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PLANNING/DESIGN STATEMENT
and

Heritage Statement

**For the occupation of two ground floor holiday apartments
as a combined manager's flat in connection with
the remaining holiday apartments
(part of the former
'Meyrick Court Apartments')
10 Trinity Crescent
CT20 2ET
for
Kent Rooms Ltd**

Ref: 14/19

April 2019

INTRODUCTION

This design statement is prepared in accordance with the CABE guidelines, and a Heritage Statement is included because the site is in the Conservation Area

This re-application of Y18/1418/FH is made to reinforce the comment that if the applicant cannot live on site, in order to run the business with reduced overheads, the business WILL CLOSE, and all holiday apartments will be lost.

DESIGN (use, amount, layout, scale, landscaping & appearance)

Background/use

Planning Consent was granted (ref SH/83/1121) for the conversion of the former Meyrick Court Hotel, to C3, self-contained self-catering holiday apartments.

Owing to a decline in demand for tourist accommodation of this sort, consent was granted for ½ of this operation (No 8 Trinity Crescent), to be converted into self-contained flats (Y14/1301/SH). As a result of this work, the access to the former unit 2 in No 10 became impossible, and subsequently consent was granted to convert the 2 basement apartments in No 10 to a self-contained flat (ref Y15/1069/SH)

At around the same time, the owner's accommodation was granted a LDC for use as a self-contained flat, and is now an open market unit (Y15/0422/SH)

As a result of these consents, there remains 5 units in No 10 Trinity Crescent. These continue to be marketed as the former 'Meyrick Court Apartments' and achieve occasional bookings from the tourist trade. They are still subject of consent No SH/83/1121, and have a Condition (no 2), restricting occupation to 2 months in any 6 months.

The Planning Case

A recent application to remove the occupancy condition on the remaining units, ref Y18/1027/FH was refused, on the grounds that:

*The proposal would result in the loss of holiday accommodation, in an area that is popular for tourist activity and that contributes significantly and positively to the local economy. **The application fails to demonstrate that the accommodation is unsuitable to meet visitor demand, or is poorly located in relation to the main areas of tourist activity, or is unviable in its current use, with no evidence of marketing supplied, and as such would result in harm to tourism in the District and the local economy contrary to policies DSD and CSD3 of the Shepway Core Strategy, saved policies SD1 and TM2 of the Shepway Local Plan Review and policy E4 of the emerging Places and Policies Local Plan***

And an application to combine 2 of the apartments to create an on-site manager's flat ref Y18/1418/FH, was refused for the same reasons

As testified by the Chairman of the local Hoteliers Association, this kind of accommodation cannot compete against the growing number of 'Boutique' hotels, and self-catering apartments that are cropping up in the town.

Furthermore, figures supplied by the applicant suggest that his not inconsiderable investment in the accommodation (to bring it up to a reasonable standard), plus the cost of employing staff, mean that it is a failing business.

Faced with a refusal to remove the occupancy condition on SH/83/1121, and therefore with no option but to operate the units in a more cost-effective way, the applicant has concluded that the only way he can 'save his business' (his words), is to live on site and to manage the property himself, acting as manager, receptionist, night porter, chambermaid and cleaner, and to see if he can make it work

Hence the wish to take 2 of the units out of the equation, and to convert the Ground Floor of the building into a managers flat/office/Reception, and to run the business himself, living on site so as to fulfil the function of 24/7 night porter.

This was the thrust of the application that was refused, and it is now the wish that the Council look at the inevitable consequence of this decision, that the business WILL CLOSE, and all units will cease to operate with the loss not only of visitor accommodation, but rates to the council, and spin off for the local economy.

Amount

The application involves amalgamating 2 studio apartments into one 2-bed self-contained apartment on the same footprint (for which we understand planning consent is not required)

Layout

The layout is shown on the attached plans, and involves linking 2 one-bed studio apartments via one single new door opening, to create a self-contained 2-bed apartment..

Scale

The scale is consistent with the existing building, and is in context with the existing buildings in the crescent.

Landscaping

There are no landscaping issues attached to this application.

Appearance

The appearance of the house reflects the existing character – there will be no discernable change to the property.

The balance of the self-contained holiday apartments will remain available to book on the 'Meyrick Court Studios' website.

A C C E S S (pedestrian, vehicular and transport links and inclusive access)

Access to the site is unchanged. Inclusivity will be improved by the creation of better facilities in the apartment, but this is restricted by the existing layout.

Vehicular access is unchanged – with on-street parking, there is plenty of parking for residents' as well as visitors' cars.

There is a convenient bus route on Sandgate Road, and much of the Town is accessible on foot.

Sustainability

The existing building had suffered some neglect over the years, and the current owner has carried out some improvements, and upgrading of the infrastructure, such as condensing boiler, improved electrical installation, etc, in each of the apartments.

Insulation has been incorporated into walls, and each unit has an independent heating system, with up to date controls.

Also, during the construction process:

- Minimum Code 3 of the CfSH will be achieved
- Minimising off site waste
- Incorporation of water saving measures in the detailed design (including water-efficient taps and showers), and the reuse of recycled materials particularly in matching materials.
- Improved thermal efficiency in the construction of walls, windows and roof as far as practically possible to achieve a minimum in the Building Regulation Standards.
- Additional measures are include drying space, energy efficient lighting, cycle storage, recycling and waste management measures.

Consultation

We have not consulted on this particular issue, although a recent application to remove the occupancy restriction of the remaining apartments has been refused (Y18/1027/FH), despite our frequent requests for the case officer to let us know if more information was required in support of the application (see emboldened text in the ground for refusal).

We note that Folkestone Town Council raised NO OBJECTION to this proposal, and we will seek their SUPPORT for this renewed application

As ever, if there are issues relating to this application, we would welcome an early discussion with planning officers.

P O L I C I E S :

The South East Spatial plan is no longer relevant

The Kent & Medway Plan is no longer relevant

Kent Design is an overriding planning guidance document, that is subtitled 'towards a sustainable future'

We believe the aims of Kent Design are embodied in to this solution to the brief.

The implications of the newly introduced NPPF are taken into account:

The 'spirit' of the NPPF seeks to encourage sustainable development, and defines the three main planks as 'economic', 'social' and 'environmental' – 'providing there are no material indications otherwise'

Decisions are still to be plan-led, and it therefore assumed that the 'saved' policies of the District Authority's Local Plan (LDF) are still material considerations....

SDC saved policies include:

POLICY SD1 – the description of sustainable development in NPPF covers this

Policy BE1 – the design is a result of careful manipulation of potential space, and is thought to be acceptable in terms of design standards

Policy HO8 – refers to the adaptation of the available building stock, to meet local needs

Policy TM2 – (formerly TM5) – and SPG

2.1.1 the current accommodation is not suited to meet tourist demands

3.1.1 the premises have never been graded against ETB, AA or RAC standards

3.1.2 there are currently no 'SDC Minimum Standards', and nor has there been a 'Shepway Holiday Guide, for many years, or TIC support to receive bookings

This is backed up by a statement from the Chairman of the Folkestone Hoteliers Association, who says:

'I would support it but only unofficially as they have never been members so not aware of their grading or any other details. SDC don't grade and haven't done a holiday guide or any other destination marketing for years as it was cut from budget and Discover Folkestone took over. I don't believe they have been a member of any organisation or grading board unfortunately which is very typical with small tourism businesses.'
Regards,
Dan

3.2 assessment against availability of similar accommodation within the area, must be a judgement of the LPA. 6 holiday lets have been retained as a result of these applications

3.3 Tourist demand will be considered according to the views of the ETB, and the SETB, and the Folkestone, Hythe and District Hotel and Catering Association, is out of date, as, according to the opinion of the Chairman of the Folkestone Hoteliers Association, in supporting this application:

'The trends done nationally by the likes of PKF, PWC, Jones Lang Lasalle & Christies, does indicate that the accommodation providers industry has predominantly split into two main markets and both of these markets are successful in the main when the properties are branded.

The two markets are budget but quality such as Premier Inn & Holiday Inn Express and the other is luxury (4-5 star) such as Double Tree by Hilton, Radisson Blu, Indigo....

This is where there is growth around the country with new properties and also the latest fad is "trendy budget" such as Bloc and (Marriot) Moxy or "lifestyle accommodation" such as (Best Western) Vib.

Of course there is good demand for niche properties such as fine dining or spa and "boutique" hotels or heritage properties but traditional BBs are only surviving if they are very good quality (4-5 star guest accommodation standard).

I've been saying for a while that Shepway still has many low quality guest accommodation providers and coach party hotels but in my opinion they are a dying breed and these properties need to be either upgraded such as Langhorne to 10 to 12 or converted to quality flats (as they probably were originally).'

6.1 suggests that applications for change of use **could** supply information on the operation. In this case, it is not strictly a change of use, but a change of tenure that is sought.

6.2 suggests that costs of upgrading the facilities **could** be provided.

The **Conclusion** of the SPG states:

8.1 that the foregoing information will be considered by the Council in applying Policy TM5 (now TM2) for a change of use of a **hotel** premises. This premises is for self-contained self-catering holiday accommodation, and is currently regarded as C3 Flats by the Council

Emerging Local Plan:

Policy E4

Hotels and Guest Houses Applications for the change of use or redevelopment of hotels, guest houses or self-catering units which would result in a loss of visitor accommodation will only be permitted where:

1. The standard and type of accommodation that is, or could be provided at reasonable cost, is unsuited to meet visitor demands;
or
 2. In the case of hotels and guest houses, the premises or site are poorly located in relation to the areas of main tourist activity or tourist routes, and uses in the immediate vicinity are predominantly unrelated to tourism or incompatible with the continued tourist use of the premises; and
 3. In addition to the above, it has been demonstrated that the business has been marketed at a reasonable rate and for a period of 12 months.
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1. Above has been described by the Chair of the Hoteliers association.
 2. It is accepted that the location is good for tourist demand, and that in itself, this is not grounds for supporting this application
 3. The business is continually marketed on its own website – there is no other available vehicle, as described by the Chair of the Hoteliers Association.

NPPF Heritage Statement

Prepared as required as the site is in the Conservation Area

HE1 deals with the Heritage Asset and Climate change

There is no conflict between climate change objectives and conservation of the Heritage Asset

HE2 deals with evidence base for plan-making

The TDC HERS will provide the information

HE3 deals with Regional and local planning approaches

HE3.1-4 describe the role of RSSs, and the LDF, and the relative weight placed on considering the impact of proposals: at a local level, (HE3.4), the plan should consider how best to conserve HAs.

In this case, the viability of the holiday lets is called into question, the transition to 6 formal letting units is a result of this series of applications, and the local housing need can be addressed by the provision of low-cost rentable units.

HE4 deals with PD and article 4 Directions

Not relevant in this case.

HE5 deals with monitoring the impact of planning policies

This relates to designation of Conservation Areas.

HE6 deals with information requirements for applications for consent affecting HAs

In this case, the D&A Statement describes the approach to the design: if further information is required to satisfy decision-makers as to the impact on the setting of the HA, this can be provided.

HE7 places the responsibility on the LPA to determine the application in the light of the information provided. We expect to be asked for more information where this is appropriate.

HE8 deals with identification of the HA

The Designation of the CA is included in the emerging Local Plan

HE9 deals with the designation of the HA

See HE8 above

HE10 deals with the setting of the HA

In this case, the setting will not be affected.

HE11 deals with enabling development and is not applicable in this case

HE12 deals with recording of the HA

In this case, a full measured and photographic survey is submitted as part of the application; it is the Agent's and the applicant's normal practice to record work as the work proceeds, and all of this is capable of being put into the public domain if necessary

Conclusion: The effect on the Heritage Asset is neutral

Roger A Joyce

Architect, April 2019