Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1552/23 Recommendation: REFUSE

Site: Church House, 29 East Street, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 5ZD

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for new like for like entrance porch to replace previous rotten porch

Date of Site Visit: November 16th 2023.

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

The application relates to a Listed Building Consent to this grade II Listed Building situated within the town centre of Shoreham-by-Sea. It was listed in 1972 and the listing reads:-

"House. Early-mid C18. Incised render with plinth and plat-band. Plain tiled roof with central flat headed dormers. Two storeys and attic; regular 3 window front, glazing bar sashes. Central panelled door in Gibbs surround with fanlight and wooden architrave surround. Flat entablature hood on columns."

The site lies within the Shoreham Conservation Area. St. Marys Church, also a Listed Building, lies to the west of the property, indeed the street and immediate area contains many Listed Buildings.

Church House has been converted to a dental practise some years ago, and has been altered within and added to at the rear.

Proposal:

The Listed Building Consent application seeks consent for the:-

1. Temporary removal of the flat roof porch;
2. Repair the damaged and rotten sections of the porch;
3. Reinstate the repaired porch.

Planning History: Various applications

Consultations:

Design & Conservation Architect

Various correspondence throughout the time of the application, and before the submission of the application, including correspondence to the applicant regarding the process of how to repair damage of the porch versus when to apply for Listed Building Consent.

In summary, if no other information received for the application which overcome his earlier objections, then he cannot support an approval of the application.

Adur District Conservation Advisory Panel

Approval

Representations: None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 15, 16, 17
Shoreham by Sea Conservation Area
Listed Building
Character Appraisal & Management Strategy (ADC 2008)
National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Planning Assessment

Historic Assets:

Listed Building Consent applications are assessed in accordance with the effect of the works on the conservation and enhancement of the Listed Building.

Listed Building Assessment:

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time.

The current use of the property is as a dentist, which of course entails visiting members of the public. The entrance to the building is at the front (west), and viewing the submitted photographic evidence of the columns it can be seen that they are made of timber and have patches that are decayed. This damage could have been caused for many reasons, but generally poor maintenance over the years

would be the likely reason. Suffice it to say that they will need to be satisfactorily repaired to a good standard in keeping with the heritage asset; and the works are urgent as the failure of the columns would mean the collapse of the flat roof canopy. Both of which would be injurious to either the heritage asset and/or members of the public.

However, since the application was submitted, the owners have removed the whole structure without any discussion, and when challenged, they have stated that the whole of the porch was rotten and needed to be removed for safety reasons.

This is very disappointing particularly given that their submitted Design & Access (D&A) statement, which does contain a few photographs of the canopied porch, reveals that the ceiling of the porch has some details on it of a central flower (rose?) and other curlicues and leafs (ivy?)

The D&A also points out that the roof of the canopy is currently felt, and suggests that the original roof is likely to have been lead.

The D&A similarly suggests work to the porch to keep it safe and how/what repairs should be undertaken including removal of layers of paint. And finally suggests that a regular maintenance regime should be put in place to ensure the structure remains in a sound condition.

There is no information as to why works could not have been done without the canopy being removed.

Subsequent to the removal of the porch, photographs have been submitted to support their claim that the porch was too rotten to keep, and there are also submitted photos to show that the porch has not been stored for safe keeping but has been left in the open to all weathers.

There is also no documentary evidence of each piece of the porch, and details of what work will be undertaken to each piece in order to strengthen it ready for its reinstatement.

Over 6 months ago, an email was received from the applicant which states that: -
“The process of restoring the porch has proven to be more intricate than initially envisioned. The contractors estimate that this undertaking will require a minimum of 10 weeks and there’s a possibility that it might take longer. I want to assure you that our focus remains on ensuring a thorough and accurate restoration, even if it extends the timeline.”

Since that time the LBC application has been received and the porch has been removed.

There has been no update from the applicant as to what the position is with the repairing of the porch.

National Planning Policy Framework para 16 states *"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification."*

Impact on character of Listed Building

The loss of the porch has resulted in a denuding of the Listed Building, indeed the reference to the porch is included within the Listing, "*Flat entablature hood on columns."* Clearly therefore it is an important feature of this listed building, and should be repaired and replaced.

In light of the removal of the porch and the fact that the pieces have not been safely stored in order to repair the pieces, together with no categorizing taking place of each of the pieces in turn, the application will be refused, and the file returned to enforcement to serve an enforcement notice regarding the situation, and seeking the safe keeping of the removed porch pending its repair.

Recommendation REFUSE

1. The removal of the porch has resulted in unacceptable and significant harm to the historic fabric, character and appearance of the Listed building. The application is therefore contrary to policy 17 of the Adur Local Plan and part 16 of the NPPF

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation N

Case Officer: Eve Hearsey Date: 25.04.2024

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 25 April 2024