

APP/15/00829 – 36 -38, North Street, Emsworth PO10 7DG

Assessment

36-38, North Street, Emsworth is situated in a prominent position in North Street on the bend of the road. The building lies outside the conservation area and is not listed, and currently it is not included on the "local list". The local list in Havant is patchy and by no means a comprehensive District wide appraisal. To the west of the property is St James Church (listed) and churchyard which is an actively used public space. Glimpses of the rear of the application site are possible from churchyard. Collectively 36/38 and 40/42 are the most significant buildings in this part of North Street and positively contribute to the wider gateway to the Churchyard.

The NPPF takes a holistic approach to the historic environment. It uses the generic term "heritage asset" to encompass the varied structures, buildings and landscapes that make up the historic environment. Those that are afforded statutory protection listed buildings, conservation areas; ancient monuments etc are designated heritage assets. The NPPF also recognises that outside this there are other "assets" that make a local contribution, but may not reach the criteria for national recognition. Key to the NPPF is the assessment of "significance" in the local and national context.

I understand a similar sized rear addition has already been permitted. The primary difference is therefore the replacement of the building. From what I was able to see the building appears to date from the early part of the C19. It is slightly curious as the main body of the building is constructed in Flemish Garden Wall bond (as to be expected) but the front façade in stretcher bond indicating the building has been refaced. The reason for this is unclear and there is a degree of conflict with the fenestration which stylistically is indicative of a pre-1860 date (no sash horns). One can only speculate but I assume the wall was rebuilt, possibly for structural reasons, with the earlier windows re-incorporated. Who knows?

The ground floor is suggestive of two residential properties (domestic scale of the fenestration), later adapted to commercial use with quite a poor shopfront.

The Proposal

The proposal is for the replacement of the building in its entirety. I acknowledge the building is not protected by virtue of being within a conservation area or listed. However, I feel there needs to be a better explanation as to what has led to this decision. The photomontage is helpful in providing a general impression of scale, mass and context. The proposed drawing shows the building with its immediate neighbours. For certainty, a similar arrangement showing the current situation would be helpful for direct comparison.

I am open minded as to whether or not there is justification to demolish and will await the evidence. The preference would be for retention and adaptation. If replacement is necessary, we should be seeking a better design than proposed which is a bit of a halfway house with odd window proportions. If

rebuilding I would not be looking for a pastiche, but rather a good quality architectural solution befitting the area. If it is a restaurant or commercial business, one solution would be to provide a well designed timber shopfront on the ground floor. This would provide plenty of light into the building and identify the building more boldly. It would avoid the need for poorly proportioned windows and the sign would better be located on a well designed raked timber fascia. I would suggest face brickwork as proposed but perhaps use a version of Flemish Garden wall bond (snapped headers) for the principal elevation to give texture. Thought needs to be given to the proportions used in the upper floor windows.

The photomontage indicates a slate finish, but I note the roof is intended to be plain tiles. A good quality sand faced clay plain tile is essential given the prominence of the roof. The existing handmade tiles serve as a benchmark.

I have not looked at the previous permission. As an observation, with a new build I would have sought to avoid a large external fire escape. Is there not scope to internalise this within the new addition?

I trust these comments are helpful in establishing a positive way forward.

John Townsend
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