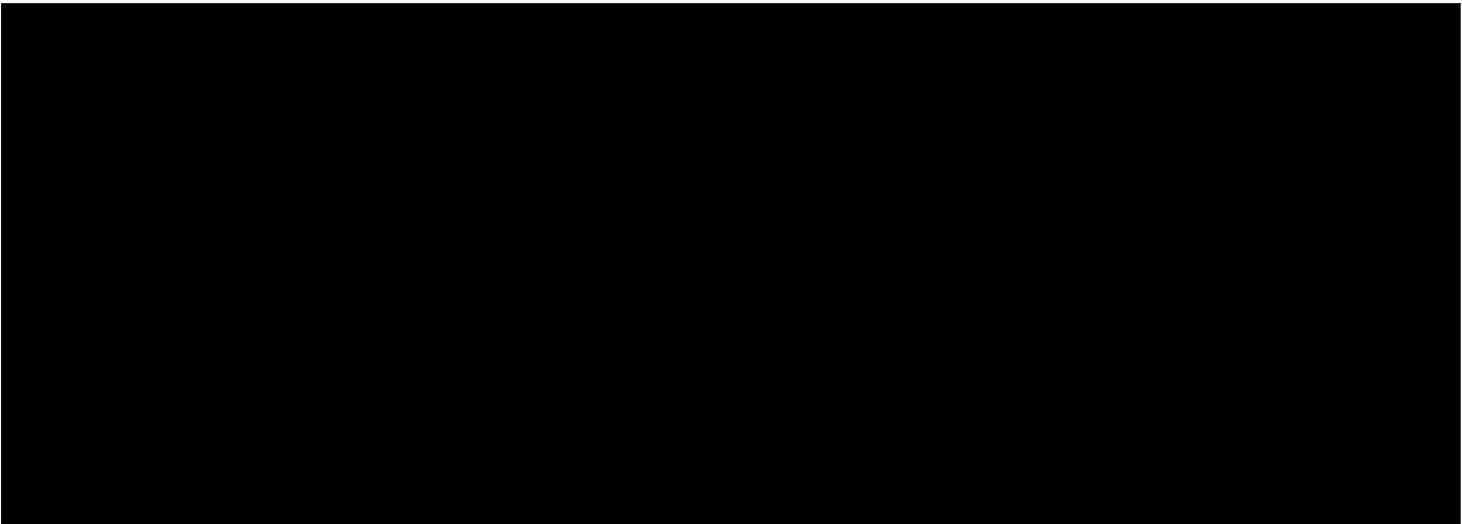




From: Martyn White
Sent: 19 July 2019 14:42
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Cc: Anita Gardner <Anita.Gardner@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: LU/126/19/PL

LU/126/19/PL

The application site is located within the Littlehampton – River Road Conservation Area. The River Road Conservation Area is situated to the west of Littlehampton town centre and runs parallel to the River Arun. It developed in several stages during the first half of the 19th Century. At the Surrey Street end the buildings as far as Hampton Court were originally known as Seaview and contains all the Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area. They were originally occupied by town dignitaries and those who had an interest in the sea and seafaring. This group are of two- and three-storey town houses built as semi-detached houses or in short blocks.

Of greater relevance to this application is the presence of a second distinct area to the west of Hampton Court and along lengths of Purbeck Place and Terminus Place. The buildings in this area are smaller and simpler than those to the east. They are predominantly of two storeys and front on to the carriage way. The elevations are treated with painted render. The application site is located within this area.

The Proposed Development

The application proposes the demolition of the existing car garage/workshop and the erection of two blocks of apartments, which collectively provide 9 residential units. One of the units will front on to River Road, whilst the other will front on to Terminus Place.

The units are rendered with mansard roofs. Undercroft parking is provided to both units, with the parking to the Terminus Place unit being visible to the street.

The application raises a number of issues which shall be discussed in turn below:

Change of use

Historically, the conservation area would have had a more diverse mix of uses, which have (to some extent) informed the development of the area). However, as of 2019 it is predominantly residential in nature with limited alternative uses present in the locality. The properties immediately surrounding the site appear to be purely residential, with modern development from the last 20 or so years having taken place in the place of former river wharfs.

Based on the current character of the conservation area, it is considered that the change of use to residential will not harm the established character of the road.

The loss of the existing garage building

As part of reviewing the application it has been necessary to review the historic mapping used by the LPA. A review has noted that a structure of similar dimensions appears on the 1911/1912 OS map. This indicates that a structure (possibly this one) was present during the 20C.

It is considered that whilst a reminder of the former use, the structure does not make an important contribution towards the established character of the street-scene. In-fact it can be considered to detract from the neighbouring properties when viewed from River Road. On balance, its loss can be considered to be acceptable.

The design/appearance of the proposed apartment blocks/impact upon the surrounding area

The concept of redeveloping the site offers the opportunity to better reveal what is important about the site and local area. This concept should inform the proposed design of the development, as should an assessment of the local area.

As the development consists of two independent units, they shall be discussed in turn.

River Road Apartments: the proposal is for a three storey, building which follows the building line of the neighbouring properties. The concept of maintaining this street frontage will ensure that the character of the local area can be reflected. However, the current proposal is problematic:

The properties within the conservation area are constructed with pitched roofs, whereas the proposed building will have a mansard roof. Further, the proposed dormers are large and occupy a large proportion of the roof, and a basic assessment identifies that there do not appear to be any in this particular part of the road. This feature is considered to be out of character, and it is not clear what the justification for including this is. This issue is especially important on the road facing elevation, where the development could have a significant impact.

The concept of providing car accommodation on the ground floor to provide for parking spaces (and potentially deal with flooding issues?) would enable slight references to the sites previous use. Further the fact that a gate is provided to hide the parking from sight is a positive feature. The design should ensure that this gate remains closed unless in use.

Whilst generally positive, it is suggested that further consideration could be given to the two gates. For instance, their treatment and appearance; could they be the same in terms of appearance and design, or can the design of the bin store be amended to look more like a single door? Etc. this is a point for detailed design issues but should be considered none-the-less.

I note that reference is made to the quality of materials, and this could be conditioned in order to ensure that they are suitable for a conservation area. Materials would have to be of high quality.

Terminus Place Apartments: This apartment block is much larger than the first one. Whilst there is an apartment block to the north of this, it appears to be only three storeys, as opposed to the proposed 4.

Both the existing, and the proposed block of apartments are in conflict with the general character of Terminus Place (and Purbeck Place) where the traditional properties within the conservation area are two storey, terraced houses. This character is also evident on the section of River Road closest to the application site.

As with the River Road apartment block, it is noted that apart from the existing apartment block, the properties are constructed with pitched roofs, whereas the proposed building will have a mansard roof. This is out of character, and it is not clear what the justification for this is. This issue is especially important on the road facing elevation.

Further, the presence of the Undercroft, and varied fenestration pattern, means that the building does not have a positive impact upon the street-scene.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development will not adequately reflect the character of the conservation area. As such it is considered that the impact can be described as causing less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2018). 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 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

For your information, the Planning Practice Guidance states that public benefits include:

sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation