

F/TH/17/0964. Quay Edge Military Road - Erection of railings to quay edge. Granted 14 December 2017.

F/TH/17/0843. Units 19 and 32 Military Road - Retrospective application for the change of use of retail and restaurant/cafe (Use Class A1 & A3) to a mixed use retail, restaurant/cafe and bar (Use Classes A1, A3 and A4) outside seating area. Granted 29 November 2017.

L/TH/17/1033. East Cross wall. Application for listed building consent for the erection of 2No. pitched roof plant buildings either side of the dock gate and removal of existing redundant structures. Granted 21 September 2017.

F/TH/15/0569. 9 Military Road - Erection of platform to facilitate use of land for the siting of tables and chairs, together with insertion of gate to existing fence. Granted 03 September 2015.

L/TH/15/0090 and F/TH/15/0089. 15 Military Road - Application for Listed Building Consent for internal alterations including installation of mezzanine to facilitate change of use of building to Restaurant/Cafe (Use Class A3). Granted 18 May 2015. Change of use from light industrial/storage to Restaurant/Cafe (Use Class A3) together with external seating. Granted 18 May 2015.

F/TH/14/0377. 17 Military Road - Change of use from light industrial and storage (B1 and B8) to retail, restaurant and cafe (A1 and A3), siting of tables and chairs to front, installation of new doors to front elevation and installation of flue. Granted 08 July 2014.

F/TH/13/0762. Units 19 and 32 Military Road - Change of use from light industrial and storage to retail and cafe use, and use of forecourt for the siting of table and chairs. Granted 12 November 2013.

F/TH/13/0577. 9 Military Road - Change of use to mixed Retail, Restaurant/Cafe and Storage. Granted 04 October 2013.

F/TH/00/694. 24-25 Military Road - Change of use from workshops/store to the sale of food or drink (use class a3) and external alterations. Granted 05 October 2000.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is the erection of white powder coated three bar railings around the harbour edge, infilling the spaces between the existing railings to provide a continuous barrier for pedestrians and vehicles. This includes the southern section of the inner harbour, the crosswall and part of the west pier. The proposed railings match the railings approved under application reference F/TH/17/0964.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Thanet Local Plan 2006 Policies

D1 - Design
EC8 - Ramsgate Waterfront

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to neighbouring property occupiers, a site notice was posted close to the site and an advert was posted in the local paper. No individual letters of representation have been received in relation to this application.

Ramsgate Town Council - No comment

Ramsgate Design and Heritage Forum - No objection.

CONSULTATIONS

TDC Conservation Officer - This application is a continuation of another previously approved by Thanet District Council (L/TH/17/0964) for the installation of more railings within Ramsgate Harbour, which is within the Ramsgate Conservation Area.

Policy HE02 (Draft Thanet Local Plan) Section 8 it states Appropriate materials and detailing are proposed and the extension would not result in the loss of features that contribute to the character of the conservation area. NPPF Section 16, 185, it states Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, including, the wider social, cultural economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.

The design of the railings is simple and not particularly sympathetic to the surrounding historic environment or the character within the conservation area. The railings have been matched, to a previously installed design, for this application and application L/TH/17/0964. The proposed railings have been coated in a white protective paint in order to protect the finish for a longer period of time when exposed to the weather elements within Ramsgate Harbour which should make them easier to maintain. Better maintained railings will reduce the risk of the area looking unkempt and maintain the health and safety benefit which warrants their installation.

This application is for the area mostly covering the crosswall and is designed to protect pedestrians and vehicles from the quay edge of the harbour. The current lack of railings has caused multiple health and safety issues over the past five years with evidence given within the design and access statement. Although it is disappointing their design is not more sympathetic to the character of the area they do not look out of place when compared somewhat to the industrial character of the harbour and railings which have already been installed. In my opinion the public health and safety benefit outweighs any harm caused by the installation of the railings and the impact to the conservation area, therefore I do not object to this application.

Historic England - On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation advisor.

COMMENTS

This application is brought before members as the application has been made by Thanet District Council.

The main considerations in determining this application are the impacts upon the character and appearance of the listed structures and highway safety.

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when 'considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority... shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'. Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage asset, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The NPPF requires that where a development causes substantial harm, or less than substantial harm but where the harm is not outweighed by public benefit, permission should be refused.

Design and Installation

Currently there are sections of railings around Ramsgate harbour where vehicular and pedestrian traffic are highest, along Harbour Parade, and to provide secure access to pontoons and slipways. More recently 'keylock' railings with a three bar design have been installed along Military Road and the western section of the inner harbour following the approval of application reference F/TH/17/0964 which has recently changed in character through the opening of a number of restaurants and cafes. The areas where this application proposes to install railings are generally considered to be the working areas of the harbour.

The Granite coping stones are a key feature of the harbour being located on the edge of the quay and extending around both the inner and outer marinas. This application would require holes to be drilled into the listed granite coping stones every 2.2m to allow for the installation of the railings. The physical incursion into the historic granite coping stones would result in harm to their historic fabric by altering their structure and appearance.

The listed bollards are situated at varying intervals around the harbour on the inner edge of the Granite coping stones and are painted white with a domed top. In addition to the listed structures around the harbour, there are numerous other features located adjacent to the granite coping stones, including road signs, utility boxes and bollards. The location of the railings would be adjusted to allow for clearance around any obstructions similar to the railing approved under application reference L/TH/17/0964 and it is likely that a consistent line would be achieved.

Whilst the proposed railings would match the railings installed as part of the 2017 application they are still considered to have a utilitarian appearance that is out of keeping with the historic harbour and its listed features, the proposed railings would therefore detrimentally affect the significance of the designated heritage assets in terms of its visual appearance.

Therefore it is considered that there is harm to the character and appearance of the designated heritage asset from the proposed railings. This however must be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal.

Public Safety

The design and access statement notes that the character of the harbour has changed in recent years with the various restaurants, cafes and retail outlets along Military Road increasing the appeal of the harbour as a tourist destination and subsequently increasing the amount of visitors along the Crosswall and Western Pier. The harbour also has capacity for over 600 permanent and visitor berths, with the main visitor berths being located along the Western Pier.

Information has been submitted during the application process showing the location of seven incidents involving pedestrians, cyclists or vehicles leaving the quay, and falling into the marina or onto pontoons since July 2014. Three of these incidents have occurred along Military Road and four on the harbour cross walls. As a result of this changing character, it is clear to see that there is an increased risk to pedestrians and vehicles without railings in these areas.

This change in character and risk has been recognised by the Conservation Officer, however it has been noted that from the submitted application it is not clear whether other more sympathetic options have been explored to minimise or mitigate these risks and harm to the heritage assets that contribute to the historical and architectural significance of the harbour.

The harbour continues to move away from its working character, with the most recent application for a mixed use development granted on the 29th November 2017 and therefore the risk to members of the public around the harbour is only likely to increase.

Conclusion

The design and form of the railings, and the works required for their installation, is considered to result in less than substantial harm to the grade II listed structures, and therefore the NPPF requires that this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. 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 and as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

The installation of railings around the remaining section of the inner harbour, cross wall and west pier is considered to have a clear public benefit due to the obvious change of character around the harbour, however the design and physical contact of the railings with the Grade II* listed structures does result in harm to the historical and architectural significance of the designated heritage assets. When this harm is weighed against the increased risk of vehicles and pedestrians falling into the harbour, which has resulted from the change in character of the area, the public benefit of the proposal is considered to outweigh this harm, and therefore it is recommended that having special regard to the provisions of Section 16(2)

of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the amended plan is approved in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF.

Case Officer

Duncan Fitt

TITLE: L/TH/19/0674

Project Quay Edge Crosswall And West Pier Ramsgate Harbour Military Road
RAMSGATE

