



HERITAGE STATEMENT

42 Marine Parade, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 3QA

Prepared by: Deadspace Designs

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Planning Application: Change of Use — Ground Floor Commercial Premises to Two Self-Contained Residential Flats (Use Class C3)

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Deadspace Designs to support a full planning application for the change of use and internal conversion of the ground floor bar and commercial premises at 42 Marine Parade, Worthing from its former use as a licensed bar (sui generis) to two self-contained one-bedroom flats (Use Class C3).

The property is an end-of-terrace building forming part of the Marine Parade seafront frontage within Worthing's South Street Conservation Area. This statement assesses the heritage significance of the heritage asset and its wider setting, and evaluates the potential impact of the proposed works on that significance, in accordance with:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised December 2024 and amended February 2025 — in particular paragraphs 205-214
- Historic England's 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' (2008)
- Historic England's 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' (Good Practice Advice Note 2, 2015)
- Policy DM15 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) of the Worthing Local Plan 2023
- The South Street Conservation Area Appraisal, Worthing Borough Council (adopted June 2009)

The statement follows Historic England's recommended approach of first establishing the significance of the heritage asset before assessing the impact of the proposed works on that significance. This methodology is consistent with GPA Note 2 and with the requirements of the NPPF.

2. Heritage Asset Status and Designations

2.1 Conservation Area

The application site is located within Worthing's South Street Conservation Area as defined by the adopted South Street Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009). Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The statutory duty of the Local Planning Authority under section 72 of that Act is to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

2.2 Listed Buildings in the Vicinity

Number 42 Marine Parade is not itself individually listed. However, it sits within a sensitive heritage context:

- The building is adjacent to and forms part of a row that includes Grade II listed Regency terraces forming part of the Marine Parade seafront ensemble.
- The site is in close proximity to the Grade II Listed Worthing Pier, a significant landmark on the Worthing seafront.

The settings of these listed buildings are a material consideration in assessing the impact of the proposed works. This matter is addressed specifically in Section 5.3 of this statement.

2.3 Article 4 Directions

The South Street Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009) records that an Article 4 Direction applies within the conservation area, specifically to the area comprising Western Row, Edinburgh Cottages, Brunswick Cottages, and the old coastguard house on Marine Parade. This direction removes permitted development rights in those specific locations so that the Local Planning Authority can control relatively minor works in the interest of the character and appearance of the buildings and the area.

The application site at 42 Marine Parade does not fall within the area subject to that Article 4 Direction. No Article 4 Direction applies to the application property. The proposed external works are in any event subject to full planning permission through this application and are not being carried out as permitted development. The Article 4 Direction has no bearing on the proposed works.

2.4 Local Listing and Other Designations

The building is not understood to be on Worthing Borough Council's Local Interest List. There are no scheduled monuments, registered parks or gardens, or registered battlefields in the immediate vicinity that would be affected by the proposal. The South Street Conservation Area Appraisal records that there are locally listed buildings on Marine Parade, but number 42 is not among them.

3. Understanding the Significance of the Heritage Asset

3.1 Historical Development of the Area

Worthing evolved from a small fishing hamlet into a fashionable seaside resort during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The arrival of Princess Amelia in 1798 accelerated the town's development as a high-status resort, and Marine Parade became the primary fashionable thoroughfare — a parade designed to provide sea views and promenading opportunities for wealthy seasonal visitors.

The South Street Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009) records that this section of seafront is particularly important as the original 19th century form of development largely remains intact, describing it as a fine section of seafront exhibiting the evolution of seafront terraced architecture from the early Regency period through to the grand Victorian era. The buildings along Marine Parade were constructed principally during the Regency and early Victorian periods, initially as lodging houses and private residences for seasonal visitors, later transitioning to a mix of commercial and residential uses. Number 42, an end-of-terrace property at the junction with Montague Place, forms part of this historic seafront ensemble.

3.2 Architectural Significance

The South Street Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009) specifically identifies the architectural, historic and townscape elements of the seafront frontage that should be preserved. These are quoted directly from the Appraisal:

- Three to four storey terraced properties built on very narrow plots at the back of the pavement
- Light painted stucco elevations
- Slate pitched roofs
- Cant bays or bows with double hung timber sliding sash windows
- Architectural detailing including cornices, string courses, banding and parapets
- Decorative lamp posts
- Traditional seafront shelter

Number 42 Marine Parade contributes to all of the building-related elements in this list. It is a three-to-four storey end-of-terrace property with light painted stucco elevations, traditional timber sash windows, decorative cornices, and a consistent building line forming part of the unbroken terrace frontage along Marine Parade. Its end-of-terrace position at the junction with Montague Place gives it additional prominence within the terrace, providing views along both the Marine Parade frontage and the Montague Place secondary elevation.

3.3 Social and Historic Significance

The building contributes to the social and historic significance of Marine Parade as the primary surviving expression of Worthing's development as a fashionable Georgian and Victorian seaside resort. Significantly, the South Street Conservation Area Appraisal notes that the properties along this section of the seafront are mainly in residential use, particularly flats. This directly confirms that the established and prevailing character of the area is already substantially residential, and that the proposed residential use of the ground floor is entirely consistent with the character that the Appraisal itself identifies.

3.4 Contribution to Conservation Area Character and Identified Negative Factors

The South Street Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009) identifies the seafront frontage as a defining element of the conservation area's character, specifically noting the importance of the unbroken terrace frontage, the consistent architectural language, and the relationship between the built frontage and the promenade.

Critically, the Appraisal also specifically identifies dead frontages and properties not in full use as negative features within the conservation area, and explicitly calls for owners and occupiers to implement schemes of repair, maintenance and external decoration to achieve a harmonious and attractive seafront. The current position — a vacant former bar with a non-active ground floor — represents precisely the type of dead frontage that the Appraisal identifies as harmful. This is a material consideration that weighs directly in favour of the proposed change of use.

4. Description of Proposed Works

4.1 External Works

External works are minimal and are strictly confined to secondary elevations only. The principal Marine Parade seafront frontage is entirely unchanged:

- West elevation (Montague Place): An existing window opening is adapted to provide a residential access door, constructed in traditional timber to match the existing joinery on the building. This is the sole external alteration to the west elevation and is not visible from the Marine Parade seafront frontage or the promenade.
- Rear elevation (north): An existing rear door is upgraded, with an altered fanlight, using traditional timber to match the existing building fabric. The existing roof windows on the rear, north-facing roof slope (bedroom flat 2) are to be retained.
- Principal front elevation (Marine Parade, south): NO CHANGE WHATSOEVER. The seafront frontage of the building — the element identified by the South Street Conservation Area Appraisal as carrying the greatest heritage significance — is entirely unchanged in every respect.
- Courtyard (west side): Hard and soft landscaping to create two private courtyard amenity spaces on the western side of the building along Montague Place, replacing a disused commercial service area with an attractive, well-maintained residential curtilage.

4.2 Internal Works

The internal works comprise studwork partitioning and layout changes to create two self-contained flats within the existing ground floor footprint, plumbing, electrical and mechanical services installation, acoustic separation works between the new ground floor flats and the existing residential flats above in accordance with Building Regulations Part E, and decoration, kitchen and bathroom installations. No structural alterations to the external envelope are proposed. No historic fabric of any significance is disturbed or removed.

5. Impact Assessment

5.1 Methodology

The impact of the proposed works has been assessed by reference to the significance of the heritage asset as described in Section 3, considered against the nature and extent of the proposed works as described in Section 4. The assessment follows Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 2 ('Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment', 2015), identifying first what is significant, then assessing how the proposal affects that significance.

5.2 Impact on the Significance of the Building

The proposed works do not affect any of the elements specifically identified by the South Street Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009) as requiring preservation. The architectural character of the building — its stucco facade, traditional sash window joinery, decorative cornices, slate roof form, and principal proportions — is entirely preserved without alteration. No historic fabric is removed, damaged, or obscured.

The minor external alterations are confined to secondary elevations forming no part of the Marine Parade seafront frontage. Both works use traditional timber to match the existing building fabric. They are reversible in principle — the window-to-door adaptation on the west elevation requires only reinstatement of the original opening if future circumstances were to warrant it. Neither work is visible from the Marine Parade frontage, the promenade, or any principal public vantage point.

The internal conversion of the ground floor does not affect the heritage significance of the building. The upper floors have already been converted to four residential flats. The proposed ground floor conversion is consistent with the established and prevailing character of the building and of the wider Marine Parade area, which the Appraisal confirms is already mainly in residential use, particularly flats.

5.3 Impact on the Setting of Listed Buildings

The setting of the adjacent Grade II listed Regency terraces and the Grade II Listed Worthing Pier is not affected by the proposed works. The setting of these assets is defined primarily by the scale, form, and architectural character of the Marine Parade frontage — the unbroken terrace line, consistent building heights, and historic seafront ensemble described by the Appraisal as an area where the original 19th century form of development largely remains intact.

The proposal introduces no change whatsoever to the scale or massing of the building, no change to the principal Marine Parade elevation, and no change to the terrace form, building line, roofline, stucco render, or any architectural detailing. The contribution of number 42 to the setting of the adjacent listed buildings is fully and completely preserved. No harm to the setting of any listed building arises from the proposed development.

5.4 Impact on the Conservation Area — Preservation and Enhancement

The South Street Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009) identifies specific architectural, historic and townscape elements that should be preserved. The proposal preserves every one of those elements without exception:

- Three to four storey terraced properties built on very narrow plots at the back of the pavement: **PRESERVED** — no change to height, massing, plot width or building line.
- Light painted stucco elevations: **PRESERVED** — the principal facade and all stucco elevations are entirely unchanged.
- Slate pitched roofs: **PRESERVED** — no change to the roof form whatsoever.
- Bays with double hung timber sliding sash windows: **PRESERVED** — all windows on the principal elevation are retained intact. The single window adapted to a door is on the secondary west elevation only and is not visible from Marine Parade.
- Architectural detailing including cornices, string courses, banding and parapets: **PRESERVED** — no architectural detailing is altered, removed or obscured.
- The historic relationship of buildings to the promenade and seafront: **PRESERVED** — the building continues to address Marine Parade and the promenade with an entirely unchanged principal elevation.

The proposal goes beyond preservation — it delivers a genuine and measurable enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, directly responding to the Appraisal's own stated enhancement objectives:

- The ground floor is brought back into permanent, active residential occupation, eliminating the dead frontage specifically identified by the Appraisal as harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
- The building will be regularly maintained, inhabited and cared for, improving its condition and active presence on the seafront frontage.
- The western courtyard landscaping replaces a disused commercial service area with an attractive planted space, improving the Montague Place secondary elevation in line with the Appraisal's calls for enhanced repair, maintenance and external treatment.

- The removal of a vacant commercial use eliminates the ongoing risk of visual blight and deterioration associated with long-term vacancy in a prominent Conservation Area setting.

The proposal therefore both preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the South Street Conservation Area, meeting the highest standard of the test under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy DM15 of the Worthing Local Plan 2023.

6. Policy Compliance

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2024) — Paragraphs 205-214

Paragraph 205 requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. No harm to any designated heritage asset is caused by this proposal. All elements identified for preservation by the adopted Appraisal are fully maintained. The great weight owed to conservation therefore supports rather than conflicts with the proposed development.

Paragraph 206 requires an assessment of whether a proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. As demonstrated in Section 5.4, the proposal both preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the South Street Conservation Area. The test under paragraph 206 is met in full at the highest standard.

Paragraph 208 sets out the less-than-substantial harm balancing exercise. This exercise is not engaged because no harm is caused. However, even if any harm were identified — which is not accepted — the public benefits of the proposal would clearly and substantially outweigh it: bringing a long-vacant building back into active use; providing two residential units; securing long-term maintenance of a historic building; removing a dead frontage specifically identified as harmful by the Appraisal; and delivering positive enhancement of the seafront character.

Paragraph 214 confirms that weight given to conservation should be proportionate to the importance of the asset. The building is within a Conservation Area, but is not individually listed. The level of significance is moderate. The level of physical intervention is minimal — confined to secondary elevations, in traditional materials, invisible from the principal public frontage. The heritage consideration is fully proportionate and comprehensively met.

6.2 Worthing Local Plan 2023 — Policy DM15

Policy DM15 requires development affecting the historic environment to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and to protect the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings. The proposal satisfies Policy DM15 in full:

- The character and appearance of the South Street Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced.
- The significance and setting of the adjacent Grade II listed Regency terraces is not harmed.
- The significance and setting of the Grade II Listed Worthing Pier is not harmed.
- The limited external works are confined to secondary elevations, reversible in principle, and executed in traditional materials sympathetic to the existing building.
- The principal Marine Parade seafront frontage — the element of greatest heritage significance — is entirely unchanged.

6.3 South Street Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009)

The proposed development is consistent with and positively advances the objectives of the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal. Every element identified by the Appraisal for preservation is maintained intact. The Appraisal's enhancement objectives — specifically the elimination of dead frontages and the encouragement of repair, maintenance and external decoration to achieve a harmonious and attractive seafront — are directly and positively served by this proposal.

7. Conclusion

The proposed development at 42 Marine Parade has been designed with careful, specific and documented regard for the building's historic context and its contribution to the South Street Conservation Area.

The significance of the heritage asset has been established through rigorous assessment of the building's architectural, social and historic interest, and its contribution to the Conservation Area as defined by the adopted Appraisal. The proposed works have been carefully designed to avoid any adverse impact on that significance. Every element of the building identified by the Appraisal for preservation is fully maintained.

The principal Marine Parade seafront frontage is entirely unchanged. No change is made to the scale, massing, roofline, stucco elevations, sash windows, cornices, or any other feature identified as significant. The limited external works are confined to secondary elevations, executed in traditional materials matching the existing building, and are invisible from the Marine Parade frontage, the promenade, or any principal public viewpoint.

The setting of the adjacent Grade II listed Regency terraces and the Grade II Listed Worthing Pier is not affected in any respect. No Article 4 Direction applies to the application property.

The proposal both preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the South Street Conservation Area. It causes no harm to the significance or setting of any designated heritage asset. It directly and positively advances the South Street Conservation Area Appraisal's (June 2009) own stated enhancement objectives by eliminating a dead frontage and bringing a vacant historic building back into permanent active occupation.

The proposal fully satisfies the requirements of section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, paragraphs 205-214 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024, amended February 2025), Policy DM15 of the Worthing Local Plan 2023, and the objectives of the Marine Parade and Hinterland Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009).

Planning permission should accordingly be granted.
