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Planning Statement in connection with application for part change of use from hostel accommodation (C1) to residential (C3) at 28D Brighton Road, Lancing BN15 8RA.

Brief Description of the site and existing building:

28D Brighton Road forms part of 28A Brighton Road, Lancing, a two storey property adjacent to Beach Green, fronting directly onto Lancing Beach. The site was formerly a public house (Murphy's Bar) and amusement arcade, which was redeveloped around 2005 as a restaurant with storage and a function room above. This development was never completed and the building lay empty and semi-derelict for 4 years before the current applicant purchased it in 2011.

The original proposals were later revised to a cafe and water sports centre on the ground floor, with three residential flats and an '8 bed hostel' above: (Application Ref: AWDM/1515/12). Changes included increasing the amount of glazing to the ground and first floors, adding a balcony to the first floor and distinctive, curved, timber cladding to the North side of the roof. Work resumed in 2013 and the building was completed in its current form in 2015.

The building is now a landmark building and generally considered to be an attractive asset to the Beach Green area, which is well used by both Lancing residents and visitors alike.

Current Use:

The building currently provides a mixed use facility, incorporating a café and gym on the ground floor with three self-contained residential flats, occupying approximately 75% of the first floor. Two of the flats (C and F) are currently occupied by the owner and the manager of the café.

The remaining 25% of the first floor is currently designated as an '8 bed hostel' (C1), originally intended to provide short term accommodation for visitors to the water sports centre on weekend or week-long courses.

Considerable efforts have been made by the applicant since 2012 to implement a managed water sports centre within part of the ground floor. Initial interest was shown from several parties. One of these, 'Lancing Beach Building Collective' produced an initial marketing brochure for the site, (a copy of which is being submitted with this application). However, they eventually selected an alternative site in Worthing, (which has subsequently closed).

It has become apparent that a water sports centre offering residential courses is no longer feasible and is never going to materialise, and the space has been operating very successfully as a beach gym and fitness centre since 2015.

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There is therefore no requirement for the associated hostel accommodation. The hostel element at the East end of the first floor, (amounting to 128 sq m) currently remains an unfinished, vacant shell, its development effectively blighted by the C1 use.

Current Proposals:

The proposal is for a change of use to the remaining 128 Sq m (approximately 25%) of the first floor from hostel use (C1) to residential use (C3).

The applicant intends to fit out the space as a three bedroom flat, currently with a view to this being occupied by key Café staff. An alternative use in the future might be as a serviced holiday property.

No alterations are proposed to the exterior of the building.

There is currently one on-site car parking space serving the three existing residential flats. The applicant is satisfied that there is no requirement for additional parking associated with the proposal, as the development is adjacent to the public car park on Beach Green.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/0509/15 - Application to vary conditions 3 and 4 of AWDM/0769/13. Amendments: To allow the gym to open from 5.30am Monday to Friday, 7.00 am on Saturday and 9.00 am on Sunday. To allow the cafe to open from 6.00 am Monday to Friday, 7.00 am on Saturday and 7.00 am on Sundays and to be open until 1.00 am on a maximum of 15 separate occasions in connection with private functions only. To allow the cafe to sell food, beverages and refreshment to be consumed off the premises – Approved 09 June 2015.

AWDM/0769/13 - Application for a minor material amendment and variation of Conditions 2 and 4 following the grant of Planning Permission AWDM/1515/12 to enable changes to internal layout (including alterations to size and configuration of hotel and apartments at first floor and introduction of gym and community room on ground floor and subsequent reduction in size of water sports centre and minor elevation changes – Approved 2013.

AWDM/1515/12 – Change of use and alterations to partially-built building from permitted use as two restaurants with manager's flat above to ground floor cafe and water sports centre with 8-bed hostel and 3 flats above (2x 2 bed and 1x 3 bed) – Approved 07 March 2013.

ADC/0108/09 – Change of use from restaurant with storage and 1-bed flat to two restaurants with 2 - bed manager's flat on first floor and a new walkway around building. – Approved 28 April 2009

L/235/04/TP/21651 - Enlargement and remodeling as restaurant/bar with function rooms and first floor flat – Approved 2005.

Relevant Policies:

The site is located just outside the built-up area boundary and within the Beach Green and beach recreation area, subject to policies AR2 and AR12 of the adopted Local Plan (1996).

Policy AR2 states that *"non-recreation uses will not be permitted"*. Whilst it is recognised that additional residential use in this location is likely to be controversial, it is considered that residential accommodation for key café staff or short term holiday accommodation falls within the spirit of 'recreational use'.

Policy AR12 states that *"improvements to facilities at Lancing Beach and Beach Green will normally be permitted subject to sea defence, local access and environmental considerations."*

It is considered that these requirements would not be adversely affected by the proposed change of use.

The Council's regeneration vision for Lancing Beach (published in 2012) in referring specifically to Beach Green, (page 23 – 4) states:

"Develop a gateway building or buildings in this (previously developed) location which announces Beach Green, terminates the vista along South Street and provides activity to draw people onto the green. The types of use that would be appropriate in these buildings include cafés and restaurants at the ground floor and hotel or guest accommodation, commercial or community uses above".

The proposed change of use is therefore considered to satisfy this criteria.

Reasons for this application:

The redevelopment of 28A Brighton Road undertaken by the applicant over the last five years has broadly delivered on every promise and been extremely successful. The building has been turned from a semi-derelict shell into a landmark building and the café and gym elements of the development have proved very popular and provide a valuable facility for local residents and visitors alike.

However, the previously proposed water sports centre and associated hostel element of the development have proved to be unrealistic and unachievable. Despite initial expressions of interest, no third parties have been prepared to commit to developing such a facility in this location. The present C1 use of the vacant 25% of the first floor is therefore preventing this part of the building from being developed and it currently lies empty and is non-revenue earning.

There are two flats occupied by the owner and manager of the café and a third currently used as a successful holiday let. It is felt that the remaining space on the first floor would be best utilised as further staff accommodation or a holiday let, thereby supporting or attracting visitors to Lancing.

Conclusion:

It is therefore felt that a change of use of the remaining 128 sq m of the first floor from 'hotel' (C1) to 'residential' (C3), allowing it to be used for key staff accommodation or holiday lets is the most appropriate and commercially viable use in keeping with the vision to develop Lancing Beach as a holiday and tourist destination and we ask you to consider the proposal favourably.