Application Number: AWDM/0016/12 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Shoreham Health Centre, Pond Road Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5US

Proposal: Galvanised tube guard railing to edge of flat roof of three-storey Health Centre

Applicant: W Sussex Primary Care Trust Ward: St Mary's
Case Officer: Hannah Barker

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The health centre building, dating from the 1970s, comprises two floors of accommodation above an open ground floor podium which forms a staff parking area. The main entrance is on the first floor via a raised ramped area and steps which adjoin either side of the library to the south. There is an open grassed area in front of the building, adjoining Pond Road.

The proposed railings are to run along all four edges of the flat roof of the building, set in by 1 metre from the roof edge which has no parapet. There will be two horizontal rails, the top one at 1.1m high and the middle one at 0.55m high. The vertical supports are at 2.5m intervals. The railings are to be angled slightly inwards at the top and will have weighted floor feet rather than fixed to the roof.

The vacant three-storey flat-roofed Burrscrofte home lies to the north, with two-storey dwellings/flats in St Mary's Close to the south east and two-storey terraced houses in Western Road to the north east. On the opposite sides of the roads, the Grade I listed Church of St Mary de Haura lies to the south and the Community Centre to the west. The site and surrounding properties are all within the Conservation Area.

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted with the application.

Consultations and Representations

Adur District Conservation Advisory Group: Recommend approval.

Third Parties: No comments received.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AB4, AB11
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS5 ' Planning for the Historic Environment' and Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (DCLG 2010)

Planning Assessment

Principle

There is no objection in principle to alterations to the Health Centre. The relevant concern is the visual impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby historic listed church.

Visual impact on Conservation area and setting of listed building

In accordance with the statutory duty, policy AB4 of the Local Plan states that new development (including extensions and alterations) within Conservation Areas will be required to be of a high standard of design and construction materials such as to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the particular Conservation Area. Also following the statutory duty, policy AB11 requires proposed development located within the setting of a Listed Building to be of a design and materials not adversely affecting the setting.

The proposed roof railings will be starkly noticeable against the skyline when viewed across the open grassed area from Pond Road because the Health Centre building is higher and more dominant than the library to the south. There are trees to the rear, north, and to a lesser extent the south, which would obscure the view from those directions. However, the railings will affect the view of the church tower from Pond Road and, for this reason, it is considered that they will have some adverse effect on the setting of the listed church.

Need for the railings

The applicants state that the need for the railings has been identified as a result of a survey of all its properties. The agent states they are essential to meet with current Health and Safety legislation, namely the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

There is a permanent access hatch onto the flat roof and there are 4 air-conditioning condenser units close to the edge of the roof (about 1.5m from the edge) that require regular maintenance. There are also existing raised glass rooflights on the roof. The applicants state that there is a risk to personnel accessing the roof because there is no existing roof edge protection. H & S assessment requiring the railings to be erected is based on the assumption that personnel accessing the roof will be untrained. The alternative of using ‘Mansafe’ cable systems, whereby a safety harness is used as a precaution when the roof is being accessed, can only be used by trained personnel and the other alternative of regular hire of platform equipment is stated as being prohibitively expensive.

There have been discussions with the applicant’s agent with regard to the possibility of restricting the railings to one area of the roof to limit the visual impact. However, some of the air conditioning condensers are on the south

west front corner, which is one of the most prominent parts, and the other items are not confined to one area.

Conclusion

It is considered, on balance, that the degree of need for the proposed railings from a Health and Safety viewpoint outweighs the degree of harm they would cause to the Conservation Area and setting of the listed building.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason:-

The proposed railings would cause some detraction from the appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade I Listed church of St Mary de Haura but it is considered that the degree of harm is outweighed by the Health and Safety justification. The proposal is not considered to conflict materially with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AB4, AB11).

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard 3-year time limit.
2. No development shall be carried out unless and until a sample of the proposed railing material and finish has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: -
Site layout plan - 31125 Drawing no.05
Proposed guarding rail around perimeter of flat roof - 31125 Drawing no.04A

.....