Expiry Date - 19/01/2024

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1497/23 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: **The Railway Hotel 27 Railway Approach Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Retention of single-storey rear extension with revised brick 'bond' undertaken in brick slips (Amendment to AWDM/1983/22); retention of wrought iron railings to raised terrace on West side; retention of replacement fire escape stairs to North elevation courtyard.**

Application Number: AWDM/1498/23 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: **The Railway Hotel 27 Railway Approach Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Application for Listed Building Consent for retention of single-storey rear extension with revised brick 'bond' undertaken in brick slips (Amendment to AWDM/1984/22); retention of wrought iron railings to raised terrace on West side; retention of replacement fire escape stairs to North elevation courtyard and proposed freestanding electrical kiosk on West side.**

Date of site visit: With RS 09.02.2023

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The applications relate to ‘The Railway Hotel’ (formerly The Grand Victorian) located on the east side of the corner of Railway Approach and Oxford Road, opposite Worthing rail station.

The property, comprising a public house with guest rooms on the upper floors, has recently been extensively renovated and refurbished throughout, including the conversion of the eastern ‘wing’ (formerly a nightclub but subsequently vacant for several years) to provide additional guest bedrooms. There is an enclosed pub garden to the south of the building with outdoor seating.

The building is Edwardian in the ‘Vernacular Revival’ style and Grade II Listed, described as:-

WORTHING TQ 1403 RAILWAY APPROACH (east side) 753/17/10026 Chapmans II Includes: Chapmans, OXFORD ROAD Alternatively known as: Central Hotel, RAILWAY APPROACH. Hotel and public house. c1900 with some late C20 alterations and extensions to rear. Vernacular Revival style of red brick in English bond with timber-framed gables with plastered infill and tiled roof with tall brick chimneystacks. EXTERIOR: the principal feature is a 3-storey octagonal corner turret with ogee-shaped tiled dome with finial. Arched doorcase below into Public Bar. Remainder of 2 storeys and attics. Elevation to Station Approach has 4 gables, one projecting, with two single and two double doors and frosted glass to all windows on ground floor. Elevation to Oxford Road has one gable with timber-framing, 6-light window to second floor, 4-light window to first floor and 2 half-glazed doors and 2 windows all with cambered headed windows with stained glass fanlights with leaf decoration and frosted glass windows. Late C20 II 01- SEP-1997 conservatory to rear.

INTERIOR: public bar retains lincrusta ceiling, 2 Tuscan columns painted to represent marble, mahogany dado panelling, wooden partition with engraved glass panels, large wooden clock, tiled fireplace, bar fitment with round-headed arches and original counter with floor tiling in front of it. Staircase hall has well staircase with widely spaced balusters.
Listing NGR: TQ1452703318

Residential flats within Abbey House are located on the opposite corner, on the west side of Oxford Road. To the south of the site, beyond the walled pub garden, is an end-of-terrace building and associated outbuildings, Nos. 40. 40A and 40B Oxford Road, all now in residential use. Beyond 40B to the east, is a warehouse building (No.42) in use as a dog day care business.

To the east of the site is a private access road and beyond that the new 5-storey Teville Gate House HM Revenue office building.

This report covers both the application for planning permission and listed building consent.

Background and Proposal

Planning permission and Listed Building Consent was granted last year for the above-mentioned refurbishment and renovation works which involved alterations to the internal layout of the public house on the ground floor together with a single-storey rear extension and removal of an existing unsympathetic UPVC conservatory structure on the south-west side of the building.

These works have been implemented except that the rear extension has been undertaken with a larger ‘squared off’ footprint than as approved under AWDM/1983/22 and AWDM/1984/22. A condition of the planning permission required the face brick used for the construction of the extension to be agreed and also stipulated that the bond, pointing style and colour of the existing

brickwork should be matched. The external walls of the extension have been faced in brick ‘slips’ rather than constructed in brickwork. Although the colour and texture of the ‘slips’ are a reasonable match to the original adjacent brickwork, they have been laid in a ‘stretcher’ bond rather than the distinctive ‘English’ bond used on the original building. Unfortunately this mismatch between the new work and the original building is further accentuated by the bright white colour of the grouting between the slips.

Full permission and LBC is sought to retain the larger footprint of the rear extension as built, and to re-face the external walls of the extension using the same brick slips but using the correct ‘English’ bond.

As approved under AWDM/1983/22 and AWDM/1984/22, following removal of the UPVC conservatory structure, the brick base has been repurposed to create an external seating area enclosed by railings. A condition of the planning permission required details of the proposed wrought iron railings to be submitted for approval. Black wrought iron railings with an arrowhead-style finial have been installed without this condition being approved and full permission and LBC is now sought for their retention.

A condition of AWDM/1983/22 also required details of the design and finishes of a new spiral fire escape staircase shown on the approved drawing as replacing part of an existing fire escape located in the north-facing courtyard to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Similarly, this condition was not approved and an alternative replacement fire escape has subsequently been installed. Full permission and LBC is now sought for its retention.

Finally, LBC is sought to install a freestanding UKPN electrical kiosk (1500mm high x 1500mm wide x 600mm deep) on the paved forecourt on the west side of the main building (fronting Oxford Road). The green GRP cabinet will be supplied and installed by UKPN. It is required for a power upgrade necessary to run the services of the hotel.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/0418/23 Hand sign-written lettering to cornice band externally illuminated by 3no trough lights, internally illuminated menu boxes, and a new externally illuminated projecting sign (retrospective). Granted Consent.

AWDM/0500/23 Application for Listed Building Consent for hand sign-written lettering to cornice band externally illuminated by 3no trough lights, illuminated menu boxes, and a new externally illuminated projecting sign. Granted Consent.

AWDM/0248/23 Conversion of former nightclub to provide 17 new hotel rooms at ground and first-floor level with associated internal and external alterations, new windows and door to east and west elevations and replacement double doors to north elevation. Approved and implemented.

AWDM/0249/23 Listed Building Consent for removal of old toilet block to 1st floor, removal of nightclub interior to include bar, staircase and ceilings. Construction of 17 new hotel rooms with associated internal and external alterations, new windows and door to east and west elevations and replacement double doors to north elevation. Granted Consent and implemented.

AWDM/1983/22 Removal of UPVC conservatory additions with existing base retained and adapted to form external seating area enclosed by wrought iron railings, single-storey rear extension, new exterior doors onto raised platform with steps and ramp access to rear garden. Removal of existing glass/wrought iron canopies to North and Northwest entrances. Restoration of cut-glass windows. Removal of existing fire escape within North Elevation Courtyard and replacement with new galvanised spiral staircase; new planter and external lighting within courtyard. Erection of roofed fixed seating and timber pergola structures within the rear pub garden plus fixed seating booths and new fencing. Installation of 6no new lamp posts to the North and West perimeter of premises. Approved March 2023 – Part implemented [The permitted refurbishment works to the pub garden involving the new pergola structure and fixed seating booths have not been implemented to date, nor have the 6no column lampposts.]

AWDM/1984/22 Application for Listed Building Consent for removal of UPVC conservatory additions with existing base retained and adapted to form external seating area enclosed by wrought iron railings, single-storey rear extension, new exterior doors onto raised platform with steps and ramp access to rear garden. Removal of existing glass/wrought iron canopies to North and Northwest entrances. Restoration of cut-glass windows. Removal of existing fire escape within North Elevation Courtyard and replacement with new galvanised spiral staircase; new planter and external lighting within courtyard. Erection of roofed fixed seating and timber pergola structures within the rear pub garden plus fixed seating booths and new fencing. Installation of 6no new lamp posts to the perimeter of premises. Internal Works involving removal of internal walls to kitchen and central lobby plus removal of raised floor areas, fixed seating, existing bar and toilet cubicles with revised internal layout to facilitate operational improvements to connect to both sides of pub, enhancement of toilets, kitchen and bar areas, restoration of level access to all areas and provision of new accessible toilet. Minor works to bedrooms above pub. Granted Consent March 2023 – Part Implemented.

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council: No objection.

Adur and Worthing Councils:-

EHO (Public Health):- No comment.

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan (2023): DM5, DM10, DM12, DM23, DM24
National Planning Policy Framework (HCLG 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

The application property is an important building not only in terms of its heritage status, but also owing to its prominent position within a key 'gateway' location to the town and the town centre. The recent comprehensive refurbishment works and re-branding as 'The Railway Hotel' has undoubtedly reinvigorated this previously underutilised public house and together with the provision of new and refurbished guest accommodation has make a positive contribution to the visitor economy of the town in this important location.

The main considerations arising from these current applications for adaptations to the works initially approved under AWDM/1983/22 and AWDM/1984/22, are the effects on the historic character and significance of this designated heritage asset and on visual amenity. The minor changes raise no adverse impacts for the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers.

There are no highway safety implications arising from the proposed changes, and the LHA has raised no objection.

Visual Amenity and Effect on Historic Character and Significance

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2023) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:-

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 205-206 state that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal 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 including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Policy DM24 states that planning and/or Listed Building Consent will only be granted for development effecting a designated heritage asset provided the appearance, significance or historic character of the Listed Building will not be adversely affected.

The minor enlargement to the footprint of the rear extension (by 1.2m x 3.65m) is not significant and has had no adverse implications for the historic character of the building. If anything, the omission of the recess to the rear doorway leading into the rear garden area(s) results in a simpler, neater appearance, with the rear wall of the extension now aligned with the rear of the adjacent original single-storey component. The distinctive 'English' bond of the original brickwork was previously discussed on site with the Applicant and Contractor. The subsequent use of the incorrect bond for the brick slips used to face the extension was therefore extremely disappointing. The commitment to remedy this error is welcomed and can be secured by a planning condition. The 'bright white' grout that has been used with the brick slips further highlights the incongruity of the new work compared to the weathered mortar of the original brickwork. A different coloured grout could be used but the specification supplied with the current application indicates that there are many different factors that could ultimately influence its appearance. It is suggested that a trial on a small, inconspicuous part of the rear extension is undertaken to determine whether a different grout colour would help the re-laid brick slips integrate more seamlessly with the original brickwork component.

The application submission suggests that the railings that have been installed around the repurposed brick platform match the existing railings enclosing the north forecourt. Whilst they do have a *similar* arrow-head shaped finial, the finials are in fact 'flatter' in shape than those on the existing railings, and the metal uprights thinner. The resulting appearance is slightly 'weak' in comparison. That said, in visual terms the repurposed seating terrace enclosed by wrought iron railings is undoubtedly an improvement on the former UPVC conservatory which stridently conflicted with the historic character of the Listed building and detracted from its appearance. Whilst not of the preferred design, the black wrought iron railings that have been installed to enclose the raised seating terrace are traditional in appearance, similar to those on the frontage and will help safeguard the historic character of the building and its setting.

Rather than the spiral staircase in the courtyard indicatively shown on the drawings approved under AWDM/1983/22 and AWDM/1984/22, an alternative replacement black-painted, metal, open-tread, external staircase has been installed with an L-shaped layout. The replacement fire escape stairs are necessary to comply with Building Regulations. The upper part of the

replacement stairs (leading from the retained first-floor platform) is sited parallel to the single-storey component of the frontage building and is largely screened from direct views from Railway Approach by the courtyard wall. This run leads to a lower platform with the bottom run of steps sited at 90º turning into the courtyard and clearly visible through the courtyard archway from Railway Approach. Whilst the siting and more 'robust' design of the replacement stairs is now more conspicuously apparent within the courtyard than those they replaced, there appears to be no practical alternative. The Council's Conservation Architect has raised no objection. A condition of planning permission should ensure the staircase is retained in black.

The proposed green-coloured GRP UKPN cabinet will be sited on an area of paved forecourt fronting Oxford Road, just south of the main chamfered entrance to the pub on the corner. It will be sited 0.6m in front of the western elevation of the building, adjacent to, but not in front of, the decoratively shaped/framed ground-floor window openings on this elevation. Although not affecting any original historic fabric, the proposed cabinet, with its modern, utilitarian-looking external housing will undoubtedly be a conspicuous and somewhat unsightly addition to the setting of this Listed Building and the surrounding street scene in general. However, the Agent has confirmed that having suggested other less prominent locations, the requirements of UKPN for access to the electrical equipment contained within the cabinet means, unfortunately, there is no practical alternative to the siting proposed. The Agent has further stated that the hotel accommodation is currently run from two different incoming electrical supplies which is not viable going forward as 3no new first-floor guest rooms and 1no on the ground-floor within the former nightclub 'wing' cannot be used until the upgrade has been completed. Whilst disappointing, the resulting harm to the setting of the listed building can be considered 'less than substantial' and is outweighed by the significant public benefit of bringing the former vacant nightclub component of this strikingly grandiose Listed Building back into viable use in this key 'gateway' to the town centre. This has been accepted by the Council's Conservation Architect.

Recommendation

AWDM/1497/23

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved plans
2. Within 3 months of the date of this permission the external wall of the rear extension hereby permitted shall be re-faced using brick slips to match the colour and texture of the existing but carried out in an 'English' bond to match the bond of the original adjacent brickwork. The colour of the grout used between the brick slips shall match the mortar colour of the original adjacent brickwork as closely as possible.

AWDM/1498/23

Expiry Date - 19/01/2024

GRANT CONSENT

Subject to Conditions:-

1. LB 3 Year Time Limit
2. Approved plans
3. Within 3 months of the date of this permission the external wall of the rear extension granted consent shall be re-faced using brick slips to match the colour and texture of the existing but carried out in an ‘English’ bond to match the bond of the original adjacent brickwork. The colour of the grout used between the brick slips shall match the mortar colour of the original adjacent brickwork as closely as possible.
4. The wrought iron railings enclosing the raised seating terrace and replacement fire escape section hereby permitted shall be retained in black at all times.
5. Once the electrical equipment hereby granted consent is no longer required, the electrical kiosk/cabinet hereby permitted shall be removed from the site as soon as is reasonably practical and the external surfacing made good.
6. Make good any damage to fabric of LB

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 02.01.2024

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 2 January 2024