Consultee Comments for Planning Application APP/16/00898

Application Summary
Application Number: APP/16/00898
Address: 23 South Street, Emsworth, PO10 7EG
Proposal: Alterations and additions for conversion from a dwelling to a boutique hotel including link to adjacent restaurant (C3 to C1) - Revised Application.
Case Officer: Rachael McMurray

Consultee Details
Name: Mr John Heritage Team
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On Behalf Of: Conservation Officer

Comments
Principal Conservation Officer - Objection

The main planning considerations relevant to this application are design and Conservation namely the impact of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the Emsworth Conservation Area and the appearance of South Street in particular.

From the Market Square, South Street narrows and leads southwards falling gently to the quayside. This slight change in level downwards from the centre adds to the attraction. Its buildings are mostly simple, small shops and house which are predominately two to two and a half storeys. Rarely does a building exceed this to 3 full storeys. The narrow frontages of these plots give the buildings a strong vertical emphasis, which is reflected in the general proportions of elevations, shop fronts, windows and doors. Where infill development has occurred over the years, by conforming to these constraints or streetscape rules of height and width, new development has usually reflected the domestic scale and materials of historic buildings within the Conservation Area. Those that have been constructed with traditional roof treatments and in scale have harmonised more successfully with their surroundings.

The existing building dates from 1949 (Plaque LW.GM). It is of appropriate scale and proportions and sits easily within the general street scene. It is constructed of poor quality materials reflective of post war shortages at this time. The front is part render, part facing brick with Flettons used on the remaining elevations. The roof tiles appear to be clay but are shot, the face of the tiles is beginning to delaminate. There is a squat chimney which makes little visual contribution to the conservation area. Timber fenestration is used but of low quality. A modern garage door has been inserted/replacing earlier doors. The building makes a neutral contribution to the conservation area. Its replacement/upgrading using a more sympathetic palette of materials and improved

design would enhance the conservation area. The key issue therefore is not the quality of the existing building or any impact on its architectural/historic interest; but the form and quality of the intended replacement/rejuvenated building.

The Proposals

Although described as a change of use the scheme involves a substantial element of intervention/rebuild and enlargement. Whereas the current building knits successfully into the visual fabric of the street, the proposed reworking creates a building that will stand apart from its neighbours by virtue of its scale and bulk. There are essentially three strands to the proposal, apart from the change of use, which in conservation terms is not particularly controversial. These are:-.

1. Raising the height of the building fronting South Street through the creation of a parapet and addition of what is described as a mansard.

2. A two storey rear addition is proposed which adopts a traditional half hipped roof form.

3. Single storey rear extension

Policy Context

Before proceeding to consider the policy context of the NPPF, it is of primary importance that the correct weight should be attributed to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building form the outset, in accordance with section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires planning authorities, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Conservation Area, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.

The need for the decision taker to attach considerable or special weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings has been reinforced through two recent high court decisions of: Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited vs. East Northamptonshire District Council et al (2014); and North Norfolk District Council vs. DCLG and Mack (2014).

The above statue and its subsequent and consistent interpretation in recent high court decision emphasises the need for the policies of the NPPF to be implemented whilst always having regard to the need to give special or greater weight to the preservation of the setting of a listed building.

Where the impact on the setting of a listed building has been assessed in accordance with paragraphs 128 to 132 of the Framework, and has been found to fall within the category of less than substantial harm (i.e. paragraph 134), then it is still important that when considering the

balance exercise, and therefore the public benefits of any such proposal, that from the outset this is consciously weighed in favour of the need to preserve the setting of the listed building.
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets down the policies that the Council must take into account when determining planning applications. This supersedes PPS 5, however, English Heritage (web-site 23 April 2012) advises that the Practice Guide (HEPPG) remains a valid and Government endorsed document pending Government's review of guidance supporting national planning policy as set out in its response to the select Committee.
The NPPF sets out, in paragraph 17, the 12 core planning principles that local planning authorities should consider in making planning decisions. One of these core principles relates directly to conserving heritage assets, as follows
Planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;
Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets conservation. It also goes on to state that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 133 provides guidance in relation to development proposals that cause 'substantial harm'. While, paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy states that where a development will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
Paragraph 64 (Section 7 Requiring Good Design) is also particularly relevant to this case in that development should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that:

Protects and where appropriate enhances the boroughs statutory and non statutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites, buildings of local historic or architectural interest.

Policy CP16 (1a) of the Core Strategy states Planning permission will be granted for development that is designed to a high standard, which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax. All development should demonstrate that its design:

Identifies and responds positively to existing features of natural, historic or local character within or close to the proposed development site.

Policy DM20 of the Allocations Plan states that development proposals must conserve and enhance the historic assets of Havant

Assessment

Mansard roof/second floor extension

While the current building has little individual merit, the proposed design would be unsympathetic due to its design, form, and marked increase in height and mass. A full view of the bulky mansard will be gained from South Street when looking towards and from the Harbour. The proposals are over ambitious and not something I could support for these reasons.
This is a similar scheme to initial plans that were submitted for APP/15/00928. I objected to these proposals with recommendations to alter the scheme in a more sympathetic manner. Further amended plans were submitted by the agent that were deemed appropriate which resulted in the application being approved under the same application reference.

As I have previously commented there is a strong objection to the proposed mansard roof extension on conservation grounds. The proposal site, Coal Exchange PH and 25 South Street and adjacent buildings on the western side of South Street have an existing roofline almost unspoiled by any type of alteration. The addition of a Mansard roof will interrupt the existing roofline of these buildings and detract significantly from the character, introducing an incongruous feature into the roofscape.

It is also considered that raising the height of a this building which sits between The Coal Exchange and 25 South Street would have an intrusive impact upon its appearance by unbalancing the unity of the architectural composition and further breaking the original and unique integrity of this historic design. The roofline pattern and rhythm would be clumsily interrupted by the proposed mansard roof extension.

The extension would constitute a dominant and bulky addition and it is, therefore considered that the proposal would be detrimental to the character of the building and to the uniformity of roof form in the terrace and the wider conservation area.

Rear extension

A two storey rear addition is proposed which adopts a traditional half hipped roof form. The proposed two storey extension appears subordinate in nature and is therefore of an acceptable size and massing on the host building. The roof form and design of the extension would also respect the character of the property.

Single storey rear extension

The single storey rear extension potentially has the least visual impact and all other things being equal is potentially acceptable. It is of a design and size that would not cause any adverse impact

on the character of the Conservation Area. The extension is also in keeping with existing property and would not appear overly dominant or out of character.

In accordance with the NPPF I believe the degree of harm to the heritage assets (nearby listed building and conservation area) would be significant, but on balance, less than substantial. In this context, the NPPF requires such harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

I would recommend that the application approved under APP/15/00928 is implemented as I consider this to be scheme that is sympathetic to the Historic Environment.

Refuse:

The proposed roof extension would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Emsworth Conservation Area by reason of its height, scale, bulk, detailed design and prominence in the street scene and wider roofscape of the conservation area and would fail to comply with policies CS11 and CS16 (1a) of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011), policy DM20 of the Havant Allocations Plan 2014 and national guidance contained in the NPPF