

Heritage Statement

Proposal: Change of Use of former Anglo-Saxons Friendly Society offices and meeting space (Use Class E) to 2 x 1 bed flats (Use Class C3), HMO (Use Class Sui Generis), demolition of existing rear single storey flat roofed extensions and removal of 2-storey rear external metal fire escape, construction of new single storey rear extension, new traditionally detailed fenestration at front of building, new dormer window to rear, and new cycle and bin store and the ongoing management plan for those areas.

Address: 2-3 Anglo-Saxons Hall, Berkley Road, Gravesend DA12 2EU

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Produced by: Clare Blanch Wright MA GDip MRTPI



1.0 Heritage Assets

- 1.1 The former Anglo-Saxons Friendly Society building comprising Nos 2-3 Berkley Road (the cream painted building in the photo) is an arts and crafts inspired non-listed building within Gravesend's King Street Conservation Area. This Conservation Area was designated in 1980 and extended subsequently in 1998 and 2001.

- 1.2 Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”
- 1.3 Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments are products of ‘change over time’. Both NPPF and PPG provide guidance on managing change. In particular NPPG Historic Environment states ‘Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change’ before providing more detailed advice for decisionmakers’ approaches to SAM, listed building and Conservation Area proposals. Considerations of appropriateness of interventions may be nuanced, having regard to the continuum of change over time.
- 1.4 Conservation Appraisals have different purposes centring around highlighting the historical importance of an area and identifying the positive features that should be protected and the negative factors detracting from its character and appearance. Appraisals are used by the Borough Council in considering proposals for demolition or alteration of buildings, as well as for new developments and for property owners and developers to understand the significance of buildings, features, spaces and landscape within and adjacent to the Conservation Area. These in turn lead to a Management Plan setting out policies and actions to conserve and enhance their special architectural and historic interest and to mitigate the effects of negative features have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 1.5 King Street Conservation Area benefits from a Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan. Both documents inform this assessment of the planning proposals for the former Anglo-Saxons Friendly Society building.

2.0 King Street Conservation Area

- 2.1 King Street Conservation Area incorporates all or parts of the residential streets of Berkley Road, Bernard Street and Wilfred Street and shopping streets of King Street, Milton Road, Parrock Street, Windmill Street, Stone Street and Manor Road.

- 2.2 The Conservation Appraisal states the special interest of this area:-

“The King Street Conservation Area encompasses much of the 18th and 19th century commercial expansion of Gravesend. It is focused on the central east-west highway of New Road, King Street and Milton Road that was firmly established when New Road was laid in 1801, as part of a stagecoach route to London via Northfleet. The streets are lined with commercial buildings, most of them ground floor shops and accommodation above, interspersed with civic buildings and some residential houses.

The new carriageway through the town led to the establishment of many inns and coaching houses, some of which remain in King Street and Milton Road. Prior to the 19th century, the activity of the town had mostly been focused around the Town Quay and High Street to the north due to the reliance on trade via the River Thames. The new developments to the south, further strengthened by the coming of the railway in the 1850s, led to the transformation of this area from rural hinterland to tightly packed urban commercial and residential streets as part of

the next phase of the expansion of Gravesend. The streetscape is dotted with landmark 19th century buildings, such as St John's Church on the corner of Parrock Street and the County Court buildings. These reaffirm the historic and architectural special character of the area."

2.3 King Street Conservation Area is further segmented by four specific character areas comprising periods and function. Character Area 4: Berkley Road, Bernard Street and Wilfred Street comprises a self-contained late 19thC residential area marking a phase of development of Gravesend Town following creation of the Georgian new town.

2.4 The Appraisal highlights the 'modest size of the properties and tight lay-out reinforces the area's character as a small working class housing development squeezed onto what was then the only available open space left in the centre of the town in order to meet the demands of a rapidly expanding population after the coming of the railways.'

The principal features of the built form are:

- Urban residential character;
 - Cohesive qualities of two storey terraced houses, dating from the late 19th century;
 - Distinctive corner buildings;
 - Continuous building line on the back of the pavement;
 - A domestic scale of building;
- Use of red and yellow brick and patterning;
- Round headed sash windows and doors;
 - ***Landmark Anglo-Saxons Friendly Society buildings and large yard doors in Berkley Road;***
 - Rear elevation of Milton Road Methodist Church.

Negative features/issues:

- Loss of architectural features, i.e. replacement of slate roofs, replacement of timber doors and windows with uPVC;
- Addition of satellite dishes on front elevation of properties;
- Crowding of streets through car parking;
- Views into the rear gardens of Harmer Street properties, which have a ramshackle arrangement of outbuildings, car parking areas and unattractive rear elevations to the principal properties.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The proposal will have a positive impact upon the appearance of the Conservation Area. It would remedy the highlighted features/issues of uPVC replacements by replacing the current uPVC windows to its striking front elevation with traditional hardwood painted vertical sliding sash windows. It would also remedy current issues of damp and spalling to the hall part of the building, repair the pediment, remove the tree and other vegetation from the roof.
- 3.2 The middle pair of narrow plain doors will be replaced with a hardwood sliding sash window matching others in this façade. The remaining windows either side and infill below the new window will be painted render, matching the rest of the building.
- 3.3 The proposed alterations to the rear of the building will largely remove later functional additions of flat roofed extensions and the metal fire escape. In its place will be gardens and a small single storey flat roofed extension. The Planning Inspector on the previous appeal for this site accepted the principle of the large dormer to the rear. In all, the proposed rear alterations will have little impact upon the Conservation Area and its use will not alter the general appearance of the building.
- 3.4 The exterior of the building comprising Nos 2-3 behind its striking façade is unremarkable in construction and design, being of typically plain late 19th Century construction and without adornment. The interior of the buildings, although not controlled by Conservation area legislation, it is nevertheless important to note that they are likewise unremarkable and comprise basic rooms with none of the typical 19th Century adornments that might have otherwise been expected.

References:-

King Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Gravesend Town Centre Management Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework December 2023, Chapter 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

National Planning Practice Guidance: Historic Environment