From: **Ross Anthony**
Date: Wed, 18 Jun 2025 at 15:50
Subject: Application Ref: AWDM/1331/24 - Gala Bingo, Rowlands Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 3JS
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FAO: Louise Prew

Address: Gala Bingo, Rowlands Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 3JS
Application Ref: AWDM/1331/24

Proposal: Demolition of existing Buzz Bingo building and erection of a five-storey mixed-use building comprising 2 commercial units (flexible Use Class E / bingo hall) and 47 self-contained residential units (Use Class C3), with rooftop PV panels, and cycle and bin stores. Redevelopment of existing car park to accommodate the erection of a terrace of six three-storey houses with private gardens, and car parking spaces. Reconsultation: Revised plans showing a reduction in massing of the rear of the building, alterations to side facing glazing, additional units to be provided at ground floor and changes to car parking arrangement to the rear resulting in a loss of 4 spaces. Provision of updated supporting reports.

Statutory Remit: Historic Buildings & Places (formerly the AMS) is a consultee for Listed Building Consent applications, as per the *Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*. We are concerned with historic assets of all types and all ages, including conservation areas and undesignated heritage.

Comments: Thank you for notifying HB&P of the above application for redevelopment of the former Plaza Cinema/ Gala Bingo building located within the Montague Street Conservation Area.

HB&P acknowledge the existing building has been stripped of much of its original decoration and internal features and therefore do not object to the principle of redeveloping this site. However, the design and scale of the replacement building is poorly conceived and seems to lack consideration of the surrounding conservation area and the establish character. The architectural language is confused and there is a complete disconnect between the rebuilt ‘art deco’ front elevation and the style of the side elevations. This does not sit well in the streetscape.

The existing sides of the former cinema are plain and utilitarian and therefore form a backdrop to the surrounding buildings and rooflines, but this proposal introduces a very busy pattern of windows and balconies at levels above the adjoining buildings that alter the way they are appreciated in the conservation area’s streetscape. This is a clear case where Chapter 12 of the NPPF should be applied. Paragraph 135 states (with our emphasis):

135. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
(a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
(b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
(c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
(d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
(e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
(f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. There is a real opportunity to improve this part of Worthing and a more appropriate and considered architectural solution is needed to ensure this development results in a genuine long term benefit for the conservation area and wider town centre.

The need for sympathetic and well-designed development that directly affects a conservation area and setting of key listed heritage assets is emphasised by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires Local Planning Authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation.

Para 219 of the NPPF advises that new development is encouraged but must 'enhance or better reveal' the significance of the CA, stating:
'*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*'

Regards

Ross Anthony