

Appeal statement

Location: Dolphin Quay, Queen Street, Emsworth, Hampshire.

**Proposal: demolition of the single storey shop, two-storey office building and associated outbuilding and boatyard.
Erection of 4 no. houses (3 x 3 no. bedrooms and 1 x 2 no. bedrooms) fronting onto Queen Street and associated parking and erection of an apartment building (4 x 2 no. bedrooms and 1 x 3 no. bedrooms) fronting onto the Mill Pond with associated parking.**

Appellant: Wilson House Developments Limited.

Appeal against refusal of planning permission (LPA reference APP/14/00510).

**John Pike MRTPI IHBC
Town planning and heritage consultant**

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Dolphin Quay appeal: heritage and design considerations

The LPA has refused planning permission, under Reason 1 on the basis that the appeal proposals, because of their scale, mass and design, are excessive and inadequate in relation to surrounding development. Furthermore, it is suggested the loss of the openness on the appeal site would reduce important views and connections between King Street and the Harbour. The LPA consider that the appeal proposals would be a strident and incongruous form of development that would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area and setting of nearby listed buildings.

These heritage and design based objections are contended on the basis that the appeal proposals are modest in scale, well designed and compatible with surrounding existing development. Below are more detailed comments using policy references in Reason for Refusal 1:

Policy CS 11 in the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) 2011

This policy is about protecting and enhancing the special environment and heritage of the borough. In respect of the appeal proposals it refers in Paragraph 4 to protecting and enhancing heritage assets by appropriately managing development in conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings.

Comment: If it is accepted that residential development is agreeable in principle, and there does not seem to be anything in the local planning policy that states otherwise, then the appeal proposals would, it is considered, not be contrary to the aims of this policy. The LPA has not objected to the principle of demolishing the existing buildings on the appeal site because clearly they have very limited architectural interest. Consequently it is difficult to comprehend how the appeal proposals would detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area and setting of the three nearby listed buildings. The scale, design, materials and relationship to the listed buildings are considered entirely compatible in respect of the frontage development. It follows the established pattern of development close to

the back edge of the footway and the architectural approach is similar to other more recent developments in Queen Street. The part of the appeal proposals to the rear of the appeal site is deliberately more contemporary because the context is different to the frontage. The existing character of development alongside the Mill Pond frontage is more eclectic and, as a consequence, is able to accommodate a more contemporary design approach than would be the case on the Queen Street elevation.

Policy CS 16

This is a policy that seeks high quality design in the borough. In relation to the appeal proposals there is reference to the importance of suitable scale, height, materials, plot widths and proportions of windows and doors to achieving compatible and high quality development.

Comment: The appeal proposals have been designed to achieve a development that is suitable to the surroundings. To this end, particular attention has been paid to issues of height, plot widths, materials and detailing of windows and doors. It is difficult to understand how the design criteria set out in this policy has been contravened. The appeal proposals are modest in scale and certainly no higher than existing buildings nearby.

The detailed design follows, in terms of proportions and materials, the existing development in Queen Street. Again the Mill Pond frontage part of the appeal proposals has adopted a different design approach but still the scale and appearance would, it is considered, be compatible with the context.

NPPF

It is considered that the redevelopment of this site in the manner proposed in the appeal proposals would comply with advice in Chapter 12 of the NPPF. The proposals are considered consistent with guidance in Paragraph 131, as they would result in positive conservation through a carefully considered and suitable new development that would enhance the heritage asset that is the conservation area and respect the setting of nearby listed buildings. Furthermore, the appeal proposals would make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 134 suggests that where development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the asset's optimum viable use. Whilst it is not considered that any harm would be caused to the significance of the heritage assets that are the listed building and conservation area, certainly the appeal proposals and consequential financial investment would secure the future of the appeal site for the foreseeable future. Consequently it is considered there would be a public benefit resulting from these proposals.

The Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide provides some advice on alterations and additions. It is considered that the appeal proposals would be in line with wording in Paragraphs 178. The appeal proposals would respect the special architectural and historic interest of the area. In particular, the new work would not dominate. The plan form, design and materials would follow the character and appearance of existing buildings nearby in the conservation area.

Emsworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal

This document has already been referred to in the Heritage Statement that formed part of the supporting information to the appeal proposals. The appeal site is clearly referred to as an area where the character has been eroded. Consequently there is scope for repairing the character in an appropriate manner through new

development. This, it is considered, has been achieved through the carefully thought through appeal proposals.

Design Guide SPD

This is a very comprehensive document covering all aspects of design in relation to the built environment. Paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 relate to new residential development and infill. The appeal proposals appear to follow the advice given in these paragraphs. In particular the frontage building line, plot widths, vertical emphasis, external materials and architectural detail all follow the general guidance.

There is a specific document related to Emsworth in the appendices. It is noted that the appeal site is located within the historic core, Area 1. Again the appeal proposals appear to follow the advice in this chapter. The context and character have been recognised and respected in the design of the appeal proposals.

Conclusion

If it is accepted that development should take place on the appeal site to address the fractured character that is apparent in this part of historic Emsworth, and there does not appear to be anything in the LPA's published documents that resist the principle of development, it is difficult to understand how fundamentally flawed the appeal proposals are, as set out in Reason for Refusal 1. Many recent nearby developments appear to follow a similar approach to the appeal proposals and these are highlighted in the Heritage Statement. Consequently it is not considered that there would be harm caused to the heritage assets that are the conservation area or setting of nearby listed buildings.