Expires 14/10/08.

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0415/08 **Recommendation – Permit Application**

Site: **Watch Tower Old Fort Forthaven Shoreham-by-Sea**

Proposal: **Boundary fence (2m high metal railings)**

The Application

This application relates to the recently restored Watch Tower sited between Shoreham Fort and the western breakwater to Shoreham Port. Permission was granted under ADC/0741/07 to restore the building for use by the National Coastwatch Institution, with the works including new rendering, doors, a new staircase and 2.4 metre high palisade fencing. Permission was granted excluding the erection of the fencing which was deemed excessive and unsympathetic to the surrounding open beach land and Ancient Monument (Shoreham Fort). In recognition that an element of security fencing would be required, condition 4 was attached requesting a fresh application should the applicants wish to erect such fencing.
Persuant to condition 4, this application seeks permission for 2 metre high Roundex Angle metal railings to be installed around the Watch Tower. The fencing will connect with existing palisade fencing to the east and will follow the topography of the site to within 1.5m to 2.5m of the building and the staircase. To reduce its visual impact the railings will sit at the foot of the western embankment and will be completed in black.

Consultations and Representations

Consultations/Comments

English Heritage comments are awaited.

Third Parties

A nearby resident at No.183 Old Fort Road has objected on the grounds that the restored Watch Tower is now an eyesore out of context with its past. The proposed railings will bring greater attention to this eyesore and is unsightly, increasing considerably the outline of the overall structure and magnifying its impact within the area.

Contributors

No representations have been received.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005): DEV1, CH5, ERA3
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved until adoption of the new Adur Development Plan): AG1
PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (DoE 1994)

Planning Assessment

Policies
Structure Plan policies seek to protect, and where possible, enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area, requiring high standards of design, layout and construction (DEV1). In cases that will impact on listed buildings or scheduled monuments, development should not be permitted unless the statutorily listed buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and their settings, will be preserved and, where possible, enhanced (CH5). Policy ERA3 requires development in coastal areas to conserve, and where possible enhance, the distinctive character and resources of the County's coast and coastal waters, taking into account the impact on, amongst others, landscape, heritage, the environment and conservation.

Visual Amenity
The fencing as initially proposed under ADC/0741/07 was to be 2.4 metre high grey palisade railings identical to that sited around other port-related buildings/facilities in the harbour. This type of fencing was considered to be too aggressive within this sensitive open landscape and against the backdrop of the Ancient Monument (Shoreham Fort).
The revised railings have been reduced to 2 metres in height with angled tops to act as a deterrent to potential trespassers. The fencing is required as the Watch Tower is home to electrical equipment, the security of which is paramount. The fencing will act to secure this whilst also preventing possible graffiti and vandalism to the building itself. The railings will be completed in black paint in order to be recessive against the building and surrounding shingle. Black painted railings are often used on or near to historic buildings for such a reason.
In terms of footprint, the railings will sit between 1.5m and 2.5m of the building on the north, west and southern elevations and will extend to the existing chain link fencing adjacent to the western breakwater of the harbour. Although a large footprint, it is sufficient to protect the building from vandalism and will sit below the western shingle embankment such that its visibility will be somewhat reduced from the west.
It is considered that the case for fencing surrounding the Watch Tower is compelling. The modest height (2m) and finish (black) of the railings is considered acceptable in this open part of the beach and will not unacceptably detract from the setting of the Ancient Monument. Given that prior to restoration the Watch Tower was somewhat dishevelled with graffiti on

its walls, the proposed railings will serve to protect the structure from such vandalism in the future. This will in turn protect the appearance of the area. The railings will therefore not unacceptably detract from the character and setting of the Ancient Monument and SNCI, and will accord with structure plan policies CH5 and ERA3.

Recommendation

Subject to receipt of English Heritage comments raising no objection to the proposals, APPROVE for reason that :-

The proposed fencing would not detract from the local environment and can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the character and setting of the Ancient Monument. It would consequently not conflict with the policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1) and the West Sussex Structure Plan (LOC1, CH5, ERA3)

Subject to:

1. C1Ci
2. The railings hereby permitted shall not exceed 2 metres in height and shall at all times be completed in black paint.
   Reason: In the interests of amenity.

Case Officer:..... Date:30/9/08. BB 2/10/08

Planning Services Manager:..... Date:7/10/08.

Development Control Committee Chairman:... Date:7/10/08