

From: Amanda Scholes on behalf of Planning.Responses
Sent: 19 November 2020 11:17
To: Planning Scanning
Subject: FW: LU/247/20/PL

Amanda Scholes | Receptionist, Department, [Arun District Council](#) | Location: Ground Floor, Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF

Internal: 37736 | External: +44 (0) 1903 737500 ext 37736 | E-mail: amanda.scholes@arun.gov.uk



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Save the environment - think before you print.

From: Anita Gardner <Anita.Gardner@arun.gov.uk>
Sent: 18 November 2020 14:16
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: LU/247/20/PL

Anita Gardner
Principal Planning Officer,
Directorate of Place

T: 01903 737529
E: anita.gardner@arun.gov.uk



Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Rd, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5LF
www.arun.gov.uk

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From: Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk>
Sent: 09 November 2020 16:22
To: Anita Gardner <Anita.Gardner@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: LU/247/20/PL

LU/247/20/PL

57 River Road Littlehampton BN17 5DD

Partial demolition of existing building, retention of boundary wall & street facade, partial demolition of boundary wall to incorporate new pedestrian gateway & gate, erection of 6 No. flats in 2 blocks connected by shared stair & lift core, on site parking yard for 8 No. cars & 8 No. cycles & space for communal refuse & recycling bins

The existing property is an attractive small warehouse that has been adapted a number of times since its construction. It is one of two unlisted, but locally important buildings, which are rare survivals of the east bank wharves and quays. The other building being 49 River Road. The property also has an area of land to one side which is enclosed by walling to the road.

The Littlehampton Extensive Urban Survey states: '(at) 47 River Road an early riverside flint and brick warehouse survives, with a mid-19th century warehouse built adjoining to the north-west (now Riverside Autos)'.

It is considered that, even with these changes, as one of the last remaining wharfs in the town, it makes a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the conservation area. As such, it has been identified as a Locally Listed Building or Structure of Character (policy HER DM2 of the Arun Local Plan). the aforementioned neighbouring property is another Building or Structures of Character (49 River Road).

It is important to note that other former warehouses in the road have already been redeveloped, leaving on the principal facades as part of a larger scheme.

In addition, the property is located within the Littlehampton (River Road) Conservation Area. A key element of the conservation area is its relationship with the river. River Road runs parallel to the river (to its west) and the site looks directly on to it. Wharves were developed in the area in the 18th century and, especially the early 19th century.

The conservation area was enlarged and extended westwards in 1991 to include some of the remaining 19th century riverside buildings and those fronting Terminus Road which reflect the growth of the harbour at that period. It is of architectural and historic significance.

The proposal

The proposal is for the demolition of the majority of the existing building, retaining the front façade (which would be repaired) and the construction of two linked blocks of apartments. Whilst this proposal is a revision to a previous application it raises similar issues that require consideration. I note that revised plans have been submitted during the lifetime of the application. These revised plans only appear to relate to the red line of the site plans, and not to the design/appearance of the proposal.

Context

Whilst the road consists of a number of terraces with narrow vertical breaks, it should be noted that the yard to the side of 47 River Road is one of the last remaining undeveloped areas along the road. In addition, it appears to be an area of land that is associated with the property. This area of land is therefore important to the character of the local area, as well as for its association with 47 River Road.

Historical mapping identifies that the area has remained undeveloped and unchanged. It also affords the opportunity to look out of the conservation area to the west bank and further remains of further remnants of the area's association with the river. Although the new river wall unfortunately reduces the links with the river.

The development of this section of undeveloped land would result in the loss of this space. Whilst it would be desirable to retain such a gap site in order to preserve the pattern and rhythm of development in the street, it is also acknowledged that the site and the building are both in a poor state of repair and some form of development here does have the opportunity to enhance the area.

Loss of the asset

The proposal seeks to replicate the approach undertaken with the neighbouring development. That is to say, retaining the front façade of the existing warehouse and developing behind it. Unlike the neighbouring development, this proposal will also encroach upon the land to its side.

The existing building is considered to be a crucial dimension to the sense of place and local history, and it is considered that its loss would be harmful to the local character of the conservation area. It is thought that the only way that the loss of the building could be considered is as a result of issues related to its structural ability to tolerate conversion. I note that a structural report is provided as part of the application but will have to rely on others suitably qualified to provide comments on its content.

If there is clear and convincing evidence to justify the loss it is suggested that the building could be recorded, and the relevant information deposited at the West Sussex Historic Environment Record for future reference.

Further, if the concept of demolishing the existing building is accepted by the authority, it is suggested that the materials from the demolished building could form part of the proposed building works.

The Proposed Development

The propose development consists of two blocks of apartments with a glazed central area which incorporates the access stairs. Such a proposal is an improvement on the previous scheme which covered the entire area. The use of pitched roofs is also positive and reflected buildings in the local area.

The concept of splitting the building with a glazed area in between seems to be a positive approach. In terms of the impact of the development on the character of the local area it is thought that the southern block may be one floor too high. At present that is quite a difference between the height of the proposed building and the neighbouring heritage asset (a Locally Listed Building or Structure of Character). It is thought that the proposed development at this height would negatively impact on the setting of the asset. It is suggested that a reduction in height would reduce that impact.

I note that in the southern element the two upper storeys are to be metal clad, however it is not clear what the first floor is to be clad with; the drawings indicate that it will be the same. This requires clarification. If you are minded to approve the application details of the materials and joinery should be supplied to the council by way of condition.

Conclusion

Any level of harm to the historic environment, no matter how small is still harm, and as such an impact should be considered when determining any proposal. This proposal, whilst considered to be an improvement on the previous scheme is still harmful and based on the policies of the NPPF

will have to be identified as being less than substantial in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2019).

As a consequence, an assessment will need to be made which assesses the harm against any public benefit, in accordance with the NPPF and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

Martyn White
Principal Conservation Officer,
Planning Services



Please note: I work on Conservation for half of the working Week (all day Monday and Friday and Tuesday Afternoons)

T: 01903 737717

E: Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk or Conservation.officer@arun.gov.uk

Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Rd, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5LF
www.arun.gov.uk

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