

Dover Marina Hotel, Waterloo Crescent, Dover, Kent

PROPOSED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS

DESCRIPTION

Waterloo Terrace, of which Protea House is a part, is a long slightly curved terrace fronting the seafront within Dover Harbour. References to 'front, rear, left and right' are taken as viewed from the seafront. Some minor and strategic internal 'opening up' has been carried out in order to better understand the condition of the buildings and its evolution under the previous owner/developer.

Protea House comprises 3 units at the extreme right end of the terrace. The building directly connects to the Dover Marina Hotel, with the basement, fourth floor and roof rooms already in use as hotel rooms and other facilities attached to the hotel. Fire exit doors from Protea House open into the existing hotel corridors at all levels and shows the contiguous nature the building as a whole.

EXISTING

Internally, the building has been heavily altered, mainly during its conversion to a hotel (late C19th/early C20th), and later when converted to office use. The original form of each house comprised a stair well behind the main entrance doors (some still exist within the terrace), with full width front rooms overlooking the promenade on each storey, and other smaller rooms to the rear.

There are deep timber skirtings, in most rooms, picture rails, architraves and ornate plaster cornices in some rooms. Most of the windows are original and some have had glazing bars removed (as identified in the listing details). The windows have been repaired with various levels of success. Most Windows to the front also retain internal timber shutters. All internal doors have been replaced with modern doors, albeit with plantings to make them look like panel doors.

The plaster cornices vary in detail. In some rooms, the cornices look authentic but most have been over boarded to achieve fire separation, in some cases with two layers of plasterboard. Architraves, skirtings etc also vary, and it is difficult to conclude that any of it is historic.

PROPOSALS

The proposed scheme does not alter the exterior of the listed building. The envisaged scheme seeks to remove historic fabric (walls) at the Ground floor level within the grade II listed building to successfully and optimally expand the Hotel offering and achieve the objectives of providing a much-needed venue for conferences in Dover.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

The hotel's current owners have, in recent years, been very successful in improving the average occupancy rate and in promoting Dover as an alternate conference and wedding venue.

The planning to make the hotel and Dover the first choice for a conference or a wedding venue and for sporting groups such as golf in Kent To achieve the objective, the hotel has already taken steps to become a 4 star Best Western Premier hotel and has recently converted four residential flats into 13 additional guest rooms and integrated the same with the existing Dover Marina Hotel. Their acquisition of Protea House offers the potential of an additional 24 guest rooms being integrated with the Hotel, thereby expanding the total hotel capacity to 122 bedrooms.

It is important to note that no facility with the attributes outlined above exist in the districts plans and this will compliment Dover's tourism strategy and aims of the local plan.

To achieve these objectives, the hotel has listened to the Officers at the Council and also engaged consultants to review the existing planning permission for Protea House. The feedback we have received has indicated that the positioning and layout of the larger function facility originally proposed is too narrow and for this facility to be effective, it would be wiser to have this at the end of Protea House where it would be more square in shape. To achieve this and to keep the function rooms isolated from people enjoying themselves in the hotel lounge & bar facility, the hotel now needs reposition the Waterfront Bar alongside the existing facility but make it larger to accommodate the demand from the enlarged hotel. Likewise, where the existing bar is located, this area will become part of the enlarged reception lounge area to accommodate the 40% increase in accommodation guests

RECEPTION

As part of the ongoing expansion it is envisaged that the existing small reception area in the main foyer needs to be enlarged into the existing bar area to allow for a larger reception desk and a larger waiting/queuing and bag drop areas. The expansion plans upon completion will provide approximately a 40% increase in hotel rooms available within the hotel and therefore the ability to check in/out guests in a timely manner and allow a decent sized waiting / queuing area /bag drop zone is paramount to the success of the hotel. The reception area at present has the space to deal with between 10-12 guests with luggage at one time. There is no dedicated luggage drop zone for guests checking in early or wanting to leave luggage at the hotel prior to checking out. This is critical as it is the first interaction with the hotel for arriving guests. At present the main hotel bar is open plan directly off the reception area and when busy, can create a noisy and crowded environment. This sense of noise and crowding sometimes spilling out into the reception area can cause new guests to gain the wrong impression of the 4 star hotel upon arrival. The new foyer area would have reception desk, bag drop zone, office /printing facilities and a small seated area with satellite bar / coffee bar.

HOTEL BAR

The existing hotel bar would be relocated adjacent to its current position within the hotel on the ground floor area within the hotel and be twice as large as the existing facility. This is required to cater for the increased number of guests (40% increase) and allow a fully functioning hotel bar with a more varied and different menus for guests who do not want to eat in the hotel restaurants '1 a By doing this it would mean that the hotel would no longer need to apply for planning for a dividing wall between the new function room and the existing function room which was giving the Heritage officers some concern in regards retaining the buildings heritage. The larger hotel bar would potentially be a draw from the town centre via the subway and the new development being created on the other side of the A20. With any large bar area the openness of the layout is important for the security of both staff and guests and by locating it more centrally in the hotel it would achieve this.

CONFERENCE ROOM / WEDDING VENUE

Due to the ongoing success of the conference and wedding facilities now at the hotel further expansion of the conference / wedding venue is required.

The existing area is situated to the front of the hotel with direct access onto the front landscaped gardens, often used for arrival of wedding / conference guests, rather than through the main entrance of the hotel.

With the acquisition of Protea house there is an opportunity for this to take place there at the North Eastern end resulting in minimum interference to the operation of the current hotel.

No function rooms within the hotel at present are either large enough or wide enough to create one room that could take more than 180 + people and be located on the ground floor. There are no other areas available without losing bedrooms and having a major refurbishment to the listed building with the removal of multiple walls and chimneys.

Dover does not have a 4 star high quality venue that can cater for weddings meetings and function between 80 and 200 people. This means people will go to Folkestone, Canterbury and surrounding areas if they want a wedding function or conference if they need this capacity. The development of this additional facility for Dover Town would add to it's Tourism portfolio and is in line with the District Council's policy to promote tourism and to promote the Dover Town. The proposed hotel development will be the only facility within the Dover town centre location with spa, gym, accommodation and conference facilities all under one roof and will allow both public and commercial users one location instead of multiple locations and travelling to different venues for different facilities. This is a sustainable solution with less generation of traffic movement in the town.

The number of bookings and type cannot be quantified but an estimate of approximately 3 5 requests by telephone are made each month for either large conferences within a hotel location or as a wedding venue where 150+ guests is not an unusual occurrence. The hotel cannot accommodate this so business is lost to the area. It is not just a commercial benefit to the hotel but to the Dover commercial area, due to customers staying in the area and spending money rather going elsewhere. As outlined, there are no alternative facilities in the Dover township.

It is also impossible to accurately measure the lost business due to lack of this larger facility as the hotel website clearly show the capacity of existing function rooms so people do not even contact the hotel, they just go elsewhere outside the Dover district.

CONCLUSION

The principle of an enlarged conference / function facility has already been established in the original planning approval. By allowing the permission of the new application to expand the conference facilities would complement the Dover Waterfront development where a mixed form of development has been implemented. The hotel would help link the old established part of Dover Seafront to the new quay development.