
Site: 2 – 4 Waterloo Square, Bognor Regis
Status: Full Planning Application
Reference: BR/282/19/PL
By: D. Edwards
Date: 31st January, 2019

1. Overall, the revised scheme has considered a number of the pre-application comments:
 - a. Reduced quantum and building height.
 - b. Continuity with the floor levels and horizontal banding of neighbouring buildings and the wider street elevation.
 - c. Similar treatment to the surrounding buildings (white render rather than yellow brick).
 - d. More contemporary elevations with larger openings (improved light and views) and materials that will be less susceptible to weathering.
 - e. More sensitive and harmonious connection to Waterloo Court.
 - f. Particular attention to scale and massing at the corner of Waterloo Square and The Esplanade.
 - g. Green roof and permeable paving.
 - h. Visual impact from the wider locale.
2. It is also noted that the proximity of proposed development to the mainline train station/ town centre activities coupled with its prominence might support a greater density, a reduction in parking provision and a bespoke type and mix of accommodation.
3. However, significantly, the site also occupies a unique and sensitive location; it completes a square in a conservation area and is adjacent to a distinct local landmark and heritage asset in the pier.
4. While this should encourage a 'place-first' approach to new development, the revised scheme still appears to be driven by the intent to maximise the number of units:
 - a. It remains unclear how the proposed quantum has been determined.
 - b. The application of minimal space standards does not support a high-quality offering and as such, the case for a reduction in affordable provision.
5. This manifests itself in a significantly larger mass than any other building in the conservation area and the surrounding context:
 - a) Twice the height of Waterloo Court.
 - b) Five floors taller than some buildings in the street elevation.
 - c) Three floors taller than the Carlton and Royal Hotels on The Esplanade.
6. The basis for the proposed height appears to be the taller point blocks on Queensway, which are not applicable to the particular conditions of the application site.

7. While some consideration has been applied to integrating with neighbouring buildings, the variation in height and mass is such that the proposed scheme would appear as an independent entity (illustrated in 'View 2' in Section 7.1 of the DAS).
8. As a result, rather than supporting a sense of unity and harmony, the proposed scheme is considered to have a negative impact on the composition of Waterloo Square and consequently, the character of the conservation area.
9. The Heritage Statement asserts that proposed development is at the edge of the conservation area, neighbouring buildings have limited historical significance and that any development will have less impact on the character of the conservation area than a vacant site. These views are not shared; the site completes the elevation of a traditional public square, frames a view of an important local landmark and heritage asset and represents a unique scale of opportunity to repair and enhance the conservation area.
10. In addition, there remains a concern for the following aspects:
 - d) The overall quality of accommodation through the extent of natural light that is likely to penetrate into the depth of the plan, particularly for units that are facing east/ Norfolk Street.
 - e) Green roof – this does not appear to be incorporated in the current plans/ section.
 - f) Sweep path of service vehicles along Norfolk Street.
 - g) Viability of a single lane access ramp to sub-level parking and the potential impact of waiting vehicles on wider traffic flows around Waterloo Square.
 - h) Height of ground floor accommodation and access to the basement in relation to a 1 in 100-year event with adjustment for climate change.