

R11

F/TH/17/0525

PROPOSAL: Demolition of buildings 10-14 Belgrave Road and part
demolition of building to rear together with the erection of 2m
LOCATION: high Palisade fencing
Land And Buildings At 10 To 14 Belgrave Road MARGATE
Kent
WARD: Margate Central
AGENT: Mr John Elvidge
APPLICANT: Mr B Wiles
RECOMMENDATION: Refuse Permission

For the following reasons:

1 The proposed works, by virtue of the loss of buildings without providing an appropriate redevelopment scheme for the site would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the designated conservation area without providing any material public benefit to outweigh the visual harm from the creation of a gap within the conservation area contrary to the provisions of paragraphs 56, 64, 131, 132, 134, 136 and 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Nos 10 to 14 are located on the west side of Belgrave Road, Margate. They are vacant and in a poor state of repair, but lie within a conservation area.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/TH/17/0526 - Prior notification of the proposed demolition of rear section of existing building to the rear of 10-14 Belgrave Road. Prior approval not required. 25th May 2017.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks consent for the demolition of buildings within the conservation area together with the erection of 2m high Palisade fencing.

A formal grant of planning permission is required for the works as the buildings lie within a conservation area.

The applicants advise that the buildings are in an extremely poor state of repair and that their removal would enhance the appearance of the area. If consent was granted for the buildings demolition, the agent has advised that the area would be cleared surrounded by 2m high Palisade fencing (as in the surrounding area) and utilise for purposes associated with Dreamland. No specific reference as to what specific use might be carried out in this particular part of the site, but surrounding uses including car parking, storage compounds and the introduction of a new access road.

The applicants have submitted a Structural Survey (dated 20th July 2017). It has considered both buildings on site - referring to the one closest to Belgrave Road as the front house and the building behind as the rear house. In terms of the front house, it notes that vegetation has been stripped from the building and it is noted that the building is of a timber construction. An inspection of the external fabric of the building was made and it was noted that generally the walls appeared to be in an adequate condition, however, there are some areas of cracking evident (some localised and some areas of more severe structural cracking). It is also identified that the rear of the building appears to have undergone a period of resettlement resulting in it leaning out vertically. The survey advises that the inside of the building contains more significant structural issues, but it is noted from the survey that a full inspection of the building was not possible and some assumptions have been made in relation to the internal condition of the building. The survey proposes that there are two methods to rectify the integrity of this structure - firstly keep the building safe for inspection, undertake a structural assessment and implement any remedial works, secondly demolish the building. The survey concludes that the second option is the only safe and immediate option. The rear house is assessed as being reasonably robust, although there are some severe structural issues to the rear of the building. It is recommended that the rear gable wall should be taken down which might compromise the overall stability of the building. The overall recommendation of the report is that both buildings give rise for immediate concern and given their location close to the site boundary it is recommended that they be demolished at the earliest opportunity.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Thanet Local Plan 2006 - saved policies

D1 - Design Principles

T8 - Dreamland

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to surrounding occupiers, a site notice posted near to the site and the application was publicised in the local paper.

One letter has been received from a planning agent on behalf of a client. They make the following comments.

* The buildings are in close proximity to the clients' premises which are open long hours including Bank Holidays and Weekends;

- * Demolition works must be carefully managed to avoid the spread of dust and noise disturbance;
- * The rear entrance of the premises is opposite the application site and is used as a fire escape; and
- * Work should not be undertaken outside of normal office hours to avoid additional disturbance.

CONSULTATIONS

Conservation Officer: The buildings proposed for demolition are of particular importance to the character and appearance of the conservation area. No suitable scheme is proposed in place of the buildings (which form the quintessential character of this part of the conservation area). In my view, the buildings, although now boarded, are of an age and style which contributes positively to the feel of the locality and in forming its character as well as contributing to the character and appearance of the conservation area and thus to its significance as an heritage asset. The demolition of the buildings with no replacement scheme in place would effectively diminish the significance by removing townscape context within which the buildings would have sat.

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation... As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm, loss should require clear and convincing justification. In justifying demolition, the applicant merely states that the buildings are unsafe structures. In my view the deterioration of the buildings should not be taken as justification for demolition.

In my view, in this case limited weight has been given to the conservation areas preservation or enhancement and the demolition of the buildings with no scheme for their replacement lack convincing justification to adduce the harm and loss proposed.

The loss of the buildings without an approved scheme for the redevelopment of the site or justification for their demolition would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area contrary to NPPF and statutory requirements.

Building Control: Further to my recent lone site visit, I am writing to confirm that since the site is effectively secured by fencing/barriers, as far as I could ascertain, there is no immediate danger to the public. I agree that the buildings are in very poor condition and need urgent attention.

COMMENTS

This application is reported to committee at the request of Cllr Johnson to allow Members to assess the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area as a designated heritage asset.

Impact on Character and Appearance of Conservation Area

As stated above planning permission is required for the demolition of the buildings as they lie within a conservation area.

Saved policy D1 of the Local Plan states that all new development is required to provide high quality and inclusive design, suitability, layout and materials and that they should respect or enhance the character or appearance of the surrounding area, particularly in scale and massing, rhythm and use of materials appropriate to the locality.

The NPPF highlights that in determining applications Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal. It goes on to advise that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 134 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

It is noted that historically the west side of Belgrave was characterised by a built up frontage and these were lost over a number of years. It appears that other buildings from this established built up frontage remained on site until the 1970s/80s.

The details and recommendations in the applicant's structural report have been reviewed and the Conservation Officer raises some concerns. It is noted that there are options recommended that the buildings could be made safe for inspection allowing an appropriate assessment of the necessary remedial works to be undertaken to make the buildings structurally sound.

It is, however, noted that the test when assessing this planning application for the demolition of the building is to weigh up whether the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset - the conservation area.

In this case, the public benefits of the proposal would see the removal of the buildings (which it is acknowledged are in a poor state of repair) and the creation of additional space for purposes associated with Dreamland together with the erection of 2m high palisade fencing. This has to be weighed against the loss of the remaining buildings which would have historically fronted this part of Belgrave Road with no definitive scheme for their replacement scheme - other than the creation of a gap and additional palisade fencing. It is noted that when this conservation area was designated that the boundary of the conservation area which essentially ran along Belgrave Road was deliberately skewed to include the buildings

on the site as they considered to be important elements remaining of the built up frontage which historically fronted this part of Belgrave Road.

The removal of these buildings, irrespective of their condition, creates a gap where none historically existed. The area would be tarmacked and surrounded by 2m high Palisade fencing which is considered to harm the character and appearance of the conservation area by virtue of its obtrusive and stark nature replacing a building.

It is considered that the public harm to the designated heritage asset is not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal and the scheme is, therefore, considered to be contrary to saved policy D1 and paragraphs 56, 64, 131, 132, 134, 136 and 137 of the NPPF.

Other Matters

As set out above, having reviewed the details of the applicants' structural survey and assessed the buildings on site, the Council's Building Control Team advise that the buildings are in a poor state of repair and urgent action is required. They also conclude, however, that due to the buildings being securely fenced and hoarded that there is no immediate danger to the public.

It should be noted that if the buildings are considered to be dangerous structures this would be a matter for the Building Control and not a material planning consideration to be taken into account when determining this planning application.

Conclusion

This application seeks consent for the demolition of buildings at 10-14 Belgrave Road and the enclosure of the site by a 2m high palisade fence.

Planning permission is required for the demolition works as the buildings are located within a conservation area and the fencing as it is 2m in height fronting a highway.

It should be noted that planning permission was not required for the demolition of the building to the rear of the application site as it did not lie within the conservation area.

The loss of the buildings which are the last of the buildings from the previously historically built up frontage along this part of Belgrave Road (irrespective of their poor state of repair) and the subsequent creation of a gap, tarmacked surface and installation of 2m high palisade fencing is considered to be detrimental to the character and appearance of the designated heritage asset - the conservation area. Whilst it maybe the intention for a scheme to come forward in the future on the site, this cannot be a requirement of the demolition. As less than substantial harm would occur, it falls to weigh the public benefits of the scheme against the harm to the designated heritage asset.

In this instance it is considered that there are minor short-term benefits from removing a building in a dilapidated state, it is not considered that the permanent harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area is outweighed. It is, therefore, recommended that the application be refused.

Case Officer

Annabel Hemmings

TITLE: F/TH/17/0525

Project Land And Buildings At 10 To 14 Belgrave Road MARGATE Kent

Scale:

