of the Birchington's shopping centre. There is also a local need for housing, and given the sustainability of the site within walking distance of bus stops and the train station, a residential use in this location would be appropriate. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Character and Appearance

National and Local Planning Policy requires all new development to provide a high quality design, that respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area within which it would be located.

The property is the end building that forms a row of commercial properties with living accommodation above and is adjacent to residential properties in Alpha Road. The application site, Nos 2-6 Station Road, has a low level brick wall enclosing a front garden area. The property has been vacant for a number of years and does not currently make a positive contribution to the streetscene.

The proposal would alter the shop front to provide bay windows and a small mono pitched roof to give the property a residential appearance in keeping with properties in Alpha Road. The entrance to Property 1 would be through the central entrance door with the entrance to Property 2 being to the side. The alterations proposed to the front elevation would, in my opinion, be an improvement to the current appearance of the vacant property.

It is proposed to clean and repoint the existing brickwork to the front and replace the wrought iron gate. Timber half glazed panelled doors are proposed for both properties, with windows and brickwork to the front matching the existing property at first floor level, with the mono pitch roof tiles matching those used on the main roof.

The rear of the property would not be easily visible from the public realm, therefore any proposed works would have only a limited impact on the character and appearance of the area. The works proposed include a 3 metre deep, flat roof, rear extension following the removal of the existing dilapidated rear extensions. The bi-folding windows and single door to the rear are to be aluminium and the rear extension is to be finished with sand and cement render. The extension proposed is modest in scale and overall would improve the appearance of the rear of the property.

Two flat roof dormer extensions are proposed within the rear roof slope and are to be finished with slate tiles to match those of the main roof. The dormers would sit comfortably within the rear roof slope being set down approximately 0.5 metres from the main ridge and approximately 0.5 metres above the eaves line.

I consider the proposed alterations would not look out of character in the area as they would relate well to the neighbouring residential properties in Alpha Road. The materials to be used reflect those used in neighbouring properties. The development therefore accords with the aims of Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and the NPPF and is considered acceptable.

Living Conditions

The existing property has windows in the rear elevation facing the rear of properties in Clarendon Mews over 20 metres away. The proposed ground floor extension replaces existing extensions and there are no windows proposed in the side elevations. The dormer windows in the roof would look towards the rear of the property as with the existing first floor rear windows and these would be unlikely to result in overlooking or loss of privacy to neighbouring residential properties as the relationship with neighbouring properties would not be significantly different to the existing situation.

The rear extension would be approximately 3.3 metres in height and would run alongside the adjoining boundary with No.8 which currently comprises trellis and overgrown shrubbery. Whilst the proposed extension would extend behind the rear elevation of No.8 due to the

angled boundary, No.8 is a commercial unit at ground floor level with only a small window and door to the rear, so there would not be an unacceptable loss of light or outlook.

The side nearest No.1 Alpha Road would maintain the existing gap of approximately 1.2 metres between the property and the side boundary wall. The rear part of No.1 Alpha Road steps away from the application site and provides a greater distance of approximately 4.6 metres between the side elevation of the site and the side elevation of the rear part of No.1. The existing extensions that are to be removed project approximately 2.2 metres into the rear garden and the proposed is therefore only 0.6 metres deeper. Given the proposed extension is only 0.6 metres deeper than the existing I consider there would not be an unacceptable sense of enclosure or loss of outlook to the neighbouring property.

Local Plan policy SR5 requires new dwellings with two bedrooms or more to provide safe doorstep play space for young children. The rear amenity spaces have been divided to provide separate gardens for each property. Owing to the tapered shape of the rear space Property 1 would have an 'L' shaped garden approximately 6.4 metres by 5 metres with a 2 by 3 metre strip of land to reach it at the very rear of the plot and Property 2 would have a garden area of approximately 5.6 metres by 5 metres. Each garden would provide a safe play space and space for clothes drying, refuse storage and storage facilities.

The living conditions for future occupiers and surrounding neighbours accords with the aims of Thanet Local Plan policy D1 and SR5 and the NPPF and is therefore acceptable.

Highway Safety

The lawful use of the existing property for A1 retail use has the potential for vehicular movements visiting the premises. The proposed dwellings would therefore be unlikely to lead to a material increase in demand for on street parking on surrounding highways. In addition the property is located in a sustainable location, close to the main shopping area in Station Road and within a reasonable walking distance of bus and rail connections. Cycle storage can be provided within the site. The proposal is not considered detrimental to highway safety and accords with the aims of Thanet Local Plan Policies TR16 and TR12.

The impact upon highway safety is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use would not result in any harm to the viability of the shopping centre of Birchington and would result in the provision of family dwellings for which there is a need. The proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area or to the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers and is in line with Local Plan policies and the aims of the NPPF. Therefore the application is recommended for approval.

Case Officer

Rosemary Bullivant

TITLE: F/TH/16/1387

Project 2-6 Station Approach BIRCHINGTON Kent CT7 9RD

Scale:

