Expiry Date - 03/10/2023

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1102/23 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Sand Bay Brunswick Road Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Replacement of existing timber doors (south elevation) for new UPVC doors

Date of site visit: 25.08.2023

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a part 2/part 3-storey mixed-use building formerly The Brunswick and Thorn public house on the ground-floor with bed & breakfast accommodation on the first-floor. There are 2 flats on the second-floor, one of which comprises manager's accommodation.

The building occupies a prominent corner position and consists of a series of conjoined buildings with an inner courtyard. It is attached to residential terraces on the north side of Brunswick Road and the west side of Thorn Road. Originally named the "King & Queen", the building dates from the mid-C19. It was remodelled and renamed 'The Brunswick Hotel' in 1874. It is identified by the Council as a 'Local Interest Building' making a positive contribution to the Marine Parade and Hinterland Conservation Area.

The ground-floor is currently is use as educational/skills project with a community café run by 'Sand', providing business and enterprise skills to young adults learning difficulties aged 16-25 preparing them for independence. There is no formal planning record for a lawful change of use from the former public house.

The site is within Flood Zone 3.

Proposal

As initially proposed, full permission was sought to replace the existing single leaf timber door on the east elevation (fronting Thorn Road) and 2no pairs of double leaf doors on the south elevation with UPVC replacements.

Following discussions the application has been amended to omit the replacement of the existing single-leaf door on the east elevation. Revised details have been submitted in respect of the proposed UPVC double leaf doors on the south elevation.

The application is supported by a statement and photographs which show the poor condition of the existing timber doors on the south side, commenting as follows:-

"Since 2019 when we first took on the lease of The Bay on Thorn Road we have experienced numerous issues with the current doors. We are a college supporting young people aged 16-25 with work skills and preparing for independence. Part of that offer includes a café where are trainees learn how to be a barista and build their confidence and communication skills.

There are two sets of doors; one gains access into the collage space. We have had to stop using these as they swell up in the colder months, but mostly because repeated water ingress through the doors has meant the entrance vestibule is mouldy, damp and very unattractive. We have been loath to repair and replace the matting or repaint the area as the frequency of incidents would make any attempts to improve futile and a waste of money.

The other set of doors leads into the café area. These also let water in and earlier this Summer after heavy rain we had water come in through these doors when the pavement flooded. We have had to remove all the wooden flooring in the café and again don't want to replace it until the issues have been resolved. The café is open to the public and so we are keen to progress this application so that we can replace the flooring and make the space a better environment for our customers and students.

We are very proud of the appearance of the building and would be very disappointed to install unattractive doors. Matching the existing hardwood is not a viable option as the doors need to be sealed. I have been shown the Evolution doors and would be happy to have these installed in a colour that coordinates with the building and surrounding area.

We fully support this application and would be grateful for a speedy decision as it will allow us to make good the areas damaged by water."

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/0686/17 Replace existing single-glazed timber sliding sash windows and door on south and east elevations with double glazed timber sliding sashes and door and installation of new gate and intercom system and door to bin store on east elevation. Permitted.

Consultations:

Worthing Society: Thank you for requesting our comments on the aforementioned application which relates to a prominent building occupying a corner site located within the Marine parade and Hinterland Conservation Area (CA). This characterful building, which dates from the mid-19th century is included on the Local Interest List and as such is an important element in the Conservation Area.

I have now discussed the application with our Heritage team. Although full timber replacement doors would be preferable we note that the building needs to withstand rough weather from the seafront and increased insulation is desirable. The south elevation is particularly vulnerable. The new doors are to have a white timber-grain finish and a uniform discrete design. On balance we consider the new doors will not have a detrimental impact on the CA. Therefore I am pleased to advise you that the Society has no objection to the proposal.

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM24
National Planning Policy Framework (HCLG 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance
Marine Parade and Hinterland Conservation Area Appraisal

Planning Assessment

The key consideration is the effect of the proposed replacement doors on visual amenity and on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF 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 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.

Policy DM24 states that where development affecting any designated or undesignated heritage asset is permitted, it must be of a high quality, respecting its context and demonstrating a strong sense of place.

Development in Conservation Areas will be required to be of a high standard of design and materials so as to respect, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of that area, and preserve important features. Conservation Area Character Appraisals will be used to assess applications within designated Conservation Areas and opportunities will be taken to preserve and enhance these areas, and to implement the recommendations of Conservation Area Management Plans. The importance to the local area of Buildings of Local Interest within Conservation Areas will be a material consideration in assessing applications.

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the mid-19th century origins and development of 'Little Heene' as a distinct and separate seaside resort to Worthing as centred on Brunswick Road and the 'King & Queen Inn'. It goes on to identify enhancement opportunities generally as including the

encouragement of retention and restoration of appropriate features such as timber sliding sash windows and simple 4-panel front doors.

The existing pairs of double leaf timber doors on the south side of the building are not original, dating only from 2017-8. Although of a traditional material and design (each leaf subdivided into an upper glazed panel and lower solid panel), they clearly have not been robust enough to withstand the inclement weather in this exposed location just off the seafront.

The design and proportions of the UPVC doors initially proposed, despite their wood-grain effect, would have had a noticeably more modern appearance which it was considered would detract from the important historic significance of the building and jar with its otherwise traditional character and features.

The Agent has sourced a more sympathetically proportioned and detailed bespoke-made 'UPVC 'storm' door ('The English Door' by Evolution). Although this would not replicate the slightly 'raised' profile of the solid lower panel of the existing double-leaf doors, the Council's Conservation Architect is satisfied that these would constitute a suitably sensitive replacement bearing in mind the existing doors are not original and taking into consideration the evidence provided by the Applicant of damage caused by water ingress.

Para 202 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. In this case, as there is some doubt as to whether the current use is lawful it is considered limited if any weight can be attributed to the public benefit of the current community cafe and training enterprise.

The existing white-painted timber single leaf door on the east elevation is substantially older than the double-leaf doors on the south side. Although of a simple 2-panel design, the panels have a distinctive profiled moulding which contribute to its historic interest and character. This characterful detail would not be replicated by the 'Evolution' UPVC door. Bearing in mind the position of this door on the most historically sensitive 'front' elevation of building (facing away from prevailing weather conditions) it is considered its replacement could not be justified and this element has been omitted from the current application.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. The proposed replacement double-leaf entrance doors shall consist of 'The English Door' by Evolution in Agate grey as detailed on the approved drawing 21008-P-014-D.

Expiry Date - 03/10/2023

Informative

Pro-Active Amendment

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

Case Officer:	Jo Morin	Date: 15.11.2023
Authorised by:	Gary Peck	Date: 15 November 2023