

Heritage Statement

11 & 13 Queen Street Gravesend Kent DA12 2EQ

The site is located within the Queen Street Conservation Area which was designated on 17 May 1990 and runs parallel to the High Street Conservation area and is linked to it by Borough Market. The area sits towards the middle of the Conservation Area which is detailed in detail in the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2009.

The appraisal outlines the period in which the majority of the buildings were built as being primarily between 1907 – 45 although some of the building identified as being of interest being constructed between 1800 and 1874.

The application site itself is pair of two storey 'stand alone' properties believed to have been erected around the turn of the 20th century which were linked to the much older property at No.15 & 17 (Old Comrades Club) on the corner with Brewhouse Yard. The building at No.15 -17 being a taller three storey property with rooms within the roof space with decorative gable fronting the main highway – now converted to residential flats. The application site is two storey with retail uses on the ground floor with residential accommodation over. The retail/commercial units being located on the back-edge of the footpath on both sides of the road. The frontage area to No. 11 is currently a Class E nail and beauty salon whilst the frontage area of No. 13 is a sui generis hot food takeaway – both being self-contained lock-up. The area to the rear of the frontage units being a self-contained residential flat. Access is provided in the side of No.11 via right of way that separates it from the adjoining terrace (5 -9) and leads to a stairwell to the upper floors which are used as a 3 bed flat with lounge, kitchen and bathroom. Both properties have a single timber sliding sash window to the front elevation. The properties have access to a large amenity space to the rear.

There few listed buildings in the Conservation Area including other than the three storey units at 26/28, which is one of the earlier C19 buildings which has remained largely unchanged. These also have historically been used as retail uses on the ground floor with residential flats on the upper floors although the ground floor is currently occupied as an Education & Cultural Centre. The

appraisal also identifies properties on the western side of the road including No.'s. 19/21 & 23 as being buildings of local Interest as well as the George Inn public House.

The proposal envisages providing a second/third floor extension to mirror image the former Old Comrades club to which it is attached. The existing ground floor lock-up units will be retained and the ground floor residential unit will be refurbished and renovated to form a one bed flat (51.7sq.m). Access to the upper floors will be via the existing side entrance to 2 x 1 bed flats (43 sq.m) on the existing first floor with two additional one bed flats (43sq.m) on the new second floor and a single one bed flat over No.13. The proposed upper floor elevation treatment will reflect that of the former Old Comrades Club and is considered to have little impact to the frontage or street scene and has no impact on the conservation or its historic setting. This part of Queen Street is a mixture of C19 & C20 buildings of varying height and roof profiles with modern shop fronts. Nearly all the buildings have had some degree of adaption and few retain their historic character.

The Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan acknowledges that Queen Street has suffered more than any of the other areas from the general lack of maintenance and that this could be reversed by the carrying out of maintenance and replacement of inappropriate architectural features with more sympathetic design and materials. It goes on to comment about making enhancements to the area that could be made by the complete replacement of buildings that have a negative impact on the townscape with the area.

It is our contention that the application proposal will have a positive impact on the character of the Conservation Area. It will see the complete refurbishment of the upper floor frontage of the properties with timber Georgian sliding sashes with brick soldier course. The upper elevation will be in yellow stock brickwork with contrasting red brick soldier arches over the windows to complement the adjoining building of local interest – now also converted to flats. The rear elevation has little impact of the visual amenity of the Conservation Area and is only visible from the grounds of the former cinema (destroyed by fire) and the modern developments in Brewhouse Yard. This will be rendered and provided

with timber sash windows to match those in the rear of the other properties fronting Queen Street.

We are satisfied that the proposal can only be considered to improve and enhance the visual impact of the building and the Conservation Area as a whole. The detail provided clearly shows that the site can accommodate the proposed development without having any detrimental effect on the street scene or the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Paragraphs 190, 195 and 199 of the NPPF all look at conserving and enhancing the historic environment with specific emphasise at restoring and preserving heritage assets. We are satisfied that the application site is clearly an asset worthy of preservation and restoration and the application proposal will see the building provide valuable housing in this town centre location at the upper level without effecting the continuity of the street scene at ground floor level.

In addition to the heritage aspects, it is necessary to consider the proposal in design terms and particularly Paragraph 126 of the NPPF which states that good design is the key to sustainable development which is emphasised in Paragraph 10 and the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Paragraphs 134, 135 and 136 all encourage councils to accept innovative designs that function well and add to the overall quality and distinctiveness of the street scene. We are satisfied that the application proposal would result in a pleasing visual improvement to the street scene and be totally in accord with NPPF and local policy.

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