

## **SUSSEX MASONIC CLUB**

**25, QUEENS ROAD, BRIGHTON, BN1 3YH**



**Part change of use from Class F2 (local community use) to Class E (restaurant & bar) and Class C3 (1No: 3 bed flat) with associated works, including rear extensions, new staircases and internal alterations**

### **PLANNING AND DESIGN STATEMENT**

#### **1. THE APPLICATION SITE**

- 1.1 The Sussex Masonic Centre lies in the City of Brighton and Hove, on the western side of Queens Road, which is the principal route between the central train station and the seafront. The site comprises a square plot of land c.850m<sup>2</sup>, bounded to the east by Queens Road, to the west by Crown Gardens, and to the north and south by adjoining properties. Its principal entrance is to the east via Queens Road; it also encompasses No. 30 Crown Gardens to the rear. The site is terraced into the rising ground to the west, resulting in its Crown Gardens frontage lying c. 3m higher than its Queens Road elevation.
- 1.2 25 Queens Road was listed at Grade II on August 20th 1971 (Historic England National Heritage List, list entry number 1380794) - for further details, see separate Heritage Statement accompanying the parallel, but separate, application for Listed Building Consent.
- 1.3 The application site also lies within the West Hill Conservation Area, which was designated in 1977 and extended in 1988 and 1995. The accompanying Conservation Area Character Statement describes the Sussex Masonic Centre as a 'building of note', one of a number of large, impressive properties on this side of the street.

- 1.4 Currently - as can be seen from the "existing" plans accompanying the application - the building comprises the main Masonic community rooms and associated function areas such as offices, dining rooms, bars, kitchen, and a 3-bedroom maisonette on the second and third floors.

## **2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 2.1 Full details of the planning history of the application site are contained in the aforementioned Heritage Statement. However, for the purposes of this Planning Statement, the most relevant - and most recent - application is that granted planning permission and listed building consent (LBC) in 2019, refs. BH2019/01336 and BH2019/01337.
- 2.2 This was for the change of use of part of the building from a masonic centre (D2) to offices (B1), with associated internal and external works.
- 2.3 As these consents have effectively set a precedent for the change of use of part of the main building, then a copy of the Officer's Report recommending approval is attached at Appendix 1, so a comparison can be made between the previously approved scheme and the current proposals. (Note: these former consents were not, however, implemented due to the impact of the subsequent COVID pandemic and changing market conditions arising from same).
- 2.4 In summary, however, the following elements are considered very relevant to the current change of use scheme, vide:
- (i) the loss of community facilities to which the (then) planning policy HO20 applied, was considered acceptable as there was now an over-supply of floor space for Masonic use ;
  - (ii) the new employment floorspace would help meet an identified need for such space in the city;
  - (iii) the remaining D2 floorspace would be adequate to meet the modern needs of the Masonic membership.
  - (iv) there were no objections on the grounds of design and appearance; impact on amenity; sustainable transport; nor any unacceptable or significant impacts on parking issues nor the highway network.
- 2.5 The above factors are equally relevant to the current proposals; an updated Statement from the Applicants setting out their former and current membership levels, etc. is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.6 An added benefit of the release of former D2 space to other uses (in this case commercial) would enable funds to be raised to assist in the maintenance and repair of the listed building itself - see below for further planning policy details on this point.

- 2.7 In relation to the listed building, the consent granted in 2019 noted that the proposed works would not harm the historic character or appearance of the Grade II listed building or wider conservation area. The Heritage Statement accompanying the LBC application comes to the same conclusions.

### **3. THE PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 For the reasons given by the Applicants in Appendix 2, there is an even greater surplus of internal floorspace than was the case in 2019, so the need to seek changes of use of the currently-redundant areas to ensure the continued viability of the current Masonic/Community use remains critical.
- 3.2 The uses now proposed (which are effectively an amendment to the previously - approved B1 office uses) are:
- (i) community use (D2) in the reduced floorspace area for Masonic purposes;
  - (ii) commercial uses (A3) in the surplus areas, vide a basement restaurant/walk-in wine cellar and a restaurant on the ground floor;
  - (iii) a 3-bedroom flat (C3) on the second floor.
- 3.3 A more detailed list of the key business and related information is attached at Appendix 3, with - at Appendix 4 - the operational plan for the commercial areas. From these it can be seen that there are many and varied benefits to the city and its community from the current proposals - especially in terms of new employment and tourism opportunities - with due consideration given to the (limited) impact of same upon local residents in terms of hours of business; deliveries; noise; and rubbish disposal.
- 3.4 The proposed new flat will be for rent - to raise income which is sorely needed to help in the maintenance and repair, etc. of the property.

### **4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

- 4.1 **NATIONAL POLICIES:** The starting point against which the current proposals must be assessed is the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**.
- 4.2 Chapter 2 - "Achieving Sustainable Development" - states that: "the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
- 4.3 " At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection".

4.4 "Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".

4.5 As to decision-making, the NPPF goes on to say:

"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible".

4.6 In relation to the proposed 3-bedroom flat, the NPPF, under the heading "Delivering a sufficient supply of homes", states:

"To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay."

4.7 This is supported elsewhere in the NPPF, vide:

"Local planning authorities should recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites".

4.8 As to the economic benefits which the current proposals offer, the NPPF's "Building a strong, competitive economy" states that: "planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential."

- 4.9 Ensuring the vitality of town centres is another objective of the NPPF, stating that:  
" Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation".
- 4.10 Although more detail as to the listed building considerations in this case are set out in the separate Heritage Statement, nevertheless the planning implications of proposals affecting such heritage assets are contained in the NPPF under the heading: "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment", as follows:
- 4.11 "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary".
- 4.12. "In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
  - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use".

- 4.13 **LOCAL POLICIES:** The above NPPF policies set the framework for the more local planning policies, the most relevant here being:

**(A) Brighton and Hove City Plan Part One**

- 4.14 This sets out the strategic objectives for the city, the most relevant of which are:

**SO1** Ensure that all major new development in the city supports the regeneration of the city, is located in sustainable locations, provides for the demands that it generates and is supported by the appropriate physical, social and environmental infrastructure.

5.

**SO2** Support the continued improvement of the economic performance of the city by identifying and safeguarding an appropriate range of sites and premises to meet demands of high growth and key employment sectors and ensuring there is a well trained and suitably skilled local workforce.

**SO3** Develop Brighton & Hove as a major centre on the South Coast for sustainable business growth and innovation, creative industries, retail provision, tourism and transport.

**SO4** Address the housing needs of Brighton & Hove by working with partners to provide housing that meets the needs of all communities in the city, achieves a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures that is affordable, accessible, designed to a high standard and adaptable to future change.

**SO5** Maintain and strengthen the role of Brighton city centre, improve its attractiveness and recognise and protect its unique cultural, tourism and retail mix and look to diversify the evening economy and leisure function.

4.15 The Plan also contains **Policy CP15: Heritage**, which is of relevance to the listed building aspects of the proposals. The main thrust of this policy - which guides the consideration of the planning issues involved in development proposals (e.g. for changes of use of heritage assets) - is that:

" The council will work with partners to promote the city's heritage and to ensure that the historic environment plays an integral part in the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental future of the city through the following aims:

1. The city's historic environment will be conserved and enhanced in accordance with its identified significance, giving the greatest weight to designated heritage assets and their settings and prioritising positive action for those assets at risk through, neglect, decay, vacancy or other threats. The council will further ensure that the city's built heritage guides local distinctiveness for new development in historic areas and heritage settings".

**(B) City Plan Part 2:**

4.16 The above strategic objectives are set out as more specific and detailed planning policies within this document. Those considered most relevant to the current proposals are:

4.17 DM9 -Community Facilities - this is the updated version of the afore-mentioned Policy HO20 at para. 2.4 (i) above, and repeats the approach taken in assessing the 2019 planning application, vide:

"2. Development that would lead to the loss of community facilities will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that at least one of the following circumstances applies:

a) replacement facilities of an appropriate quality and size will be provided as part of new development proposals or in an alternative suitable location that meets the criteria in part 1 of this policy; or

b) the facility is no longer needed and suitable alternative provision with sufficient capacity is available in a location easily accessible to users of the facility; or

c) the building or land is no longer suitable to accommodate the current use or an alternative suitable community use and cannot be reasonably adapted to do so; or

d) it has been demonstrated that there is no current or future need or demand for the space, either in its current use or any alternative community use and evidence of active, flexible and appropriate marketing of the site for community use has been provided.

Partial loss of floorspace through change of use will be supported where it can be clearly demonstrated that the operational need of the community use requires less floorspace or where continuation of the existing use would otherwise be unviable and can be sustained by cross-subsidy."

4.18 The supporting text at paragraph 2.85 highlights this latter fact:

"The policy includes flexibility by allowing partial loss of floorspace where this would not affect the ability of the existing use to effectively operate, to sustain an otherwise unviable community use through the introduction of a higher value use on part of the site".

4.19 DM20 - Protection of Amenity - this states that:

"Planning permission for development including change of use will be granted where it would not cause unacceptable loss of amenity to the proposed, existing, adjacent or nearby users, residents, occupiers or where it is not liable to be detrimental to human health".

4.20 The main effects referred to in this Policy are visual privacy and overlooking; outlook and overshadowing; and sunlight and daylight.

4.21 All these factors were assessed in relation to the originally-approved change of use referred to above with no objections raised on the grounds of loss of amenity. The current revised change of use proposals, relating to mainly internal differences only, will not cause any greater, unacceptable, impacts on the main effects and so are considered equally acceptable.

4.22 The only new building works relate to the (small) proposed rear extension which reduces the garden area to 31, Crown Gardens by some 2 m - but still leaving a viable garden space for this city-centre dwelling. (it should be noted here that this property, and the adjoining No.30, are in the freehold ownership of the Applicants and rented out).

4.23 Interestingly, Policy DM20 above makes no reference to the impact of noise upon local amenities. The current proposals, introducing commercial elements such as a restaurant and bar will require the installation of various extraction fans, power sources, etc.

4.24 As such, these elements will need to be assessed against the requirements of Policy DM40 - Protection of the Environment and Health: Pollution and Nuisance. Here, specific reference is made at criterion (e) to assessing the impacts of emissions from transport, flues, fixed plant, and heat and power systems.

4.25 In respect of transport, any emissions will be no greater than those emanating from the previously-approved change of use proposals; regarding the other elements, the Mechanical Ventilation Specification Report accompanying the planning application indicates, inter alia, that:

"Noise levels generated by the building services to the external environment shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Local Building Control/Environmental Health Officer. Attenuation will be installed to all new supply and extract fans to ensure no noise breakout to the local environment - see plans and drawings showing the extraction, etc. details".

4.26 The accompanying Acoustics Report

4.27 Details of the attenuation measures for individual services are set out in the Report itself; any further requirements/details could, if required by the LPA, be the subject of appropriate planning conditions attached to the planning permission if granted.

4.28 Turning to the impact of the proposal on the Conservation Area, Policy DM26 states that:

"Development proposals within conservation areas, including alterations, change of use, demolition and new buildings, will be permitted where they preserve or enhance the distinctive character and appearance of that conservation area, taking full account of the appraisal set out in the relevant character statement. Particular regard will be had to, inter alia,:

a) The urban grain and/or historic development pattern of the area, including plot sizes, topography, open space and landscape.

b) The typical building forms and building lines of the area, including scale, rhythm and proportion.

c) The cohesiveness or diversity of an area.

d) The retention of buildings, structures and architectural features that contribute positively to the identified character and appearance of the area.

e) The preservation or enhancement of key views.

f) The primary importance of street elevations (or other publicly visible elevations) and the roofscape.

g) The importance of hard boundary treatments and the distinction between public and private realm.



h) The retention of trees and gardens where these are integral to the significance of the area.

8.

i) The use of building materials and finishes that respect the area.

j) The retention of historic street furniture. Where either substantial harm or less than substantial harm is identified, the council will expect the applicant to fully meet the requirements set out in the NPPF, having regard to the significance of the conservation area/s affected".

4.29 Similarly, Policy DM27 - "Listed Buildings" - states that:

"A listed building should be retained in viable use and good repair. Proposals involving the alteration, extension, or change of use of a listed building will be permitted where they would not harm the special architectural or historic interest of the building....."

4.30 As the proposals are aimed at preventing the non-use/vacancy of substantial areas of the listed building, then the concluding text under this policy is very relevant:

"Where vacancy is an on-going concern, consent will be granted for a new viable use that is consistent with the conservation of the building's special interest, provided that this would not unacceptably conflict with other policies or material considerations. In applying other policies the council will have special regard to the benefits of bringing the listed building back into use."

4.31 Policy DM35 - "Travel Plans and Transport Assessments" - indicates that such documents are required to support planning applications where the development "is likely to generate significant amounts of movement/travel .....etc."

4.32 However, as with the 2019 application, the alternative changes of use now proposed are not considered to generate significant movements and, as with the original planning permission, the transport details could, if required, be the subject of a travel plan via a planning condition.

4.33 The same position relates to Policy DM36 - "Parking and Servicing", especially as this supports car-free developments, etc.

4.34 In relation to the proposed new flat, Annex 3 -"Housing Implementation Strategy" - specifically states that, in order to meet the City's housing supply needs, it intends to concentrate a significant amount of new residential development within the most accessible areas (which the application site most certainly is), and that some new housing will be provided via what are known as "windfall" sites, e.g. through changes of use of existing buildings, as proposed in the current application.

## **5. ASSESSMENT**

5.1 National Policies: in the NPPF, sustainable development is a pre-requisite. The application site is within a highly sustainable location, being only a few hundred metres from Brighton Station; well-served by public transport (incl. taxis); and with easy pedestrian access from the adjoining, wide pavement areas.

5.2 The proposals are thus consistent with the policy approach as set out in paras. 4.2-4.4 above.

**9.**

5.3 The proposed development will also meet the economic, social and environmental objectives of the NPPF as referred to in para. 4.5.

5.4 The proposals will make a small, but not insignificant, contribution to meeting local housing needs (paras. 4.6 - 4.7).

5.5 They will also contribute, in a significant way, to building a strong, competitive local economy. (para. 4.8).

5.6 The proposals will ensure the continuing viability of Brighton City Centre (para.4.9).

5.7 As to the Listed Building aspects, a study into the significance of the heritage asset has been undertaken (see Heritage Statement), balanced against which is the necessity to put that asset to its optimum, continuing, viable use. (para. 4.12).

5.8 Local Policies: the proposals will meet the strategic objectives of the City Plan Part 1 (para. 4.14) and the Heritage Objectives of Policy CP15 (para. 4.15).

5.9 The requirements of Policy DM9, community facilities, have been met in that the facility no longer requires its original floorspace/usage needs, due to falling membership levels, and there is no future demand for such floorspace. In these circumstances, the policy supports the loss of some floorspace via change of use. (paras. 4.17 - 4.18).

5.10 No unacceptable loss of amenity will be caused to nearby users, residents or occupiers, nor will there be any detriment to human health, thus the proposals meet the requirements of Policy DM20.

5.11 Similarly, the proposals will not give rise to any material nuisance and/or pollution that would cause unacceptable harm to health, safety, quality of life, etc. nor will there be any adverse impacts arising from transport or services emissions, etc. and so the proposals are in accordance with the requirements of Policy DM40.

5.12 The impacts upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are not significantly different from those arising from the scheme approved in 2019 (i.e. due to less than substantial harm to the area). The current application is thus consistent with Policy DM26 (para. 4.28).

5.13 Similarly, the application is consistent with Policy DM7 as it ensures the maximum viable use of the heritage asset - as was the case with the 2019 application. (paras. 4.20- 4.21).

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 Due to plummeting membership levels, the building is now past its original function and that new uses are vital if the expense of maintenance and repair of the heritage asset is to be met via new revenue streams, such as the commercial uses now proposed. It is thus contended that the public benefits greatly outweigh any harm to the listed building.
- 6.2 This was of course the case with the original permission for change of use to offices in parts of the building which the planners and conservation Officers at the City Council then accepted; the only reasons the approved scheme did not go ahead were due to the impact of the subsequent COVID pandemic upon economic and marketing factors.
- 6.3 No other suitable uses have come forward, so if the current application is refused, then the Lodge runs the risk of not being able to maintain, repair and upkeep this listed building, which would be contrary to the principles of preservation/conservation wherever possible. This justifies the loss of certain individual features which the current proposals require, which again appears to have been the case - at least in general principle - with the first planning permission.
- 6.4 For all the above reasons. It is considered that the amended change of use proposals meet all the national and local planning policy requirements set out above.
- 6.5 It is also contended, as a material planning consideration, that the impact of the proposed changes in terms of access, local amenity, footfall, traffic and parking, etc. are no different, if not less, than when the Masonic premises were in fully operational use at the height of its membership.
- 6.6 Furthermore - and having regard to the material consideration/precedent of the 2019 planning permission for change of use - then the considerable benefits of the new proposals (especially maintenance of the heritage asset, employment opportunities, tourism benefits, and new housing, etc.) outweigh any actual or perceived disbenefits.
- 6.7 Thus, in NPPF/Government policy terms, there is a presumption in favour of the proposals.

**APPENDIX 1****EXTRACT FROM OFFICER'S REPORT - BH2019/01336****CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT**

The main considerations in the determination of this application relate to the principle of the change of use, the impact on the character and appearance of the listed building and conservation area, neighbour amenity and highways issues.

**Planning Policy:** The proposal seeks to change the use of part of the building from D2 to B1. The application states the total GIA of the building is 2,130m<sup>2</sup> and the proposed change of use would result in net loss of c.19% of this existing D2 floorspace; resulting in a net gain of 396m<sup>2</sup> B1a floorspace.

**Loss of Community Facilities:** The current use of the building is D2 therefore policy HO20 applies. This policy seeks to retain community facilities, however recognises that a site may no longer be needed and specifies four exceptions as follows:

- a. The community use is incorporated, or replaced within a new development; or
- b. The community use is relocated to a location which improves its accessibility to its users; or
- c. Existing nearby facilities are to be improved to accommodate the loss; or
- d. It can be demonstrated that the site is not needed, not only for its existing use but also for other types of community use.

Where an exception applies a priority is attached to residential and mixed use schemes which may provide 'live work' and/or starter business units to meet identified local needs.

Although little weight can be afforded to Draft City Plan Part 2 policies, policies indicate the direction of travel. Draft Policy DM9 supports partial loss of community floorspace "when the operational need of the community use requires less floorspace or in order to sustain the viability of the existing use by cross subsidy."

The application states that no. 25 Queens Road is a substantial building and there has always been an over-supply of floor space for Masonic use. During the last ten years (from 2008 to 2018) the membership has fallen from 6000 members to 5000 members, a loss of 1000 members which represents a 17% fall over a decade. 40 years back, the membership was in excess of 10,000 members. Therefore over a period of four decades there has been a loss of 50%. This fall in membership levels has resulted in an oversupply of D2 use within the building.

It appears that the remaining D2 floorspace would meet their members' needs given the membership has reduced. The proposal would also provide new employment floorspace and would therefore support City Plan Policies CP2 and CP3, helping to OFFRPT meet an identified need for B1 office space in the city and would be located in an area where B1a office floorspace is protected under policy SA2.

Therefore the loss of the community space and partial change of use is considered acceptable and reasonable given that a significant proportion of the building will remain in D2.

A condition is recommended to ensure that office is retained as an B1 (a) office in the interests of safeguarding the supply of office floorspace in the city given the identified shortage.

**Design and Appearance:** The external alterations include the installation of a small rendered dwarf wall with cast iron railings and opening up of lightwell to the front of the building, new timber sash window and four panel door to basement. The external alterations would be relatively minor in nature within the streetscene, and would not detrimentally impact on the the listed building or the conservation area. The Heritage Officer has no objections to the scheme.

**Impact on Amenity:** Policy QD27 of the Brighton & Hove Local Plan states that planning permission for any development or change of use will not be granted where it would cause material nuisance and loss of amenity to the proposed, existing and/or adjacent users, residents, occupiers or where it is liable to be detrimental to human health.

With regard to the neighbouring properties, by its nature the change of use to B1 is unlikely to lead to any significant noise or problems with increased activity in this busy part of the City. However it is recommended that the use as B1(a) office use only and hours of use of the office are conditioned as there are some residential properties in close proximity.

**Sustainable Transport:** The applicant is not providing car parking on site and this is in line with the City Council's Parking Standards SPD14. It is noted that parking surrounding the site is restricted and is within Controlled Parking Zone Y. There are pay and display bays on Church Street and an NCP car park on North Road if employees and visitors did wish to travel to the offices by car.

No cycle parking is proposed. It is however acknowledged that the site is constrained and a space for policy compliant cycle parking may not be possible. There are cycle stands on Queens Road and Church Street within the vicinity of the site and therefore the Council's Highways team do not object in this instance.

The applicant has not provided an assessment of the difference in trips from the existing D2 use and the proposed B1 use. It is acknowledged that this site is in a very central location and is close to good public transport links. There is likely to be an increase in person trips to the site but for this size of development it is not deemed likely to have a significant enough impact on the highway network to warrant a reason for refusal. To reduce the number of journeys made by car and mitigate the OFFRPT impact of these trips, the Highways team has recommended that a travel plan is requested to promote sustainable travel to the site. This can be secured by condition.

**EQUALITIES** The application is proposing an existing pedestrian access point directly from the footway. The route is stepped and this will mean the access is not level. However

it is acknowledged that the site is constrained by the existing historic building and therefore level access is difficult to provide.

**13.**

I have considered and agree with the reasoning in this report and authorise the grant of planning permission, subject to the Conditions and Informatives set out above.

**Signature of Reviewing Officer: Liz Arnold Dated: 17 September 2019**

**APPENDIX 2****SUSSEX MASONIC CLUB****CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP LEVELS**

1. 25 Queens Road is a very large building and there has always been an over-supply of floor space for D2 Masonic use.
2. During the last 10 years, the membership has fallen from 6,000 to 5,000 - a loss of 1,000 members which represents a 17% fall over a decade.
3. Going back 40 years, the membership then was in excess of 10,000 members, so over a period of four decades the overall loss is in the order of 50%.
4. Thus if planning permission were to be granted for the changes of use now proposed, the remaining D2 floor space would be more than adequate for the current levels of membership (which are not anticipated to grow in the future; indeed, going by past trends, they are more likely to fall even further).
5. Falling membership also means falling revenue, which is normally set against the rising costs involved in the upkeep of this Grade II Listed Building.
6. For example, in recent years the members have re-decorated the front facade of the building, and replaced the concrete roofing tiles with slate - which has transformed the look of the building as well as restoring it to its original form. The members would like to continue with this work, both internally and externally, as finances permit.
7. The proposed changes of use would thus be a critical element in securing the necessary finances for such important heritage and conservation works.

**APPENDIX 3****KEY BUSINESS AND RELATED INFORMATION**

- 2 & 3 Michelin starred trained chef opening in Brighton city centre
- 2 minutes walking distance from station
- Utilising a prime city centre space not previously used by the public.
- Employing 20-25 full time staff. In peak periods of the year, we also expect to use part time workers.
- Bringing 2 unique concepts yet unseen in Brighton
- All funded by local investment
- Amount of investment £850k - £1m in fit out, plus amount of cost in building & structural restoration on the landlord's side (thereby creating temporary employment opportunities).
- Focus on sustainability, no single use plastic, minimal food waste structure etc.
- Working with as many local producers, farms, to supply produce as possible
- Commissioning local artists, craftsmen, traders during the build & design.
- Target within two years to bring Brighton its first Michelin star.
- Offering two concepts with drastically different price points & target audience.
- Fine dining restaurants bring different clientele to areas & contribute to lifting city's economy's, cultural standing & house prices
- Ground floor space allows for 42 cover restaurants with seated drinks only
- Basement space allows for 18 cover restaurant & walk-in wine cellar, seated drinks only
- Operational Tuesday through Saturday for dinner – Friday through Sunday for lunch
- Elevating the high street leading into the centre by adding two fine dining concepts



## **APPENDIX 4**

### **COMMERCIAL USES - OPERATIONAL PLAN**

#### **Hours of business use for the ground floor concept**

Monday closed

Thursday to Saturday lunches 12:00 – 15:00 Sunday lunches 12:30 – 17:00

Tuesday to Saturday evenings 18:00 – 12:00 (Last table sitting at 22:15)

#### **Hours of business use for the basement concept**

Monday to Wednesday closed

Thursday to Saturday evenings 18:30 – 12:00 (Last table sitting at 20:00)

Saturday lunches 12:00 – 15:00

#### **Deliveries**

All our food & beverage suppliers will deliver between the hours 8:00 to 11:00, drivers will have use a buzzer system to gain access.

Should a delivery arrive before then, which we acknowledge is likely to happen from time to time we have the middle entrance on the front of the property that will have a coded access deliveries room inside the hallway, this is the flats entrance of the property and it could only be used on particular exceptions.

#### **Noise**

We will be ensuring a minimal noise impact approach to neighbours by not having a designated smoking area anywhere on site, employee's will only be allowed to smoke off-site on allocated breaks.

Kitchen extraction systems to be housed and have soundproofing and redirected to the north end of the property, furthest away from adjacent residents.

The earliest staff would be on site is 8am (to open up & take deliveries) with the majority of the employee's arriving between the hours of 9-12.

Staff leaving after the hours of 10-10:30 will leave via the front of the property to minimize the foot traffic & noise to adjacent residents.

#### **Rubbish**

We plan to use a waste management company to collect our bins from the rear of the property several times a week at allocated collection time slots. Moving the waste storage & collection to an enclosed area to the rear we feel tidies up the Queens Road, as currently bins are situated at the front within the property boundaries right next to the pavement, degrading the aesthetics of the building, plus the addition of the smell, which

isn't a great first impression, with the majority of Brighton's visitors walking down Queens Road.