

5.03 – SE/11/03261/LBCALT Date expired 2 March 2012

PROPOSAL: Enlargement of existing window to front of building.

LOCATION: Bridges Charity Cafe, Bridges, High Street Edenbridge
TN8 5AJ

WARD(S): Edenbridge South & West

ITEM FOR DECISION

This application has been referred to the Development Control Committee as the Officer's recommendation is at variance to the view of the Town Council and at the request of Councillors Davison and Orridge who wish to challenge the Conservation Officer's response and to highlight that the minor enlargement of the window is essential in increasing footfall to the building.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:-

The proposal is not in accordance with Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks District Core Strategy as lowering the window would have a detrimental impact on the character of the Listed Building.

In the absence of a clear and convincing justification to alter the Listed Building, the proposal does not meet the requirements of Policies HE9.1, HE9.2, HE9.4 and HE6.1 of Planning Policy Statement 5.

Description of Proposal

- 1 The application proposes to lower the window cill of the existing front window of Bridges Charity Café (now referred to as Bridges) which faces onto Edenbridge High Street. The window will be enlarged by 0.84 metres.

Description of Site

- 2 Bridges is situated in the Town Centre of Edenbridge and is positioned at the northern end of the High Street within the Edenbridge Conservation Area.
- 3 In this area of the High Street there are a number of commercial businesses in the immediate vicinity as well as some residential properties to the rear of the site (Cranbrook Mews). Grade II listed Bridges is a former non-conformist Ebenezer chapel built in 1808.

Constraints

- 4 Conservation Area: Edenbridge;
- 5 Grade II Listed Building;
- 6 Area of Archaeological Potential;

Policies

Sevenoaks District Core Strategy

7 Policy – SP1

Other

8 Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment

Planning History

- 9 SE/10/03101/ADV – Double sided hanging sign (granted 7 January 2011).
- 10 SE/10/03102/LBCALT – Double sided projecting sign (granted 10 January 2011).
- 11 SE/07/00068/ADV – Poster Cabinet to advertise community drop in centre.
- 12 SE/07/00425/LBCALT – Display of poster cabinet on front elevation of premises (granted 23 March 2007).
- 13 SE/01/01608/LBCALT – Demolition of existing single storey side/rear extensions to Bridges and demolition of rear outbuildings, and erection of new rear addition as amended by revised plans received with letter dated 15 November 2001 (granted 14 February 2002).
- 14 SE/02652/HIST – Details of door joinery pursuant to condition 2 of listed building consent SE/98/01964 (15 January 1999).
- 15 SE/01964/HIST – Re-hang existing double doors to open outwards and provide new pair of double glazed timber doors (granted 19 November 1998).
- 16 SE/95/01972/HIST – Display of non illuminated flat sign, small flat sign and one cabinet for three posters (granted 5 December 1995).
- 17 SE/95/01124/HIST – Display of three non-illuminated advertisement sign (LBC). As per amended plans received with letter dated 3 September 1995 (granted on 31 October 1995).

Consultations

Edenbridge Town Council

18 Members supported this application which will enhance the look of the building.

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Conservation Officer

19 'Bridges' is a former non-conformist Ebenezer chapel built in 1808. No reasoning has been put forward in terms of the Listing or Conservation Area setting as to why this prominent and important feature of the front elevation should be altered. There just seems to be a desire not to be seen as old. PPS 5 contains a presumption against change for its own sake. HE 9.2 states 'loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification' and this is reinforced in Paragraphs 178-180. of the Practice Guide. The building has

been in use as a cafe for some years, so there can be no argument that the alteration is needed to facilitate the use. Recommend refusal.

- 20 *The SDC Conservation Officer has also stated verbally that even if further information was submitted, she could not support the alteration of the front window, as this is an original feature to the chapel and important to the character of the Listed Building.*

Ancient Monument Society

- 21 No response received.

The Council For British Archaeology

- 22 No response received.

Georgian Group

- 23 'As The Group has not been provided with any details regarding the significance and history of the fabric it is proposed to alter The Group must object to the scheme. PPS 5 states that:

- 24 'An applicant will need to undertake an assessment of significance to an extent necessary to understand the potential impact (positive or negative)' (Para. 58). The applicant has provided no such assessment of the significance of the building or window it is proposed to alter. We would expect to receive at least the listing description.

- 25 We recommend that application SE/11/03261/LBCALT be refused. Should further information regarding the significance of the building be provided will may be able to reassess this position.'

- 26 *In response to this the Planning Agent made the following comments on 19 January 2012:*

- 27 Further research has been undertaken on the Chapel and although the original structure was constructed in 1808 (Georgian) the gable end to the High Street was not completed until late Victorian times.

Society For Preservation Of Ancient Buildings

- 28 No response received.

Twentieth Century Society

- 29 No response received.

Victorian Society

- 30 'We object to the application in its present form given the surprising lack of information provided. From the documents supplied I can neither judge the significance of the building in question, nor the impact of the submitted proposals. There is no listing description, or even any mention of the date of the building. Given the applicant's almost total lack of assessment of the significance of the building, I urge the council to refuse consent.'

Representations

- 31 No representations have been received for the Listed Building consent. Two letters of support have been received under the accompanying planning application (reference SE/11/03260/FUL).

Head of Development Services Appraisal

Principal Issues

- 32 The main issues in this case are whether the proposal will have a detrimental impact on the important and original features of the Listed Building and whether sufficient information has been supplied with the application in order to assess the potential impact of the proposal.

Listed Building

- 33 Bridges is a Grade II Listed Building and as such the presiding material planning consideration with this application regards the impact that the development would have upon the character of the Listed Building. It is considered the front elevation is a prominent and important feature on Edenbridge High Street.
- 34 Policy HE9.1 of PPS5 states that there should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. This policy goes on to state that any loss affecting a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Therefore, as outlined in the PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide paragraph 85, any harmful impact on the significance of a designated asset needs to be justified on the grounds set out in Policy HE9.2 (substantial harm or total loss) or Policy HE9.4 (less than substantial harm).
- 35 In addition, Policy HE6.1 of PPS5 states that as a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should be consulted and the heritage assets themselves should have been assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary given the application's impact.
- 36 In terms of this application, the SDC Conservation Officer has assessed the proposals and has recommended refusal, on the grounds that no reasoning has been put forward in terms of the Listed Building or Conservation Area setting as to why this prominent and important feature of the front elevation should be altered. Therefore in the absence of a clear and convincing justification the proposal does not meet the requirements of Policies HE9.1, HE9.2, HE9.4 and HE6.1 of PPS5.
- 37 In addition, the SDC Conservation Officer has also stated that the front window is an original feature to the chapel and important to the character of the Listed Building and any alteration to it would not be supported. It is therefore considered that the proposal is not in accordance with Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks District Core Strategy as lowering the window would have a detrimental impact on the Listed Building.
- 38 Paragraphs 22-26 and paragraph 29 highlight that two statutory organisations (Georgian Society and Victorian Society) have recommended refusal on the grounds that limited information has been submitted with the application and

therefore they can neither judge the significance of the building in question or the impact of the alteration to the front elevation window. Therefore if Members are minded to grant consent, then the application would need to be referred to the Secretary of State.

Conclusion

- 39 The SDC Conservation Officer has stated that the front window is an original feature to the chapel and important to the character of the Listed Building. It is considered therefore that altering it would have a detrimental impact on the character of the Listed Building and the proposal is not in accordance with Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks District Core Strategy.
- 40 In addition, as the applicant has failed to provide a clear and convincing justification to substantiate the loss affecting the important and prominent feature of the designated heritage asset, the proposal is not in accordance with PPS5 and therefore the Officer's recommendation is to refuse Listed Building Consent.

Background Papers

Site Plan

Contact Officer(s): Neal Thompson Extension: 7463

Kristen Paterson
Community and Planning Services Director

Link to application details:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=LW76NWBKOCRO0>

Link to associated documents:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=LW76NWBKOCRO0>

