

ENVIRONMENT & DESIGN TEAM MEMORANDUM

To: James Wellwood

From: Ros Kain

Date: 14/06/2023

Reference/s: 23/01301/FUL

Proposal: Change of use from Class E part ground, all of first, second and third floors to Class C1

Address: 33 Bondgate Without (Alnwick Squash Club) Alnwick NE66 1PR

POSITION

Support - no harm to significance.

REASON

The proposal complies with Policy ENV 7 (1) of the adopted Northumberland Local Plan (2022) which requires new development to conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE*

The application site is a prominent and imposing mid terrace three / four storey Victorian property built in 1889, situated in Bondgate Without, close to the Hotspur Tower. It is faced in sandstone and the tall front gable and gothic revival features make it stand out from the neighbouring classical properties which line most of this side of Bondgate Without. It has a striking projecting curve at its south end and an attractive curved glass shopfront on this corner. A projecting stone canopy frames a central entrance void, above this a canted bay at first floor. The second-floor features stone arches and the top floor six smaller stone mullioned windows. The building has aesthetic value.

It is the former premises of fishing tackle manufacturers, Hardy Brothers (Alnwick) Limited and is still known as the Hardy Factory. It is assumed the structure was commissioned by and built to accommodate this successful local business. The building has historic (associative) value for this reason.

Due to the significance identified the building is classed as a non-designated heritage asset.

The building is in Alnwick Conservation Area (South Road) and is mentioned in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as a prominent 3- or 4-storey building, with a vertical emphasis and significant massing.

LEGISLATIVE & POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72(1) requires the LPA to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Northumberland Local Plan (March 2022)

Policy ENV 1 - Historic and built environment (Strategic Policy)

1. The character and/or significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

a. Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings

Policy ENV 7 - Historic environment and heritage assets

Part/s 1, 2 & 6 are relevant.

1. Development proposals will be assessed, and decisions made that ensure the conservation and enhancement of the significance, quality and integrity of Northumberland's heritage assets and their settings.

2. Decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and the impact of any proposal upon that significance. Applicants will be required to provide a heritage statement; describing the significance of the asset and any contribution made to this significance by its setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance, but should make use of the Historic Environment Record, the Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, any relevant character appraisals or design guides, and/or other relevant records.

6. Development proposals that affect the significance of non-designated heritage assets shall require a balanced judgement, taking into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy ENV 9 Conservation Areas

Part/s 1 is relevant

1. Within a conservation area, or where its setting may be affected:

a. It will be ensured that development enhances and reinforces the local distinctiveness of the conservation area, while, wherever possible, better revealing its significance;

b. Development that would lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) any aspect of a Conservation Area that contributes to the reasons that it was so designated, will not be supported unless the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy ENV 7(4) apply; if the harm is less than substantial, this will be weighed against any public benefit that the same development may make to part 1(a) above, applying Policy ENV 7 (5);

c. Development must respect existing architectural and historic character and cultural associations, by having regard to:

i. Historic plot boundaries, layouts, densities and patterns of development; and

ii. The design, positioning, grouping, form, massing, scale, features, detailing and the use of materials in existing buildings and structures; and

iii. The contribution made by the public realm, private spaces and other open areas, including hard and soft landscape features, trees, hedges, walls, fences, watercourses and surfacing.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the change of use of the ground floor (rear) and all the upper floors.

No external alterations are proposed to the building. It is not clear if this is an error on the plans. It is proposed to internally reconfigure the layout and many of the bedroom would not have a window as proposed.

As submitted the development would not impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and no external works are proposed to the non-designated heritage asset. The attractive curved glass shopfront, original fenestration pattern and prominent dressed stone elevations would remain as existing.

The building fronts directly onto Bondgate Without, a busy vehicle route into the centre of Alnwick and hence front bedrooms would have the benefit of windows. Some, if not all the windows, are the original timber framed Victorian windows.

If sound attenuation measures are necessary to facilitate the hotel use it is preferable to upgrade and not replace the existing windows to the upper floors. Double glazed units could be inserted to replace the single glazing.

Ros Kain

Built Heritage & Design Officer

* The NPPF defines significance as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations resulting from its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Historic England Conservation Principles <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/> includes a recommended approach to assessing significance grouped into four categories - evidential value, historical value, aesthetic value, and communal value.