

Subject:	Options for the store between 67 & 67A St Andrews Road Portslade (aka Portslade Police Station)		
Date of Meeting:	19 March 2015.		
Report of:	Executive Director of Environment, Development & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Simon Pickles	ext: 2083
	Email:	simon.pickles@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	South Portslade.		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report sets out the options for the future use of the building formerly used as the Portslade police station (decommissioned over 60 years ago). This police station was built in 1908 for the East Sussex County Constabulary. The building is held with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). A photograph is at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 The reasons for this report coming to P&R are:
- a) That this committee has previously (in March 2014) considered a petition for an alternative community use and (in February 2015) a delegation by the Brighton & Hove Heritage Commission; and,
 - b) That the potential uses span more than one service committee.
- 1.3 A key priority identified in the City housing strategy 2015 is to improve the supply of housing, specifically identifying the lack of sufficient new affordable rented housing. By creating additional accommodation, the proposal in this report supports the delivery of the new City housing strategy.
- 1.4 The delivery of additional homes can be achieved both through newbuild and conversion of existing HRA properties. The asset management strategy options range from conversions and extensions to infill development and estate regeneration. The recommendation to convert the building for housing supports the wider HRA strategy to make the best use of our assets to meet pressing housing needs.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Policy & Resources Committee agrees that:

- 2.1 Officers should proceed with the option to convert the building into one wheelchair accessible four bedroom family dwelling.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The storage areas of the decommissioned Portslade Police station were identified as a 'change of use' opportunity as part of a city wide review of empty properties, which formed a register of HRA assets for strategic consideration in 2011.
- 3.2 The Property and Investment's asset team were instructed to undertake an initial options appraisal with recommendations following a lack of available empty homes.
- 3.3 A preferred option was put forward in 2012 for conversion to a single accessible residential unit. Policy and Resources committee approval to expend funds was secured at the time.
- 3.4 Planning applications were then made, then withdrawn due to local action to achieve listed status for the building with English Heritage. This listed status application was unsuccessful despite the recognition of the site as being a 'local historical asset'. Extracts from the decision: *'Architectural interest: the Queen Anne style is standard for police stations of this date and although the sandstone porch is an attractive well carved feature overall the design lacks strong compositional quality and coherence. The adjoining police houses are typical suburban houses of the period and not integrated into the design; ...a number of first floor windows have been replaced on the principal front and the stables have been demolished...CONCLUSION: Although this building has some local interest it does not meet the criteria for listing'*.
- 3.5 After receiving planning consent in 2013 for the conversion a local group made objections to the council. Concerns were raised from a local history perspective and permission was granted to explore independently the viability of creating a museum. An ePetition on this subject, signed by 177 people, ran from 18/12/2013 to 20/03/2014.
- 3.6 Following a review of this option, it was concluded that the viability of a community led museum remained uncertain, noting that any community group taking this on would still have to find the capital to purchase and refurbish the premises.
- 3.7 In early 2014 Mears were commissioned to design a conversion to achieve 3 units of accommodation on the site, because 67a was soon to be void which allowed the broadening of the scope of the opportunity. This latest iteration of the plan - at pre-planning stage and not yet signed off by housing, incorporates 67a & the store into three family units. This is not recommended owing to complexity and viability.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The initial feasibility appraisal in 2011 highlighted the alternative options (please see appendix 1 & 1a. below).

Option 1:

- 4.1 The analysis of the range of options favoured a conversion to one domestic dwelling as the most viable option for the storage space at the time.

- 4.2 The aim of achieving a 'sympathetic' historical conversion was the central plank of the design rationale.
- 4.3 Working closely with both the planning department and English Heritage, the project team has sought to retain as much of the original interior as practicable, reversing some planning breaches by restoring the façade to its original design whilst still providing a flexible family home.
- 4.4 Notwithstanding the planning conditions attached to this planning consent, it is anticipated that this scheme, for a 4 bedroom family home, can be delivered within existing allocated budget. A capital budget line of £127,000 has currently been approved at P&R committee, with regard to this project,

Option 2:

- 4.5 The later scheme (with 3 family units) envisaged, has brought to light more problematic design related implications and presents with creating significant risks giving rise to several complex management implications.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that the design produced would cost £350,000 additional to the existing approved budget, necessitating a need for officers to take the scheme back to P&R committee for additional budgetary approval.
- 4.7 Taking such action would mean that further delay would be experienced by this project.

Option 3:

- 4.8 This option would involve outright disposal of this HRA asset, likely to be in the region of £250-300,000 (subject to a valuation). This option is not recommended.
- 4.9 Last year (2014) most property sales in Portslade involved terraced properties which sold for on average £253,984. Semi-detached properties sold for an average price of £256,427, while detached properties fetched £313,480.

Option 4:

- 4.10 The economic viability of a community led heritage museum remains uncertain and the issue of any community group taking this on would still involve them having to find the capital to purchase and refurbish the premises.
- 4.11 The Council may wish to question the deployment of any further officer time or resources into working up the options on this option. Any further model that comes forward for consideration would have to be fully costed, from both the capital and revenue perspectives.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Ward councillors have been briefed on the proposal.
- 5.2 The preferred scheme has already been taken by officers through full public consultation within the planning process.

- 5.3 An ePetition ran from 18/12/2013 to 20/03/2014. 177 people signed the ePetition which stated: *'We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove Council to Stop any imminent redevelopment works on the 'Old Police Station' immediately and allow local residents to be consulted on the buildings future use. We the undersigned believe this building to be of significant local interest and part of our community's heritage and propose consideration of the building for use in the community'*.

The P&R Committee in March 2014 turned down this proposal, advising that the building had been earmarked by the council to be developed into social housing with planning permission and funding already in place.

- 5.4 On 12 February 2015 the P&R Committee received a delegation from The Brighton and Hove Heritage Commission who believed there was an opportunity to utilise the old police station as a heritage centre for Portslade and the city. The delegation believed that it would provide a greater benefit as a heritage centre for the community and enable it to become a focal point for schools, groups and local organisations. The delegation sought the committee's agreement to enabling a feasibility study to be completed within 6 months.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The delivery of new homes helps to meet the City's strategic objectives as set out in the Council's Housing Strategy and City Plan. This is an excellent opportunity to provide a much needed wheelchair accessible home for rent in one of the few areas of the city that can provide level access and physical transport links for a disabled resident .
- 6.2 This project will provide a much needed fully accessible home for a family, while retaining its distinctive, historical appearance.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Financial Implications:

The original budget approval of £127,000 for the conversion of Portslade Police Station was included in the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2012-2015 report (included in the structural works programme) approved by Policy & Resources in February 2012. As this scheme had not progressed this budget has been carried forward each year, with the carry forward being reported and approved through the targeted budget monitoring reports to Policy & Resources Committee in each subsequent financial year.

In the main body of this report it states that the delivery of a 4 bedroom family home can be delivered within this existing budget approval. Any significant variation to the original budget would require further approval from Policy & Resources in accordance with the council's standard financial procedures.

A proposal to deliver 3 family units would need further budget approval from Policy & Resources as this significantly changes the original scheme. A full appraisal would be required, which would consider the costs of delivering the alternative scheme and how this can be funded through the Housing Revenue Account.

If the disposal of the asset was considered, the receipt from the sale can be retained by the council for use on affordable housing projects, estate regeneration or the repayment of Housing debt.

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Section 9 of the Housing Act 1985 allows local housing authorities to provide housing accommodation by erecting houses, or converting buildings into houses on land held for the purposes of Part II of the Act – Provision of Housing Accommodation. The recommendation to proceed with the conversion of the building into one accessible four bedroom family dwelling is clearly within the council's powers.

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 20/02/15

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The proposed option provides wheelchair accessible accommodation for a high priority group of housing applicants. There are tangible efficiencies that can be delivered by providing a home for someone who is in need of an adapted home. E.g. preventing admission to residential care and ensuring a family with a disabled member can continue to live together. The council has a number of households on the waiting list who require high costs adaptations and this project will be a way of meeting some of that need.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The conversion will include photovoltaic panels on the roof, thereby reducing the tenant's electricity costs, and also internal wall insulation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Future Use Analysis Scoring

1a Planning Approval

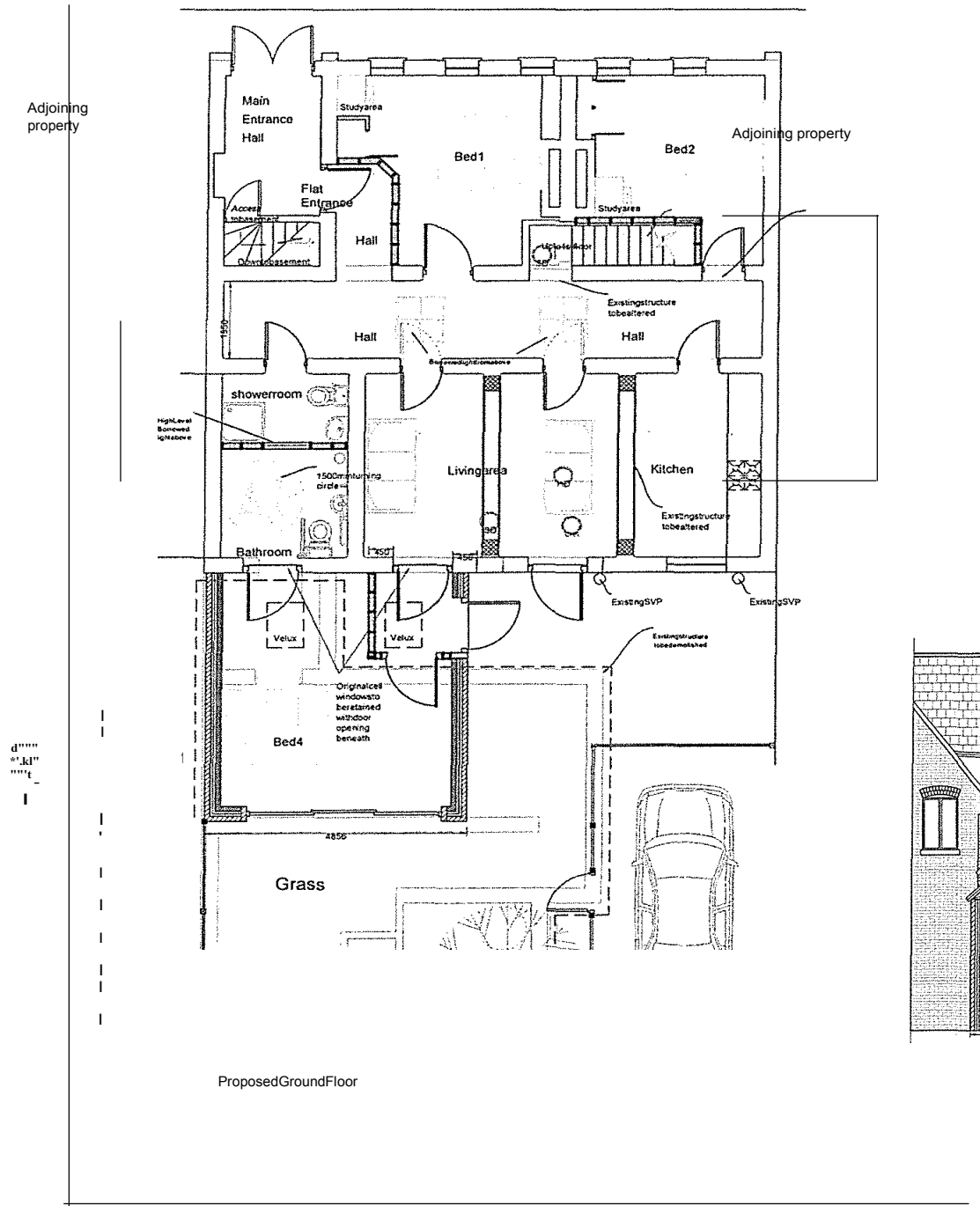
2. Photograph

Appendix 1

St Andrews Road former police station				
Future use potential analysis and scoring July 2011				
Potential Use	Positives	Constraints	Overall use potential	Notes
Museum	Potentially allows all existing historical features to be retained	No BHCC funding identified to set up and run/financial viability unclear. Location in residential block/area away from tourist attractions. Parking. Existing features may not be attractive enough. Conflict with police museum at Brighton Town Hall basement ?	Low	
Office	May be some potential for this use. Some internal features can be retained.	Some loss of existing internal features	Low	
Domestic	Financially viable. Within residential block/area. Clear demand for residential/social housing in city. Can retain some internal features within design. Can use garden for family.	Some loss of existing internal features	High	mitigation?:can offer original fittings to police museum if they are interested
Storage	Potential for existing features to be retained	BHCC has no requirement for storage facilities at present	Low	

Appendix 1a

Planning approval for a 4 bedroom flat



Bedroom three is upstairs and is not shown on this plan.

Appendix 2

Portslade Police Station



