Expiry Date - 05/12/2023

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1402/23 **Recommendation – GRANT CONSENT**

Site: **Beach House Brighton Road Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Application for Listed Building Consent to replace the forecourt railings between wall piers**

Date of site visit: 23.10.2023 (with RS)

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a Grade 2* Listed Regency manor house fronting the south side of Brighton Road. The building is in residential use, subdivided into flats.

It is described in the listing as:

BRIGHTON ROAD 1. 5406 (South Side) Beach House TQ 1502 NW 5/19 3.8.48. II 2.1820 by J B Rebecca. Originally called Marino Mansion. 2 storeys, attic and basement. 3 windows. Stuccoed. Cornice and parapet. The central portion projects slightly with a pediment over. Windows in frames, the central one with entablature over. Porch in 3 sections with Doric pilasters. The south front has a curved bay of 3 windows with parapet over and Venetian shutters on the 1st floor. The East front of 1 window is also curved and has a projection on the ground floor. There is a later addition of 2 windows to the west. Edward Knoblock, Dramatist, lived here for some years and added the "Regency" internal decoration. Listing NGR: TQ1544902653*

The building has a formally laid out forecourt with steps leading up to the front entrance. The forecourt is surfaced in concrete with marked out bays and is used as car parking for the residents. That half of the forecourt closest to the building is enclosed by tall, stuccoed walls painted off-white to match the elevations of the building. The remainder, closer to the road, is enclosed by black wrought iron railings above a black-painted plinth wall interspersed by tall, off-white painted, stuccoed pillars with decoratively shaped caps. The railings are not original with a decorative ‘scroll’ detail above the vertical uprights within each panel. The railings are badly corroded with some scrollwork missing in places. The wall/railings/pillars extend up to the back edge of the pavement with an opening to provide vehicle access to the car park. The opening is not gated.

The public car parking areas fronting Brighton Road to the east and west on either side of Beach House have been similarly enclosed by black railings above a black-painted plinth wall interspersed by tall, off-white stuccoed decorative pillars positioned along the back edge of the highway fronting Brighton Road. The latter date from c.2013 and were deliberately designed to complement the wall and railings enclosing the forecourt at Beach House, creating a strong sense of visual cohesiveness. The design of the railings enclosing the adjacent parking areas does not include the decorative wrought iron 'scrollwork', and the individual uprights are positioned with maximum gaps of 99mm so as to comply with Part K of the Building Regulations.

Proposal

As originally submitted, the application included 2 options to i) replace the railings on an exact like-for-like basis in black-painted steel, or ii) replace the railings on a like-for-like basis in black-painted steel but with narrower gaps between the vertical uprights in order to comply with Building Regulations (maximum gap 99mm). The scrollwork on top of the panels will be reinstated and replaced where missing.

Following discussions with the Council's Conservation Architect, option i) has been omitted from the application.

There will be no change to the existing vehicle access arrangements.

Relevant Planning History: None

Consultations:

WSCC: No objection

Amenity Societies: No comments received.

The Worthing Society: No comments received.

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM23, DM24
National Planning Policy Framework (HCLG 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

The key consideration is the effect on the historic significance of the Listed Building, its setting and features of special architectural or historic interest.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset, or development within it setting.

The existing railings are not considered to be part of the early fabric of the manor house. The individual railing panels are typically 1.25m tall with a bottom and top rail. The bottom rail is positioned 0.13m above the plinth wall. On either side of the forecourt there are 4no railing panels filling the gap between each pillar and 2no railing panels between the pillars fronting Brighton Road. At either end of each railing panel the thicker vertical upright is caulked directly into the plinth wall for support. All the vertical uprights (existing and proposed) are square shaped.

The only noticeable change will be to the spacing of the vertical uprights in order to comply with Building Regulations. This will result in a subtle change in appearance with the slightly tighter spacing resulting in the railings having a nominally 'heavier' appearance than existing. The change in material (from wrought to steel) will mean the railings will need to be galvanised and may result in some delay before painting. The Council's Conservation Architect has suggested a condition requiring the railings are painted black within one year of implementation.

The NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Where a development proposal will lead to loss than substantial harm the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

In this case, the change in appearance arising from the tighter spacing of the railing uprights to comply with the Building Regulations can be justified on the grounds of enhanced safety, particularly in this location adjoining the public realm close to the swimming pool and public car parks, where considerable numbers of children are likely to be passing-by in close proximity.

Recommendation

GRANT CONSENT subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. LBC time limit
3. Within 1 year of implementation the railings shall be painted black and thereafter retained in black.
4. The method of fixing the proposed replacement railings to the pillars and plinth wall shall match exactly that existing.

Informative

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The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 19.12.2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 19 December 2023