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**From:** Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk> **On Behalf Of** Conservation Officer  
**Sent:** 01 December 2025 17:26  
**To:** Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Hebe Smith <Hebe.Smith@arun.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** BR/176/25/PL

**BR/176/25/PL**

The Pier The Esplanade Bognor Regis PO21 1SY

Change of use of existing redundant storage building located at the south end of the pier to become a cafe/sauna. This application affects the character and appearance of The Steyne, Bognor Conservation Area, affects the setting of a listed building and is in CIL Zone 3 (Zero Rated) as other development.

The Pier is a Grade II Listed Building which is also located within a conservation area.

### The Pier

Built in 1865 for the Bognor Promenade Company Ltd, the pier was extended in 1912 with large pavilions housing a theatre, arcade, shops, and a picture house, designed by G.C. Smith. A small pavilion at the seaward end collapsed in 1965, and the wooden stage tower was removed in 1972.

The pier is constructed of iron posts with wooden decking and cast iron railings. The shore-end pavilions are roughcast with varied roofing materials. The two-storey arcade facing the promenade features a hipped roof, ornate central pediment, Art Nouveau stained glass, and modern shopfronts below.

The former theatre at the rear includes two square towers with flagpoles, keyed arches, and modillioned cornices. The original entrance is now obscured by later additions. Side elevations have pedimented gables and mullioned windows. The former open arcade beneath the balcony has been enclosed, retaining original columns. The pier is considered to derive its significance from its architectural, historical and communal interest.

### The Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is illustrative of the growth of Bognor Regis in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and derives its historic interest from its links to the development of Bognor Regis as a seaside resort town as well as its association with the founder of Bognor Regis, Sir Richard Hotham.

The conservation area has a strong grid pattern. It is clear in 'plan view' that the conservation area includes a series of roads which run on a north south basis which link up the promenade on the southern boundary of the conservation area with West Street, which is located (in part) to the north.

Architectural interest is derived from the various buildings with architectural features such as terraced houses with bay windows and balconies and building materials, such as render. The variety of buildings present creates a jostling vitality quite different in character from the formal buildings of Sir Richard Hotham's resort, which is located to the north around Upper Bognor Road (and is the subject of a separate conservation area)

Like the Royal Norfolk, the pier is an imposing building, which extends out into the sea. Its appearance and size has changed over the years as a result of a lack of maintenance and loss of various elements. However, its location and size mean that it forms a clear focal point along the seafront as well as in views across Waterloo Square.

### **The Proposal**

The proposal is for the change of use of existing redundant storage building located at the south end of the pier to become a cafe/sauna.

The building forms part of the Grade II listed pier, and as a result any changes to it need to be carefully considered. It is a single-storey timber-framed building positioned to the rear of the main pier building. It has weatherboarding and a somewhat complex pitched roof. We are informed that historically, it has been used for storage but that it has fallen into disrepair in recent years. Due to lack of maintenance, it currently appears dilapidated and detracts from the visual quality of the pier complex.

There are two elements to this application:

- The change of use
- The various physical alterations to the structure itself.

At present, the current condition and appearance does not have the best impact upon the listed pier, and I am of the opinion that a new use which would ensure that the structure is not only put into a good state of repair but also maintained on an ongoing basis is positive. The new use would also ensure that the structure is used as opposed to be left to deteriorate further.

While the proposal presents an opportunity to revitalise the space and support the pier's ongoing use and maintenance, it currently poses significant challenges in terms of some of the physical alterations.

The proposed exterior design includes multiple windows, timber cladding, signage, and what appears to be an artificial grass wall. I am concerned that these elements are not fully informed by an understanding of the pier's historic character.

The installation of numerous windows would result in the loss of significant timber walling and historic fabric. It would also expose the structure, particularly during the winter months when internal lighting is in use, as the building is clearly visible from the promenade in both directions. However, if carefully integrated, this approach could help open up the building rather than appearing as an afterthought. Introducing windows could make the structure feel more connected to the pier, rather than looking like a small, poorly designed addition.

The application form specifies UPVC or aluminium windows, while the heritage statement proposes aluminium. Please confirm which material is intended. I must stress that UPVC would be unacceptable in this context.

In addition, the proposed timber cladding and artificial grass wall are visually out of keeping with the strong seaside character of the locality. The external walls should be finished in painted render to reflect the appearance of nearby historic structures on the pier.

Although, in general, I am of the opinion that the various internal works are acceptable, subject to clarification regarding the introduction of new water supply and drainage. I would not want to see historic fabric altered in the creation of an appropriate drainage run.

## **Conclusion**

The current proposals do not appear to be informed by the historic character or significance of the listed pier and are therefore harmful. The proposal is such that the impact can be described as causing less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF (2024). As such, you will also need to consider the public benefits that the development may achieve as part of your assessment of the application, along with the contents of section 16/72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

**Martyn White**  
**Principal Conservation Officer, Planning**

T: 01903 737717

E: [Martyn.white@arun.gov.uk](mailto:Martyn.white@arun.gov.uk)

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