

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 20 November 2024 15:11:29 UTC+00:00
To: "Anna Tidey" <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Handcross Newsagents DM/24/2497

Hi Anna

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site is an unlisted attached building located to the western side of Handcross High Street, within the Conservation Area. From its appearance, and from a brief historic map regression exercise it would appear that the building dates from the 19th century, and may originally have been a pair of cottages, which were converted during the 20th century into a single shop at ground floor with residential accommodation above. The building has been subject to a number of unsympathetic alterations, including in particular to the front elevation a pair of extremely unattractive uPVC projecting oriel windows, and a uPVC conservatory and windows to the rear. It does however retain some character and overall makes a neutral or slight positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Handcross Conservation Area.

The current proposal is for alterations and extensions to the building including removal of the existing rear conservatory and construction of a two storey rear extension, new windows to the side elevation, and replacement of the existing uPVC windows to the front elevation at first floor with new uPVC windows to match.

The existing rear conservatory detracts from the appearance of the building, and its removal is not considered problematic. However, although I do not consider that the principle of a replacement two storey extension is contentious in this context (there are a wide variety of rear extensions and additions to other buildings to this side of the High Street), I do have some concerns regarding the scale and form of the proposal as shown:

- In my opinion the scale, and in particular the width, of the extension is excessive, resulting in an inappropriate relationship of scale with the host building. In particular, the extension would appear inappropriately dominant in views of the building from the rear. The offset position of the extension is awkward and detracts from the existing, what I assume to be original, symmetry of the building at first floor.

I would therefore suggest that the width of the extension should be reduced by setting it in from the southern side elevation by an amount equal to that shown to the opposite northern side, so that the extension is centred on the elevation. If the existing pitch of the roof is maintained, this will also reduce the height of the roof ridge. These factors should result in a more appropriate scale and form.

- The detailed design of the extension would also benefit from amendments to include windows which are more appropriate to the age and original character of the building and its setting, i.e. timber sashes as opposed to casements.

- The associated loss of the rear chimney is considered regrettable as this detracts from the roofline interest of the building. If at all possible the chimney should be retained.
- I would also suggest that the number of sun pipes shown should be reduced in order to minimise clutter to the roof slope.

In relation to the other proposed external alterations, whilst there would be no objection from a heritage perspective to the new windows to the side of the building, subject to detail, with respect to the front oriel windows I would strongly recommend that the opportunity is taken to enhance the appearance of the building by replacing the existing unattractive uPVC windows with timber windows of a more sympathetic design, e.g. timber sashes. I note that whilst the application form suggests timber windows are to be used throughout, the proposed elevation states the windows are to be replaced to match existing. Given the scale of the proposed rear extension (even if this is reduced as suggested), every opportunity should be taken to include enhancements such as this elsewhere within the scheme, to ensure that the overall impact on the character and appearance of the scheme is considered on balance to be neutral or positive.

In summary, although the principle of the proposal may be acceptable in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, amendments are required in order to ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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