

**A03**

**F/TH/20/1471**

**PROPOSAL:** Replacement of existing windows from timber, UPVC and metal to powder coated aluminium, extension of fascia to High Street

**LOCATION:** elevation, replacement of existing doors and installation of Louvre panels to bin store, changes to render together with alterations to fenestration

Foy House 27 - 29 High Street MARGATE Kent CT9 1DL

**WARD:** Margate Central

**AGENT:** Mr Chris Chambers

**APPLICANT:** Thanet District Council

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

**GROUND:**

In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Purchase Act 2004).

2 The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted application and the approved drawings numbered 350-003 and 350-004.

**GROUND;**

To secure the proper development of the area.

3 Prior to the installation of any external windows and doors, joinery details at a scale of 1:5 of the windows and doors to include sections through glazing bars, frames and mouldings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details as are approved shall be carried out concurrently with the development and fully implemented prior to the first occupation of any part of the approved development.

**GROUND;**

To secure a satisfactory external treatment and to safeguard the special character and appearance of the designated heritage asset in accordance with policy HE02 of the Local Plan and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

## SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to a three storey non-listed building within Margate Conservation Area. The property, known as Foy House occupies a position on the corner of the High Street and New Street. The premises is owned by Thanet District Council, but is currently vacant. The building itself has a flat roof behind a parapet wall with concrete coping. The building is constructed from red bricks, roughcast render panels and composite cladding panels. Window frames within the building are both metal and UPVC.

## RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PN06/TH/18/1713 Notification of a proposed change of use from offices (B1 Use Class) to 8No. Self contained flats (C3 Use Class) Granted 13/02/2019

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning consent is sought for the replacement of existing windows with new powder coated aluminium windows, covering the existing roughcast render panels on the buildings facade with insulated coloured render and glazed tile plinth. The fascia to the High Street will be extended to link with the existing door and surround with insulated render. The existing doors will be replaced by new doors and louvre panels (to the bin store), obscure glazing panels will be installed to low level windows at ground floor level. Fenestration at second floor level (north and east elevations) is proposed to be altered and alterations to the door openings to the bin store to the New Street frontage are proposed.

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

### **Thanet Local Plan 2020**

SP10 - Margate  
SP35 - Quality Development  
SP36 - Conservation and Enhancement of Thanet's Historic Environment  
SP37 - Climate Change  
E04 - Primary and Secondary Frontages  
QD01 - Sustainable Design  
QD02 - General Design Principles  
QD03 - Living Conditions  
HE02 - Development in Conservation Areas  
HE03 - Heritage Assets  
TP02 - Walking  
TP03 - Cycling  
TP06 - Car Parking

## NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to adjoining occupiers, a site notice posted close to the site and the application publicised in a local newspaper.

One representation was received. The concerns can be summarised as follows:

- \* Conflict with local plan
- \* Out of keeping with character of area
- \* Over development
- \* Concern about the proposed use and users

**Margate Civic Society:** The Planning Committee should be alerted to the draft Town Investment Plan (TIP) soon to be published and approach this application accordingly.

The TIP is likely to prioritise a 'Creative & Cultural Corridor' as a means of repurposing the High Street, utilising the main 'flagship' redundant stores (Woolworths, M&S, BHS/Primark) as the bedrock of economic regeneration. Foy House is another such 'flagship' and there is no shortage of potential 'redeployment' as witness the Reinvention Symposium run in October last year.

No one will have missed the ongoing 'bricks and mortar' retail disaster and the Local Plan rethink will doubtless be considering the 'brownfield' prospects materialising over the next few years at Westwood Cross. You will know that Amazon has recently announced it is moving into online pharmaceuticals and that John Lewis is to residentialise a large part of its estate for social housing (as has already been happening in US secondary shopping malls.)

So let us hope that the Planning Committee puts on a 'strategic' cap and liaises with the Town Deal Board over the instant application : encouraging footfall with the Corridor will hopefully in time encourage smaller enterprises to repopulate the Central Business District.

**Margate Conservation Area Advisory Group:** Concern over render- plastic beaded edges, Marine environment?  
Window materials  
Insulation panels sustainable / resistant for impact?  
Approve subject to condition: Materials detailing & colours.

## CONSULTATIONS

**TDC Conservation Officer:** Foy House is a substantial building located on Margate Highstreet, located within Margate Conservation Area and cited within the main thoroughfare of Margate's commercial centre.

Thanet Local Plan policy HE02 states within Section 7 'The character, scale and plan form of the original building are respected and the development is subordinate to it and does not dominate principal elevations.' As well as Section 8 which states 'Appropriate materials and detailing are proposed and the development would not result in the loss of features that contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area. New development which would detract from the immediate or wider landscape setting of any part of a conservation area will not be permitted.'

NPPF Section 16, Paragraph 192 states, In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their

conservation as well as (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The building as it currently exists is a mixture of prevailing aesthetics with a varied material palette consisting of UPVC, aluminium and timber framed windows across varying elevations. It has proportions and an aesthetic appearance reflective of its time of construction, whilst having a somewhat neutral to poor contribution to the existing character and appearance of Margate High Street through added UPVC and dull general appearance.

The principle elevation, considered to be that fronting the high street and most prominent within the conservation area, appears to consist of UPVC windows at ground level with the upper floors being a thin aluminium. This application proposes to unify these features to the facade by reinstating all windows as aluminium which, by nature of the removal of the presence UPVC, would be viewed as an improvement for the site. Typically within the conservation environment the use of UPVC would not be encouraged as it appears contemporary, bulky and unrefined within an environment which a traditional material palette should be respected and maintained.

Proposed alterations to the cladding, although alternative and bright in their colour scheme, are supported as the application proposes to remove the existing roughcast panels which contribute little to the existing external appearance of the property through their similarity to pebble dash render.

To the rear a similar approach has been taken to unify the appearance of the property whilst utilising its position away from primary views from the conservation area to locate required services and AC units. This approach is typical and acceptable for implementation within the historic environment as it keeps more unsightly elements of schemes away from views from the public realm which can often appear unsightly.

Nearby to the site are multiple listing buildings whose setting is at risk of being impacted through the proposal of this application. However on review of the submitted plans I do not believe this to be the case. As previously stated I believe that the alterations proposed to Foy House ultimately improve its appearance and with this subsequently improves the setting of any nearby listed properties.

From a heritage perspective I believe that this application ultimately improves the aesthetic appearance of Foy House whilst ensuring its future maintenance and sustained use, an important factor when considering its prime location to Margate High Street. Through analysis demonstrated above I believe the proposed scheme improves the perceivable appearance of Foy House within the context of the surrounding Margate Conservation Area, therefore preserving the character and appearance of the high street ultimately meeting with Thanets recently adopted Local Plan, policy HE02, Section 7 and national guidance from the NPPF Section 16, Paragraph 192. For these reasons I do not object to the application proposed.

## COMMENTS

This application is brought to the Planning Committee, as Thanet District Council is the applicant. In addition Cllr. Bambridge has requested its referral on the basis that the site is within the Conservation Area and on economic/regeneration/tourism reasons. The main considerations with regard to this application is the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the residential amenity of neighbouring property occupiers, and highway safety.

### **Character and Appearance**

The impact the proposed scheme may have upon the character and appearance of the area and in particular the Margate Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset falls to be assessed.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also states 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. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. The NPPF goes on to state in states that where a development proposal would 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 where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Policy SP36 of the Council's Local Plan is a strategic policy which states that the council will support, value and have regard to the historic or archaeological significance of Heritage Assets. Policy HE02 relates specifically to new developments in conservation areas. It states that within conservation areas, development proposals which preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area will be permitted and when relating to proposals to extend existing buildings within the conservation area that the character, scale and plan form of the original building are respected and the extension is subordinate to it and does not dominate principal elevations and appropriate materials and detailing are proposed and the extension would not result in the loss of features that contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, sympathetic to local character and history, establish a strong sense of place and optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and create place that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

The existing windows are a mix of both white UPVC and metal framed windows. The size of the proposed window openings would remain as existing (on the first and second floors), and made slightly smaller on the ground floor, but the new units would not replicate the existing glazing pattern, the proposed windows would unify in terms of window frame material. Precise details of the frames (profiles/thickness etc) or reveals are not given in this application. Viewed from a distance, for example from across the street, the proposed windows would look considerably newer than existing, it is therefore recommended that

details are secured by condition to ensure that they would be appropriate and not draw undue attention to the building.

Proposed alterations to the cladding would see the removal of the existing roughcast render panels that is a non-traditional material. The proposed insulated coloured render is a more modern material, which would improve the thermal insulation of this building, which is supported by policy SP37. It is recognised that this building whilst attached to number 25 is not architecturally related to this building and would therefore not visually disrupt the attached building. It is acknowledged the colours proposed are more vibrant, but it is noted they would be installed on a 20th Century building, would remove the existing roughcast panels and improve the thermal capacity of the building. Therefore I consider that this element would not create visual harm to the Conservation area

The proposed fascia would extend above the ground floor windows and continue over the entrance door on the High Street facade and continue down the New Street facade. I consider that this alteration would result in a more cohesive front elevation and would be a visual improvement.

The existing doors will be replaced by new doors and louvre panels (to the bin store). This includes the entrance doors on the New Street frontage and would see the removal of solid double doors with new glazed entrance doors and louvre doors to the side to the bin store. This provision would provide a more visually pleasing appearance to this elevation and a more active frontage.

Obscure glazing panels will be installed to low level windows at ground floor level. The window openings are vertical in nature and are typical for office buildings rather than buildings in residential use. These windows would serve habitable rooms of the new accommodation. Thus these rooms need to be afforded privacy from pedestrians walking along the High Street and the New Street frontage (although these windows serve an office and storage area). Externally it is considered that the obscure glazing would not be overt in its appearance. I considered that this element is acceptable.

Alterations to the fenestration to the south elevation are modest; repositioning of window above the replaced entrance door. I consider that this would not disrupt the pattern or hierarchy of fenestration. With regard to the east elevation windows the proposed changes involve the enlargement of an existing opening and replacement of a door with window opening. This elevation would not be seen from a public vantage point and is therefore considered acceptable. The north elevation changes are a window being changed to a door again this would not be readily visible from the public realm.

Therefore when considering all proposed external changes to the building, it is considered that the changes will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the building or the wider Conservation area.

## **Living Conditions**

Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Policy QD03 of the Local Plan deals specifically with living conditions. This policy states that all new development should:

- 1) Be compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces and not lead to the unacceptable living conditions through overlooking, noise or vibration, light pollution, overshadowing, loss of natural light or sense of enclosure.
- 2) Be of appropriate size and layout with sufficient usable space to facilitate comfortable living conditions and meet the standards set out in QD04.
- 3) Residential development should include the provision of private or shared external amenity space/play space, where possible.
- 4) Provide for clothes drying facilities and waste disposal or bin storage, with a collection point for storage containers no further than 15 metres from where the collection vehicle will pass.

Given that the replacement windows would occupy the same size and position as existing across the elevations, the proposals would not result in undue overlooking, noise disturbance or light spillage compared to the existing situation.

The proposed external alterations including the new render, the fascia changes, new doors and obscure panels, due to their nature would not create harm to the living conditions of adjoining properties.

The fenestration alteration to the south elevation would not raise neighbour amenity issues, given it is a repositioning of an existing window. With regard to the east elevation these windows would serve a bedroom and bathroom (second floor) I consider these windows would not result in an increase in overlooking. The north elevation would not result in an increase in overlooking, given that this was formerly a window opening.

## **Transportation**

Given the proposed external changes or aesthetic and do not result in increased traffic movements, the impact upon highway safety is considered to be acceptable.

## **Other matters**

Whilst it is noted that some concerns have been raised concerning the proposed use of the building, the change of use has already been permitted through the prior approval process (see planning history section) and therefore the principle of a residential use, or the occupants of the property, are not matters to be taken into account when determining this planning application.

## **Conclusion**

It is considered that the alterations proposed to Foy House ultimately improve its appearance from the current situation and ensure its future maintenance and continued use,

given its key position in the High Street. The proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the High Street complying with Local Plan policy HE02, and the NPPF Section 16, Paragraph 192.

It is therefore recommended that Members approve the application subject to safeguarding conditions.

**Case Officer**

Gill Richardson



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Project Foy House 27 - 29 High Street MARGATE Kent CT9 1DL

