

Rustington Convalescent Home Summerhouse: Heritage Statement

The application site is situated within a wider, historically important, nine acre site on the seafront at Rustington. Although the wider site is not located within a Conservation Area, it includes two Grade II Listed buildings; the Convalescent Home and the Laundry Building. The remainder of the buildings on-site, including the existing summerhouse, are curtilage listed.

Planning Policy requires that all applications affecting the historic environment be demonstrably informed by an understanding of the relevant heritage assets. The significance of any heritage assets should also be preserved or enhanced through development wherever possible, or, if harm will occur, wider public or heritage benefits should be delivered to balance such impacts out.

Curtilage listed buildings are protected by listed building policies, however the key consideration in any decision-making affecting changes to curtilage listed buildings does still remain whether the special interest of the principal listed building will be harmed.

The Convalescent Home

The Grade II Convalescent Home is the focal point of the wider site. Built in 1897 as a place of respite and relaxation for Members of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters, the Home is built in a grand neo-Caroline classical style, decorated with tall multi-light sash windows, an active roofscape of gables turrets and cupolas, and prominent rusticated quoins to the building corners. Comprising three storeys, with a long southern façade, the Convalescent Home is prominent in views from Sea Lane despite its well set back position from the road.

The Laundry Building

The Grade II Laundry Building is a much more modestly scaled two storey brick building, its architectural design is however still clearly influenced by the neo-Caroline style of the larger listed Convalescent Home and it still shares some of the more grandiose decorative details of the principle building: multi-light sash windows; an active double pitched roofscape with a central cupola, and a large square entrance bay at its west end, complete with over-sized finials. Reflecting its ancillary status however, the window surrounds and quoins on the Laundry are accented in red brick rather than stone or stucco. The tall laundry chimney also dominates the northeast corner of the building, clearly demarcating its original service function.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance for local planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation of heritage assets during development.

The NPPF acknowledges that intelligently managed change to heritage assets, including listed buildings and their settings, can sometimes be necessary and positive for helping historic places remain vital and prosperous, for the enjoyment of future generations.

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF requires that planning applications should always be informed by an understanding of the significance of heritage assets, which should be used to seek to minimise harm wherever possible.

Within the settings of heritage assets, local authorities are encouraged to look for opportunities for new development which will enhance, or better reveal their significance where possible (paragraph 137).

Local Policy

Saved Local Plan Policy DEV11 (Setting of Listed Buildings) states that proposals which adversely affect the setting of a Listed Building, or group of Listed Buildings, will be resisted. The policy includes that *where the principle of development in the grounds of, or near to Listed Buildings is acceptable, it should be sensitively designed and constructed of appropriate materials to ensure that the special qualities of the older buildings remain unimpaired. Where relevant, appropriate space about the building or buildings must be retained.*

Draft Policy HER SP1 (The historic environment) includes that for Statutory Listed Buildings, development proposals must preserve the building, its setting and any features of special architectural and historic interest it possesses.

Draft Policy HER DM1 (Listed Buildings) includes that development should protect, and where possible enhance the setting of the building.

Draft Policy D SP1 of the draft Local Plan states that all development proposals should be of good quality and demonstrate a high standard of design.

Impact of the Proposal on the significance of the Listed Buildings

The thoughtful and conservative design of the replacement summerhouse, as illustrated in the submission drawings, would preserve the historic character of the site and the listed buildings, whilst the high quality materials used have been carefully considered, ensuring that they respect the listed buildings.

The proposed design has sought to enhance and preserve the character and appearance of the Listed Buildings and their setting, as required by draft Policy HER SP1 and draft Policy HER DM1 of the emerging Local Plan. We consider the design of the proposed summerhouse represents an improvement compared to the existing summerhouse and is therefore an enhancement to the setting of the Grade II listed buildings. Therefore, we consider the design of the replacement summerhouse is acceptable.