

Planning Statement

12-16 Queen Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2EE



November 2021

On behalf of

Mr Cam Javed



BARRON EDWARDS
PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Barron Edwards Ltd on behalf of Mr Cam Javed in support of this full planning application for the development of the site at 12-16 Queen Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2EE.
- 1.2 The proposal is for the demolition of existing outbuildings to the rear of the site to make way for new build 1 and a half storey rear block consisting of 6 x studio flats along with associated landscaping and cycle storage.
- 1.3 In addition to the applications form, the following documents are submitted;

- Planning, Design and Access Statement

Application plans:

- Drawing No. 001 (Site Location and Existing Block Plan)
 - Drawing No. 002 (Existing Floor Plans and Elevations)
 - Drawing No. 003 (Proposed Block Plan)
 - Drawing No. 004 (Proposed Rear Block Floor Plans)
 - Drawing No. 005 (Proposed Rear Block Elevations)
- 1.4 This planning statement is to be read in conjunction with the plans and documents referenced above.

2.0 Application site and surroundings

2.1 The application site is located within the High Street & Queen Street conservation area and is situated within a terrace of buildings on the East side of Queen Street and almost immediately opposite its junction with Brewhouse Yard. Queen street forms part of the commercial heart of Gravesend and extends from the junction of king street to the south, with the river to the north.

2.2 The ground floor of the site comprises of 3 commercial units at the front, with an outbuilding to the rear, The 1st and 2nd floor consists of a self-contained HMO type property. The site is served by a good frequent bus service with Gravesend main line railway station only a few minutes' walk away.



3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 There have been several instances in the past where planning application were submitted relating to this site and its associated properties. The most significant of which are as follows.

- App Ref: 19970119
Type: Change of use
Proposal: Change of use of the first and second floors from multiple occupancy to a residential care home for people with learning difficulties.
Decision Date: 22-04-1997
Decision: Approved
- App Ref: 20180214
Type: Full Planning Application
Proposal: Change of use of 8 numbered bedsits into 4 numbered 2 bed self-contained flats.
Decision Date: 07-01-2019
Decision: Refused
- App Ref: 20180215
Type: Listed Building Consent
Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed change of use of 8no. existing bedsits into 3no. 1 bed self-contained flats, 1no. 2 bed flat and 1no. studio flat.
Decision Date: 18-06-2018
Decision: Withdrawn
- App Ref: 20191256
Type: Listed Building Consent
Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed change of use of 8no. existing bedsits into 2no. 1 bedroom flats, 1no. 2 bed flat and 1no. split level 3 bedroom flat.
Decision Date: 14-01-2020
Decision: Withdrawn
- App Ref: 20191255
Type: Full Planning Application
Proposal: Change of use of 8no. existing bedsits into 3 no. 1 bedroom flats and 1 no. 2 bedroom flat.
Decision Date: 26-02-2020
Decision: Approved

4.0 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 54A of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, if require that, when making a determination under the Planning Acts, the determination shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The development plan for the site comprises the Gravesham Core Strategy (September 2014) and the saved policies of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994). The following policies of and were taken into consideration in the formulation of this application:

Core Strategy (September 2014)

Policy CS14 – Housing Type & Size

Policy CS 19 – Design & Development Principles

Policy CS20 Heritage and the Historic Environment.

Gravesend Town Centre Conservation Areas Management Plan 2009)

Queen Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)

Gravesham Local Plan (First Review) - 1994

Saved Policy TC3 – Developments affecting a Conservation Area

Saved Policy H5 – Increasing Housing Stock by Conversion.

Saved Policy P3 - Parking Standards

National Planning Policy

- 4.3 National planning policy is enshrined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) adopted in March 2012 (Revised Feb 2019) and the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) published in March 2014. The PPG was published to set out how to implement the strategic vision contained within the NPPF.

- 4.4 Revised on 19 February 2019, the overarching principle is contained within Paragraph 10 which states that there is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Paragraph.11c goes on that decision making should follow this approach so that proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan can be approved without delay. Paragraph 8a & 8b says that the planning system has three overarching and support sustainable economic & Social development to deliver the homes that the country needs and that this is secured by high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. It goes on in paragraph 8c to emphasise the need to enhance our natural and built environment, including making effective use of land.
- 4.5 The NPPF emphasises that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Councils Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.6 Paragraph 85 seeks to ensure the viability and vitality of town centres are maintained to a high standard and specifically to the need to promote positive town centres as they are the heart of the community and Paragraph 85a states that Council's should allow growth in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters. This is supported by the Council's saved policy H5 and Core Strategy Policy CS14 which both seek to provide sustainable housing in the Town Centre to ensure the continued vitality and viability of the Centre.
- 4.7 Paragraph 118d states that decisions made should support the development of under-utilised land & buildings such as converting space above shops, this is reiterated in 118e where it states the need to support opportunities to use the airspace above commercial premises for new homes. Paragraph 121 goes on to state how LPA's should also support applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed. It mentions the use of retail/employment land for homes commercial unless there are strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate. We are satisfied that none exist.
- 4.8 Paragraph 124 says that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development,

is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

4.9 Paragraphs 131 & 132 emphasise that considerable weight should be given to innovative designs which raise the standards and lead to an improvement of the character and quality of the area and how it functions. Furthermore paragraph 130 states that LPA's should not refuse proposals solely based on their designs where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies. We are satisfied that the proposal meets all these criteria – it is well designed, relates to the existing street scene and is visually in keeping with the character of the host building and street scene and provides safety and security for the occupants of the property.

4.10 However, the main policy implications for the proposal relate to the preservation and enhancement of established heritage assets and the Queen Street Conservation Area generally. In this regard this would be totally compliant with the policies laid out in Paragraph 185 of the NPPF and particularly bullet points a & b. Paragraphs 190 & 193 add further to this by emphasising the importance of ensuring that any alterations or modifications are in keeping and character with the Conservation area and ensure the preservation of the heritage asset itself.

5.0 Development Proposal

5.1 The aim of the proposed development is to uplift the site and enhance living conditions for current and future occupants. This has been achieved through the removal of the existing outbuilding to the rear of the site and erection of a new rear block to provide space for 6 x studio flats. It is also proposed to landscape to remainder of the outdoor space to provide sufficient amenity space

6.0 Heritage Statement

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 The application site itself is mixed in age and design with 12-16 being the original 3 storey C19 buildings, part of the terrace of 6 units being 12 -18 Queen Street. The three storey terraces being retail on the ground floor with self-contained residential flats over. The retail/commercial units being located on the back-edge of the footpath on both sides of the road. The only exception being the interwar double fronted retail unit at No.24/26 which has a small forecourt area.

6.4 The only listed building in the Conservation Area is 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.

6.5 The appraisal also identifies properties on the opposite side of the road. 19/21 & 23 as being buildings of local Interest as well as the George Inn public House. Only No.18 is identified as being a positive building in the street scene.

6.6 The application site is primarily to the rear of the site and relates to the erection of a self-contained block and makes no change 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.

6.7 The proposal would be in keeping with other court yard developments in conservation area, such as Dolphin Yard and that to the rear of 5 Queen Street. It would therefore be in keeping with the character of the Conservation area and have no adverse impact on it. The appraisal makes comment about focal points on the western side of the road but all have been altered substantially with the exception of Borough Market. We are therefore satisfied that the proposal will have no adverse impact on them or their setting.

6.8 Even as a rear courtyard development it would not be visible from the listed No.26/28 due to the extensive extensions at roof level on no. 24 so any impact on the listed building would be limit. The proposal would have no impact on the more modern building at No.24 because of the extensive extensions that have been permitted. It would not impact on the amenity of its neighbours at 12 - 16 in that a similar proposal is being worked on would complete the courtyard development.

7.0 Planning Considerations

7.1 It is our opinion that the main considerations of this case would be the impact of the proposals on the visual amenity of the Queen Street Conservation Area and street scene generally, the impact on neighbouring properties and shopping frontage and the provision of off-street parking.

Impact on the Conservation Area & Street Scene

7.2 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.

- 7.3 It is our contention that the application proposal will have a little to no impact on the character of the Conservation Area, there are no proposed alterations to the main buildings fronting onto queen street, the proposal is a 1.5 storey block to the rear of the site and has been designed with traditional design elements and is separate to the main building on site.
- 7.4 We are satisfied that the proposal can only be considered to improve and enhance the site. 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 as the proposal has been set in the ground further reducing its height and mass.
- 7.5 Paragraphs 185, 190 and 193 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.
- 7.6 In addition to the heritage aspects, it is necessary to consider the proposal in design terms and particularly Paragraph 124 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 130, 131 and 132 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.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

- 7.7 The character of Queen Street varies considerably and has no uniformity in terms of height, bulk and massing. This is a result of the older historic buildings contrasting with the later inter and post war infill developments. The success of the Queen Street Conservation Area owes much to the varying styles of building and roofscapes that add interest and rhythm. This has been complemented by the

conversion of other buildings within the Conservation Area to residential accommodation which has resulted in their refurbishment and enhancement where they make a viable contribution of the vitality of the Area. It is our contention that the proposal will make a similar contribution to the area.

- 7.8 The proposed development will not have any negative or adverse effect on the adjoining buildings. The proposal will significantly enhance views of the site from both inside and outside the Conservation Area and be a potential catalyst of bringing the upper floor of other properties back into beneficial use.

Design

- 7.9 In design terms the proposed development will result in a significant enhancement of the internal layout of the building with the individual units meeting the Councils adopted residential space layout standards and the more recently adopted national described space standards.
- 7.10 The design, scale and massing of the extension is completely in keeping with the general design criteria within the area and it would be similar to other built developments in the area. It cannot be considered to be visually obtrusive, and we are satisfied that the detail provided clearly shows that the site is capable of accommodating the proposed development without having any detrimental effect on existing residential amenity or being detrimental to the street scene. We are confident that it complies with the requirements of Sections 6 & 7 of the NPPF in providing a good quality of design that is compatible with its urban location. There is no uniformity to the townscape in the locality which has a variety of property types, many of which have been altered or extended in various ways which add to the character of the area. The scale of the proposal is therefore considered to be in keeping with other properties in the locality and as such not out of character.



Proposed Rear Block Front Elevation

7.11 We are confident that the development provides accommodation in accord with the Council's Design & Development Control principles and that the proposal is sustainable and visually attractive. It is an innovative design which has no adverse effect on the character of the area and adds local distinctiveness as outlined in Paragraph 127 of the NPPF. Further weight to this being given in Paragraph 131 which emphasises that Council's should support innovative design and should not impose their own styles or tastes but seek to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness.

Access and Car Parking

7.12 The proposal makes no provision for off- street parking but given its Town Centre location and its proximity to shops and the public transport modes it is considered that no further provision is required, and that the site's location is totally sustainable.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 The applicant has taken on board all the Council's and National policies to provide a sustainable residential use for the property given its proximity to the Town Centre and with its shopping facilities and public transport modes being within easy walking distance. The prospective layout and design is in keeping with the good design principles outlined in the NPPF and Council's policies and would be in

keeping with the character of the Conservation Area. We feel that the proposal would both preserve and enhance it and the heritage asset itself.

- 8.2 It is a site that fulfils the requirements of the NPPF in supporting a presumption in favour of sustainable development and particularly residential development in the Town Centre in compliance with Saved Policy AP10. The proposal is in keeping with the surrounding area and would make a positive contribution to the enhancement of the existing built development and street scene by ensuring that the property is refurbished and put to a more beneficial use.
- 8.3 It would not be out of character or at odds with the area and reinstate the property to residential use as originally developed. There would be no adverse impact on the amenities of any nearby residents nor would it have any significant impact on the vitality and visual amenity of the area. It is our view that the application should be supported and permission for the proposed development should be granted.