DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT & HERITAGE STATEMENT

BOROUGH OF WORTHING
DEPOSITED
TP. REF. No.
WB/ /



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CONCERNING PROPOSALS TO ERECT AN AIR CONDITIONING UNIT ON THE REAR OF NO. 52 CHAPEL ROAD (THE PARKING SHOP), WORTHING WEST SUSSEX BN11 1BE

APPLICANT: NSL LIMITED

South Eastern Planning Services Limited Bartram House Station Road Pulborough West Sussex RH20 1AH

The Design Component – Amount of Development

An air conditioning plant box is proposed on the side elevation of a rear single storey flat roofed extension at the property 52 Chapel Road, Worthing, West Sussex. The air conditioning box is located at eaves level on the existing single storey extension and will have dimensions of 870mm x 808mm. A lagged pipe will run out of one of the windows on the north elevation of the single storey extension and run along the side of the building before linking with the air conditioning plant box.

Location & Description of Application Property

No.52 Chapel Road is a commercial premises located within the heart of Worthing town centre. It is part of a larger parade that contains a variety of shops and commercial premises at ground floor level with offices above. The building is a three storey brick building that dates from the inter-War period. In architectural terms, it has an Art Deco character.

The rear of this parade backs onto a large surface public car park. Around the edges of this car park are the service yards of commercial properties located within both Chapel Road and Chatsworth Road.

The front of the application building forms part of an attractive frontage on the eastern side of Chapel Road. The surrounding area forms part of a long established Conservation Area. However, the townscape quality of the rear parking area is substantially diminished. Secondary views of the rear of properties on both Chapel Road and Chatsworth Road provide a poor townscape environment with there being a clutter of extensions and additions, service ducts and fire escapes.

No. 52 Chapel Road typifies this character containing, as it does, a series of single storey rear flat roof extensions.

Photographs below indicate these rear additions and also give a close up and precise location of the proposed air conditioning plant. This box is to be located on the west side elevation of the existing single storey rear addition, in a position just above a lean to linking extension between the main building and this single storey flat roof brick outbuilding. By tucking the air conditioning box around the corner of this building it would not be visible from the public car park.

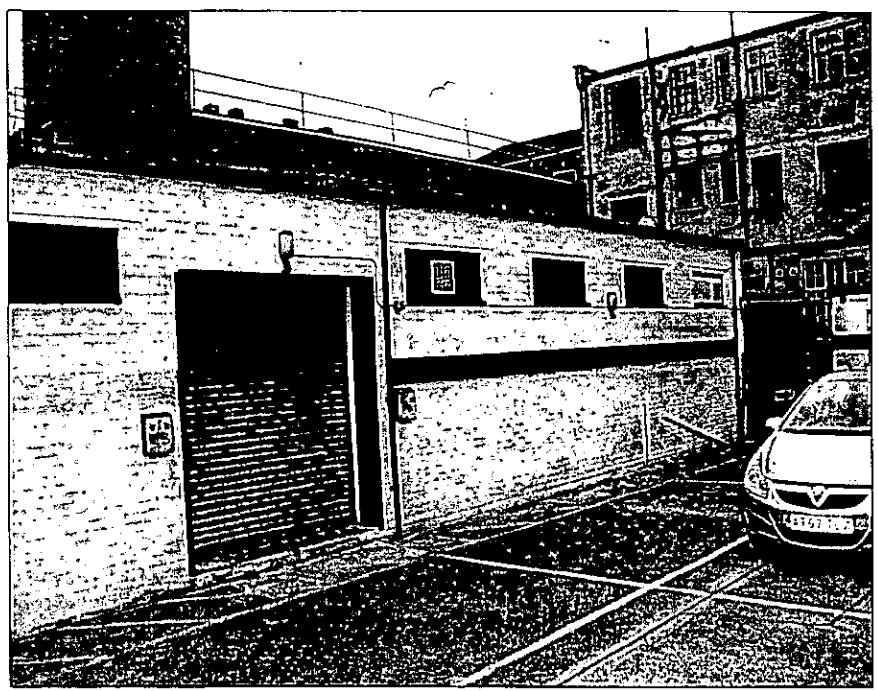


Figure 1 – Single storey flat roof extension on rear of 52 Chapel Road. Ducting to extend out of second window on the left down the side of the building.



Figure 2 – Return west side elevation of the rear extension showing the position of the proposed air conditioning plant box (sited at eaves level).

The Planning Policy Context

Advice relevant to this appeal is contained within **PPS5, 'Planning for the Historic Environment'. PPS5** defines a heritage asset as those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, architectural or artistic interest. The key objective of PPS5 is conserving these heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance by ensuring that:

- Decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of that significance, investigated, to a degree, proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset.
- Wherever possible, heritage assets are put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation.
- The positive contribution of such heritage assets to local character and sense of place is recognised and valued.
- Consideration of the historic environment is integrated into planning policies, promoting place shaping.

In paragraph HE7.5 Local Planning Authorities are required to take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design is to include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and views.

Paragraph HE9.1 states that there should be a presumption in favour of conservation of designated heritage assets and, the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through

alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Paragraph HE10.1 deals further with guidance for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset. It is stated that, when considering applications for development that affect the setting of a heritage asset, Local Planning Authorities should treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better, reveal the significance of the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, Local Planning Authorities should weigh any such harm against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.

The statutory context for the operation of development control functions within a Conservation Area is set out within Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Here it is stated that, in exercising its planning functions in a Conservation Area, a Local Planning Authority is under a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. The meaning of 'preserve' in this context was considered in South Lakeland DC vs. Secretary of State (1991) 2PMR 97, which held that to preserve means to keep safe from harm. Essentially the principle of this case was to establish that a development that was neutral in its effect upon a Conservation Area (in that it made no positive contribution to its preservation but it left it unharmed) could properly be said to preserve the character and appearance of that Area.

The relevant Development Plan for the area consists of the **South East Plan 2009** and the **Worthing Borough Local Plan 2004.**

The relevant Local Plan for the WLP 2004 is **BE21.** This states that within designated Conservation Areas proposals for development will be required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. This essentially repeats the test laid down in Section 72 of the Act. Any

development that would harm the overall character and integrity of the Conservation Area is not to be permitted. All development is further required to be sympathetic to the scale and character of the area, particularly with adjoining buildings and groups of buildings.

Evaluation

The air conditioning plant box here proposed is a common piece of equipment constructed on town centre commercial premises. It is a small box that is regularly placed on the rear of commercial buildings located within town centre locations, such as this. Whilst the front of the application buildings forms an attractive facade within the Chapel Road street frontage, the rear of buildings are poorly articulated and contain a substantial amount of ducts, drainage pipes, fire escapes etc. These rear elevations generally have an untidy and cluttered appearance and a number of haphazard rear extensions have been constructed on these commercial properties over the years.

The result is that views of the rear of frontage buildings in Chapel Road and Chatsworth Road obtained from within the public car park to the rear are generally of limited townscape quality and the environment is of a low grade quality. The rear of these buildings exhibit extensive service pipes and fire escapes, etc, and therefore the addition of the air conditioning box here proposed would not harm the character or appearance of the environment at the rear of the site.

It has been decided to position the box on the return of the west side elevation of the existing single storey rear brick extension. As such, the box would not be seen from the public car park though, the ducting running along the side of the building out of one of the windows, would. Nonetheless this extension has no architectural merit and this ducting would not harm its character or appearance.

It is believed that a sensitive position has been chosen for the air conditioning plant box and it would not impact either on the character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area or on the architectural quality of the host building. Its discreet siting shields it from public view. Neither the host building itself nor any of the surrounding properties are listed buildings and therefore the development raises no concerns about potential harmful impact on any significant heritage asset. The rear of the building is an appropriate location for the air conditioning unit. Surrounding buildings contain significant quantities of such ancillary plant and equipment on the rear. In townscape terms, it is the Chapel Road frontage that is important and this contrasts with the rear of the site which is not a particularly attractive or sensitive environment.

As a result, it is believed that the development would have no harmful impact on the character of the Chapel Road Conservation Area and the requirements of Section 72 of the Act and policy BE21 of the Local Plan would be fully met. That is to say, the development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

In the final analysis, there is no better location on the rear of the building for the air conditioning box. It would sited in an accessible and serviceable position but would be discreetly tucked out of public view.

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