

4.3 20/03396/LBCALT Revised expiry date 2 April 2021

Proposal: Conversion of building from office to residential use by the creation of 4 flats (3 x 1 bedroom and 1 x 2 bedroom). Creation of basement flat and internal alterations. Removal of bay window to front elevation and replacement with a new window.

Location: 40 High Street, Sevenoaks, KENT TN13 1JG

Ward(s): Sevenoaks Town & St Johns

#### Item for decision

Councillor Fleming has referred the application to Development Control Committee on the grounds of the impact on heritage assets (paragraphs 189, 192, 193 and 194 of the NPPF).

RECOMMENDATION: That Listed Building Consent be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1) The works to which this consent relates shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

In pursuance of section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and details: 2038-01, 2038-02, 2038-03, 2038-04, 2038-05, 2038-06, 2038-07A, 2038-08A, 2038-09B, 2038-10A and 2038-11A.

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3) Prior to the commencement of works to the external walls, specifications (including, where applicable, size, colour, texture, profile, finish, bonding and pointing) and a sample panel of 1metre square of the external surface materials of the development (brickwork to front elevation) will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

To maintain the integrity and character of the listed building as supported by policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

4) Prior to the commencement of works, window details (including architrave, frame, heads, glazing bars and mouldings, reveal, cill, lintel and method of opening) shown in elevation drawings at a scale of 1:10 and horizontal and vertical section at a scale of 1:5, will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

To maintain the integrity and character of the listed building as supported by policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

5) Prior to the commencement of works to the boundary treatment(s), plan and elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 detailing the positions, height, design, materials and type of proposed boundary treatments will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

To maintain the integrity and character of the listed building as supported by policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

6) Prior the commencement of works, specifications, including section drawings, of all rainwater goods (and any external soil or waste pipes) will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

To maintain the integrity and character of the listed building as supported by policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

7) Historic chimneypieces and the original internal doors should be retained and protected during works.

To maintain the integrity and character of the listed building as supported by policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

### **Description of site**

- 1 The site consists of a three storey terraced property located to the east of the High Street within the town centre of Sevenoaks. The property is a Grade II Listed Building and is located within the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area. The site comprises an office use and is flanked by residential properties to the north and south.

### **Description of proposal**

- 2 Listed Building consent is sought for the conversion of the currently vacant property into four flats, comprising three x1 bedroom flats and one x2 bedroom flat. The works would involve the creation of a basement flat which includes reinstating the front area and revealing the steps on the principle elevation. The existing bay window on the front elevation will be replaced with a new window, in keeping with the proposed residential use of the site. Consent is also sought for internal alterations including the removal of the internal staircase from basement and ground floor and the removal of some internal partitions.

### **Relevant planning history**

- 3 84/00263/HIST Alterations to building and affixing of externally illuminated fascia lettering and projecting sign. GRANT 12/09/1984.
- 4 84/00137/HIST Display of externally illuminated fascia lettering and double sided projecting sign. GRANT 13/09/1984.

- 5 84/00136/HIST Alterations and use of first and second floors of premises for office purposes. GRANT 31/10/1984.

### **Policies**

- 6 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 7 Core Strategy (CS)
- SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation
- 8 Allocations and Development Management (ADMP)
- EN4 Heritage
- 9 Other
- Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area Appraisal

### **Constraints**

- 10 The following constraints apply:
- Grade II Listed Building
  - Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area

### **Consultations responses**

- 11 Sevenoaks Town Council - "Sevenoaks Town Council recommended approval subject to the planning officer and conservation officer being satisfied with the amended drawings and changes, and also that the five main conditions listed by the conservation officer in their report to the original application approved by STC are satisfactorily carried out."
- 12 Conservation - No objection - Summary: "Overall the proposals will entail the loss of some fabric, but they also present an opportunity to reinstate the front area, railings and steps which will better reveal the significance of the building and terrace. This combined with the removal of the shop front and replacement with sash window to match adjacent houses will help to reinstate a consistency to the terrace. Please note that the use of high-quality bricks and appropriate mortar mix to match existing is of extremely high importance for the reinstatement of a sash window in the front elevation to be successful. The use of the house as residential is understood to be a viable use."
- 13 Thames Water - No objection with regards to waste water network and sewage treatment works infrastructure capacity.
- 14 KCC Archaeology - No comments.

- 15 Planning Policy - No comments.
- 16 Amenity Societies - No response.

### Representations

- 17 One objection received to the amended plans raising the following points:
- errors on the application form
  - errors on the existing plans, details of materials, new rails on flat roof area and use of space as a terrace, loss of front bay window, ventilation of bathrooms and kitchens and fire break in roof space.

### Chief Planning Officer's appraisal

- 18 The main planning consideration is:
- Impact on the Listed Building

### Impact on the Listed Building

- 19 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 placed a duty on a local planning authority, in considering development, which affects a listed building or its settings, to having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features or architectural or historical interest it possess.
- 20 The NPPF states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets (para 193).
- 21 Policy EN4 of the ADMP states that proposals that affect a Heritage Asset, or its setting, will be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset.
- 22 The Conservation Officer has raised no objections to the scheme, stating that whilst the works may entail some loss of historic fabric, they would largely present an opportunity to reinstate the site frontage and better reveal the historic significance of the building.
- 23 The existing shop front is Georgian in appearance but of modern fabric and is not considered to be original. The existing operable, retractable awning of the shop front was a type of mechanism that was popular in the second half of the 19th century. However, census information for 1881 indicates that this building was in residential use, and a 1919 sales particular for the terrace describes the buildings at that time as residential. This suggests that the existing shop front and awning mechanism are 20th-century fabric, in line with the listing description.
- 24 The removal of the shop front and replacement with a window would help to reinstate a consistency to the terrace and improve the appearance of the terrace from the streetscape, respecting the history of the site. Whilst the Conservation Officer comments that a "6 over 6" sash window would be

preferable, the new window has been designed to match the upper floor windows on the front of the site and this is considered to be acceptable and consistent with the existing site frontage.

- 25 The removal of the existing modern concrete deck at the front of the building and the reinstatement of the front area, steps and railings (based on the appearance of adjacent examples) will have a positive impact and help to better reveal the special interest of the Listed Building.
- 26 The removal of the ground floor rear doors and replacement with a window to enlarge the light well to the basement flat would be considered to cause less than substantial harm to the Listed Building. However, the public benefits of the scheme in bringing a currently vacant Listed Building back into a viable use within Sevenoaks Town Centre and the adequate provision of natural light to the future occupiers of the basement flat are considered to outweigh this less than substantial harm.
- 27 Overall, the proposals will entail the loss of some historic fabric, but they also present an opportunity to reinstate the site frontage which will better reveal the significance of the building and terrace. This combined with the removal of the shop front and replacement with a window will help to reinstate a consistency to the terrace. The use of high-quality bricks and appropriate mortar mix to match the existing is of extremely high importance for the reinstatement of a sash window in the front elevation to be successful. This will be controlled through a condition regarding details of material samples.
- 28 On the whole, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the NPPF (para 193) and are supported in conservation terms. The less than substantial harm of the alterations to the rear doors and window would be considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme, as stated above. As such, the proposed works are considered to conserve, and in places reinstate and better reveal, the significance of the heritage asset in line with paragraph 193 of the NPPF and policy EN4 of the ADMP.

**Other Issues:**

- 29 The objection received to the scheme references errors on the submitted documentation, plans and certificate signed.
- 30 The points raised in this objection regarding the application form and plans are considered to be minor and not material to the determination of the application. The points raised would not represent a reason to invalidate the plans or form reasonable grounds of refusal. Having carried out a site visit and reviewed the plans and documentation, the Council is satisfied that the existing plans are correct and of a suitable standard to allow determination.
- 31 Regarding the certificate, the applicant has signed certificate B to indicate they do not own all the land shown in the red outline, with an obligation to serve notice on the other property or interested party that may own part of the land shown in the red outline. The Council is satisfied that the correct

certificate has been signed and the correct procedure followed regarding the validation of the application.

- 32 The flat roof area needs to be maintained as a fire exit with access for maintenance only. The proposed roof terrace has been omitted from the plans and this area will be conditioned under the full application to not be used as private amenity space to protect the privacy of the neighbouring bedroom window which faces out onto this area. Moreover, the details of material samples will also be secured through condition on the Listed Building Consent application. The Conservation Officer has raised no objections and conditioned the required information.
- 33 The amendments that have been made to the scheme are considered to address and alleviate the original concerns raised within the public comment and the additional points raised subsequently are considered to be minor or are non-material and do not constitute a reason for refusal.

### **Conclusion**

- 34 As highlighted in the report above the proposed development accords with the NPPF and our adopted development plan.

### **Recommendation**

- 35 It is therefore recommended that this application is GRANTED.

### **Background papers**

Site and block plan

Contact Officer(s): Anna Horn : 01732 227000

**Richard Morris**  
**Chief Planning Officer**

[Link to application details:](#)

[Link to associated documents:](#)



