

Planning & Heritage Statement

The Railway Bell Public House Anglesea Place Gravesend Kent DA11 0RR

Proposals

The revised proposal is in respect of and the vacant land between it and the Tesco Express Store fronting New Road.

The Railway Bell

The public house has been the subject of a number of enforcement actions regarding the use of the A4 drinking establishment and its change to a use as a public house and restaurant with ancillary take-away service. It is understood that the Council accept that the change of use was undertaken prior to the recent changes in the Use Classes Order and that its use as a restaurant did not require the benefit of planning permission. However there were a number of changes in the internal layout, particularly the alterations to the toilet areas which require the benefit of Listed Building Consent.

Vacant Land

Planning Permission for the **erection of a detached Class E(a) building only** on the vacant land to the north of the Railway Bell between it and the Tesco Express store fronting New Road. It will be a two storey building where it abuts the listed building and then have a single storey rear projection leaving a rear yard area for providing a wrought iron staircase to the upper floor and a waste storage area. The building will be constructed of yellow stock bricks with white timber cladding to the upper floors to complement the listed building. It will have a tradition timber shopfront facing Garrick Street.

The applicant would be prepared to accept a conditional permission restricting the use to **Class E(a) only and no other without the prior approval of the LPA.**

Principle of Development

In policy terms the site is located in the town centre, adjacent to the primary shopping area and has a secondary shopping frontage. Therefore Policies CS05 and CS08 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 and Saved Policy S4 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 are relevant.

Policy CS05 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) states that the town centre will be the principle focus for town centre related economic and social activity in the Borough and that this will be achieved by encouraging

a mix of employment and residential uses and improving its role as a transport hub (amongst other things). Within the opportunity area improved public transport access will be supported (including the provision of an integrated transport interchange at Garrick Street/Barrack Row) and the redevelopment of under-used sites will be supported, where this makes more efficient use of the sites and improves townscape character (amongst other things).

Policy CS08 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) seeks to maintain Gravesend Town Centre as the highest order centre within the Borough and will be the sequentially preferred location for retail, leisure, entertainment and the more intensive sport and recreation uses.

Saved Policy S4 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 allows for changes of use within shopping frontages to uses which are appropriate to the Town Centre Shopping Area and which require a shop window frontage, provided that the total number of buildings in such uses in each length of street is not excessive.

Given that permission is being sought for a Class E(a) retail shop we do not see any conflict with existing policy and it is felt would enhance the town centre and the transport interchange. It will bring into use a vacant area of land within the town centre, provide a small number of employment opportunities and be located in a secondary shopping frontage, where it will provide a facility to travellers using the transport interchange.

Impact on the Listed Building & Character

Being located immediately adjacent to The Railway Bell, which is a Grade II listed building, Policy CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 and Saved Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 would be relevant

Policy CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 places a high priority on the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment.

Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 sets out that the primary consideration for development affecting the setting of listed buildings, will be the maintenance of their integrity. We are satisfied that the proposal is sympathetic in terms of massing, scale, appearance and materials to the listed building. And would not conflict with the principles of Policy CS19 and the NPPF

which states that new development should be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the built environment and take account of the scale, height, building lines and other architectural features of buildings. We are satisfied that the design reflect the bulk and massing of the Listed building even though it would be 'dwarfed' by the rear wall of the Tesco Express building. As such we are satisfied that it would have no detrimental impact on the amenities of the Railway Bell or its other neighbours.

The revised design has deleted the wrought iron safety railings on the single storey rearward projection which have been replace by parapet walls with contrasting brick on edge copings. This is to ensure that the roof cannot be used as a seating area for any Class E (b) use. The upper floor is to be used solely for storage in connection with the ground floor retail space due to its limited storage area.

Parking & Highways

The application site would operate independently of the Railway Bell which has its own enclosed 'beer garden' and outdoor area. It will have its own 4m wide rear access between the Railway Bell and Tesco Express delivery yard. This will serve as a delivery area and give access to the rear yard area and storage facility for the retail unit. Given its location we are satisfied that it would have no adverse impact on highway safety in the area.

Heritage Statement

The Railway Bell is a stand alone Grade II listed building located within the former Hospital & Commercial Quarter Conservation Area which no longer exists. The Pub itself is still listed and any development needs to be considered in the light of protecting this heritage asset.

It is understood that the building itself was constructed in 1853 as the Marquis of Anglesea and was renamed in 1910 as the Railway Bell. When originally listed in 1952 it comprised a two storey building of timber frame construction with white weatherboard walls under a slated roof. It had three sash windows within moulded architraves with a single vertical split at first floor level with three door opening with cornicing and canopies on the ground floor. Little has changed to the main building in the intervening years with the exception that two of the doors was closed with a replacement on the corner with Garrick Street in 1983 (19830612). It would appear that at some time between 1963 and the

application in 1983 two single storey extensions were added to the rear of the property to provide toilets and a kitchen area.

Over the years this end of the main shopping street (New Road) has seen new retail development that has dominated the Railway Bell with a three storey height stark blank wall immediately to the north.

Listed Building

We are satisfied that the works that have been carried out to the listed are of a very minor nature and have not impacted on the original historic fabric of the building. The only new element would be a door into the beer garden from the eastern end of the kitchen extension which would not adversely effect the LB. This and the other unauthorised internal works will be subject of a separate planning & LB Consent applications.

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