



HERITAGE STATEMENT

PRINCE ALBERT
26 WROTHAM ROAD
GRAVESEND
KENT, DA11 0PW

1.0

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1.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Heritage Statement accompanies the application for the demolition of the existing structure and erection of a smoking shelter at the Prince Albert, 26 Wrotham Road, Gravesend. The site lies within the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.

erection of a smoking shelter.

The assessment is proportionate to the scale of the proposal. It considers the significance of the Conservation Area, the contribution made by the site's setting, the effect erection of smoking shelter.

The significance relevant to this proposal is principally townscape and historic: the established street pattern, the relationship between buildings and spaces, the varied architectural character of the area, and the ability to experience Wrotham Road as part of the historic urban fabric of Gravesend.

The proposal does not involve substantial alteration to the principal pub building. The new shelter is located within the external area to the rear/side of the premises and is shown as a separate ancillary structure. Its elevations are substantially open above a low masonry plinth, with slender supports, an articulated roof form and integrated planting.

On the information submitted, the proposal is considered capable of preserving the significance and character of the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area. The principal heritage benefit is the removal of the existing visually disparate enclosure and its replacement by a coherent, purpose-designed and visually permeable shelter. The conclusion is subject to the shelter being constructed materially in accordance with the submitted plans and with restrained, good-quality finishes.

2.0

SITE, CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL

The application site is the Prince Albert public house at 26 Wrotham Road, Gravesend. Council planning material identifies the premises as a public house and confirms its location within the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area.

The proposal is described as: “erection of a smoking shelter.”

The submitted proposed floor plan shows the existing pub accommodation - including bar, servery, kitchen, toilets and restaurant areas - retained. The proposed smoking shelter occupies the external area beyond the main building and is physically legible as an ancillary structure rather than an extension that subsumes or materially alters the principal building.

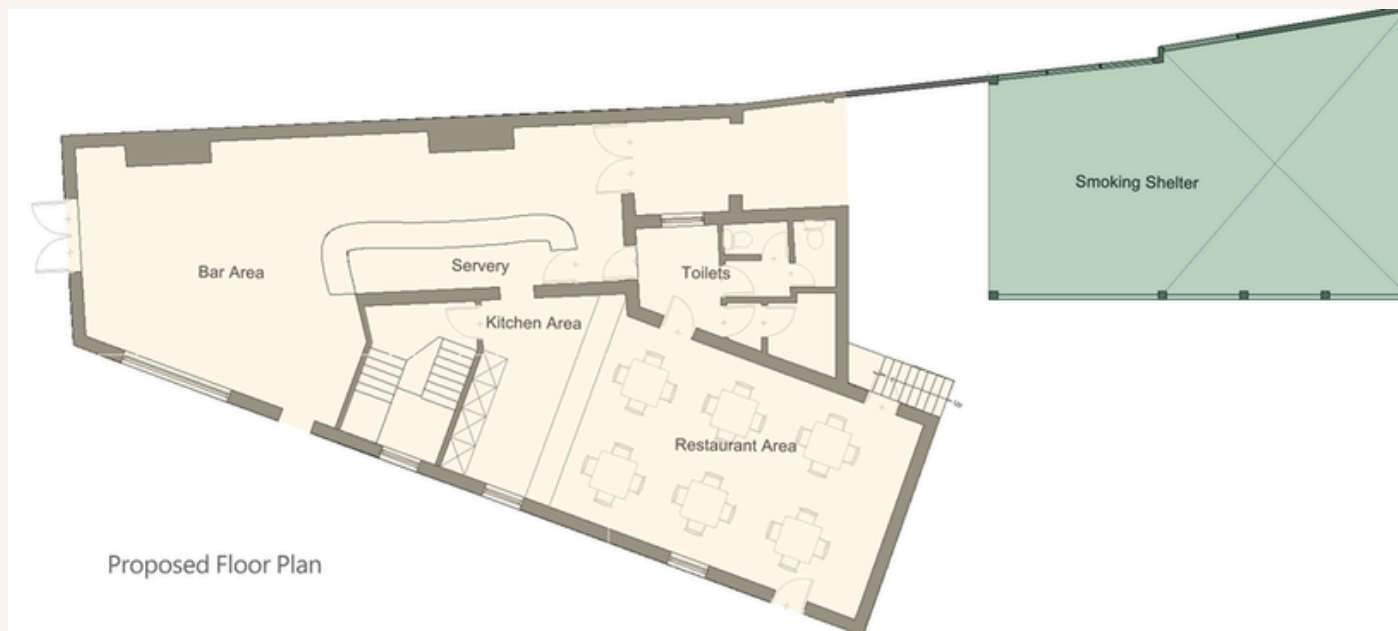


Figure 1. Proposed floor plan supplied by the applicant. Existing pub shown in yellow; proposed smoking shelter shown in green.

HERITAGE CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area

The Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area was designated on 16 January 1970. Gravesham's adopted appraisal explains that it contains the northern stretch of Windmill Street, historically a thoroughfare between the river and Windmill Hill. A section of Wrotham Road runs broadly parallel and defines the Conservation Area's western boundary.

The appraisal was prepared to define the area's special architectural and historic interest, identify positive features to be protected, highlight negative factors, and inform proposals for demolition, alteration and new development.

4.2 Significance relevant to this site

For this proposal, the Conservation Area's significance is understood to derive from the following interrelated qualities:

- the historic street pattern and long-established routes through this part of Gravesend;
- the collective architectural and townscape character of buildings of different periods and types;
- the relationship between built form, boundary treatments, streets, yards and other open spaces;
- traditional scale, proportions, roof forms and materials that contribute to local distinctiveness; and
- the ability to appreciate the area's historic evolution through surviving buildings, routes and spatial relationships.

The application does not propose demolition of a building identified here as a principal contributor to the Conservation Area's significance. The heritage sensitivity arises from introducing and removing built form within the Conservation Area and from the visual relationship of the external area with surrounding buildings and historic fabric.

4.3 Degree of significance

As a Conservation Area, Upper Windmill Street is a designated heritage asset. Considerable weight must therefore be given to its conservation. The assessment focuses on whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the elements that make a positive contribution to its special architectural or historic interest.

SETTING AND EXISTING CONDITION

The setting of the Conservation Area comprises the urban environment within which its significance is experienced. In the vicinity of the application site, this includes the established buildings along Wrotham Road, boundary treatments, external service and parking areas, vegetation and the relationship between built development and open spaces.

The application site makes a localised contribution to this setting and is experienced in conjunction with neighbouring buildings and boundary features. Development within the external area therefore has the potential to influence the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through its scale, form, degree of enclosure, materials and overall visual treatment.

The existing structure is not considered to constitute a heritage asset in its own right. It comprises an ancillary enclosure within the external area of the premises and does not make a particular positive contribution to the architectural or historic significance of the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area.

Its demolition would therefore not result in the loss of fabric or features identified as contributing positively to the significance of the Conservation Area. Instead, its removal provides an opportunity to rationalise this part of the site and introduce a more considered form of ancillary development.

The proposed replacement smoking shelter has been designed as a more coherent and visually permeable structure. Its open character and simple architectural treatment seek to reduce the sense of enclosure while maintaining a clear visual hierarchy between the principal premises and ancillary development. The shelter would consequently remain subordinate to the established built form and surrounding townscape.

A contemporary design does not need to replicate historic architecture in order to respond appropriately to a Conservation Area. In this instance, the restrained design, openness and simple structural form provide an appropriate response to the site's heritage context while allowing the shelter to perform its intended function.

5.0

PROPOSED SMOKING SHELTER

The proposed development comprises a purpose-designed smoking shelter within the external area of the premises. The shelter has been designed as a lightweight and subordinate structure, with a dark structural frame positioned above a low-level yellow stock brick plinth. The elevations remain substantially open between the vertical supports, maintaining a sense of openness and visual permeability through the structure.

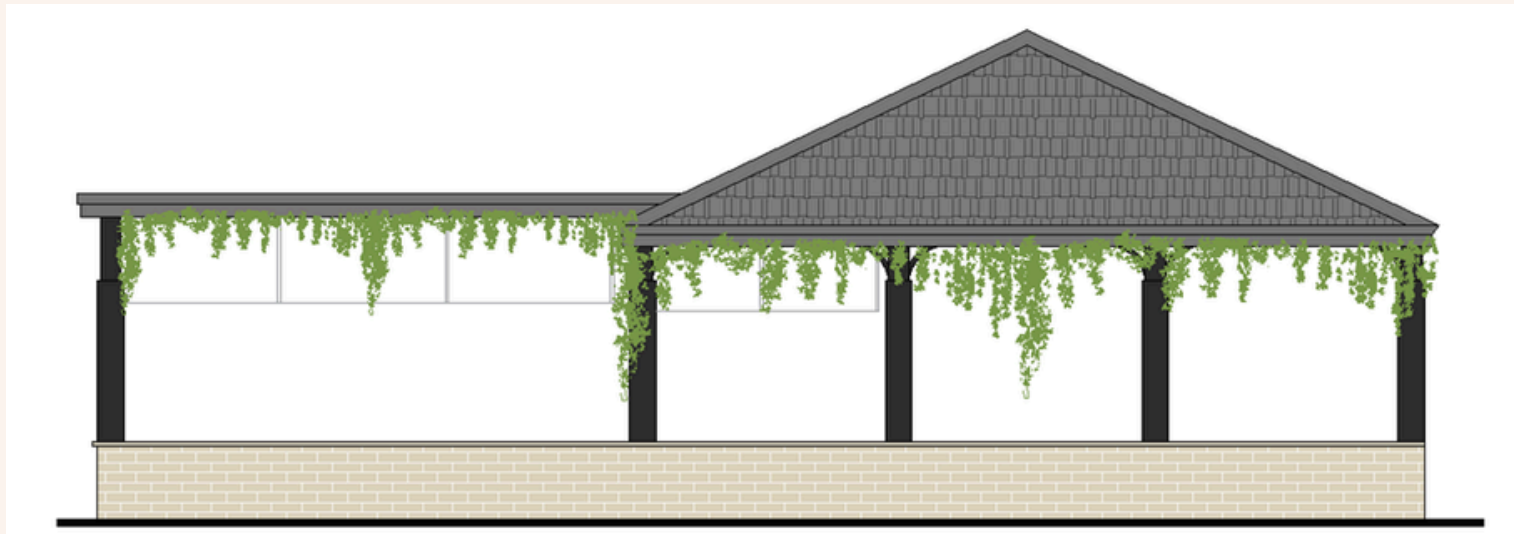


Figure 2. Proposed elevation showing the open-sided shelter, yellow stock brick plinth, articulated roof form and integrated planting.

The open-sided arrangement reduces the visual mass of the shelter and avoids the appearance of a substantially enclosed building. The low-level masonry treatment provides definition and durability at the base while allowing the majority of the elevations above to remain open.

5.0

PROPOSED SMOKING SHELTER

Yellow stock brick has been selected for the low-level masonry elements as a traditional material that is sympathetic to the established material character of the surrounding area. Its use provides a more contextually appropriate and durable treatment at the base of the shelter and assists the proposed structure in responding positively to its Conservation Area setting.

The roof is divided into a principal pitched element and a lower adjoining section, helping to break down the overall form and provide a more articulated appearance. The dark structural frame is simple and restrained, reinforcing the ancillary character of the shelter and ensuring that it remains visually subordinate to the surrounding buildings.

Planting is incorporated within the proposed design, including planting at low level and around parts of the roofline. As it becomes established, this will soften the appearance of the structure and assist its integration within the external area and wider Conservation Area setting.

Overall, the proposed material palette, openness, simple structural treatment and articulated roof form have been selected to provide a functional smoking shelter while respecting the site's location within the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area.



ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT ON SIGNIFICANCE

8.1 Demolition

Removal of the existing external structure would not, on the evidence reviewed, result in the loss of fabric that has been identified as making a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area. Its removal is instead capable of producing a beneficial townscape effect by eliminating the existing visually disparate screening and framing.

8.2 Erection of the shelter

The proposed shelter would introduce a defined roofed structure and therefore represents a change within the Conservation Area. Its effect must be assessed by reference to significance rather than simply by the physical scale of the works.

The principal positive design characteristics are its substantial openness above the plinth, the rhythm of slender vertical supports, coherent architectural treatment, articulated roof form, separation from the main pub building shown on the floor plan, and landscaping integrated into the composition.

These characteristics reduce the perceived mass and enclosure of the structure and allow it to read as an ancillary external pavilion. The contextual elevation indicates that it remains subordinate to the surrounding buildings and does not seek to compete with their architectural presence.

8.3 Overall heritage effect

Taken as a whole, demolition and replacement are considered to preserve the significance of the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area and to offer a modest qualitative improvement to this part of the site. The improvement arises from replacing a visually fragmented and comparatively enclosed arrangement with a more coherent and visually permeable design.

No substantial harm is identified. On the submitted information, the proposal is not considered to give rise to less-than-substantial harm either, provided the detailed materials and finishes are restrained and the shelter is built in accordance with the submitted form and degree of openness.

DESIGN MEASURES TO MINIMISE NEGATIVE IMPACT

The proposal demonstrates a series of measures that respond directly to the Conservation Area context:

- the existing visually disparate structure is removed rather than incorporated into the new design;
- the replacement is visually legible as an ancillary shelter, separate from the principal pub building;
- the elevations remain predominantly open above a low plinth, maintaining visual permeability;
- slender vertical supports limit the amount of solid built form;
- the roof is articulated to avoid an undifferentiated, bulky appearance;
- the palette shown is restrained, with a dark frame and light masonry base;
- planting is integrated into the design to soften the structure and improve the quality of the external area; and
- the proposal avoids unnecessary alteration to the main building.

For the strongest heritage outcome, final material selection should remain subdued and durable. Highly reflective roof finishes, bright colours, visually heavy infill panels or later enclosure of the open bays would weaken the heritage rationale set out in this statement.

PLANNING AND HERITAGE POLICY CONTEXT

The proposal has been considered having regard to the statutory and national planning framework for development affecting designated heritage assets.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when exercising planning functions.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon that significance.

National planning policy also requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and encourages development within Conservation Areas to take opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance.

At local level, the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area Appraisal provides an assessment of the area's special architectural and historic character and is relevant to the consideration of demolition, alteration and new development within the Conservation Area.

The proposed development has been assessed against these principles. Particular consideration has been given to the scale and form of the replacement structure, its degree of openness, its relationship with the principal building and surrounding townscape, and the use of materials including yellow stock brick and slate roof tiles that respond positively to the established character of the area.

9.0

CONCLUSION

This Heritage Statement has assessed the significance of the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area, the contribution made by the application site and its setting, and the potential heritage effects arising from the demolition of the existing structure and erection of a smoking shelter.

The significance of the Conservation Area derives principally from its historic street pattern, architectural and townscape character, traditional built form and materials, and the relationship between buildings, streets and spaces.

The existing ancillary structure is not considered to make a particular positive contribution to that significance. Its demolition would therefore not result in the loss of fabric or features identified as contributing positively to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area.

The proposed smoking shelter has been designed as a subordinate and visually permeable structure. Its substantially open elevations, low-level yellow stock brick plinth, simple dark structural frame and articulated roof form help to reduce its apparent mass and maintain a clear distinction between the shelter and the principal premises.

The use of yellow stock brick and slate roof tiles has been selected to provide a material palette that responds sympathetically to the established character of the surrounding area. Integrated planting would further soften the structure and assist its integration within the external setting.

Overall, the replacement represents a more coherent and considered form of ancillary development. The proposal would retain the ability to appreciate the significance of the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area and is considered to preserve its character and appearance.