Expiry: 2/2

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1668/23 Recommendation: Grant

Site: 4 Farncombe Road, Worthing

Proposal: Retrospective application for installation of 1 no. cooling unit on the northern elevation of Worthing Probation Office

Date of site visit: 12/12

Neighbours checked: y

Additional neighbour notifications:

Site and Surroundings

4 Farncombe Road is a large detached red brick building over three floors occupied by Worthing Probation services. It has been extended considerably to the rear over two floors. On both sides there is access to rear car parking. The frontage also includes car parking. The adjoining site, to the north, is a large dental practice.

The property is in the Farncombe Road conservation area and is identified in the local plan as a Local Interest Building.

Proposal

Permission is sought to retain a single air con unit added to the north wall. The unit is 1.17m above ground level and is 1 metre wide and 900mm tall. It is set back from the main front wall by 6.5 metres.

Relevant Planning History:

96/0097 – Application under Reg 4 for the construction of two ramps, provision of car park barrier and revised car park layout. Granted 19.3.96

91/0037 – New door south elevation. Granted 22.3.91

Consultations:

Environmental Health: 'No comment.'

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Worthing Society:

Thank you for requesting our comments in respect of the aforementioned retrospective application.

This red-brick Victorian building, formerly Sydney Lodge, is included on the Council's Local Interest List and has a prominent position within the Farncombe Road Conservation Area (CA).

The cooling unit on the tall, north facing elevation is clearly visible from the street as the property sits slightly forward of the building line. This unit also detracts from what appears to be an original basement window just visible at ground level. Although the garden area has long been given over to hard standing, the building still contributes positively to the CA.

We consider the new unit is out of character and harms the setting of both 4 Farncombe Road and that of the adjacent period property. It would be unfortunate if the siting of this cooling unit were to set a precedent for other properties as this would not enhance the CA.

I have discussed the application with our Heritage Team and for the reasons stated we object to the application.

Conservation Architect:

'Looking back on Google Street View, I note that various changes have been made to this elevation, the air con unit being the latest addition. All this external plant is an eyesore and should not be supported in my opinion.'

Representations:

None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5
National Planning Policy Framework (HCLG 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance
Farncombe Road conservation area Appraisal

Planning Assessment

The key considerations in this case are the effects of the air con unit on the appearance of the property and the conservation area and any potential impact on adjoining neighbours.

Conservation/Visual Amenity

The unit is visible between the properties. However, it is considered that it is set far enough back from the road not to cause any significant harm to the appearance of the conservation area or building itself. It is also removable and has not interfered to any great extent with the fabric of the building.

Residential Amenity

The nearest residential neighbours are at 2a Farncombe Road, south of the site or on the opposite side of the road. The dental practice to the north has not raised any objection to the unit.

It would appear that no nuisance is being caused.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer:	MOK	Date:	16/1/24
Authorised by:	Jo Morin	Date:	17.01.2024