

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Lallows Boatyard

3 Medina Road, Cowes PO31 7BU



INTRODUCTION

The boatyard lies on the eastern edge of the Cowes Town Centre Character Area, lying between the town centre and the River Medina. The historic 'maritime' character of the area has largely been lost and it is now a mix of old and new residential properties, marine and commercial businesses.

This statement accompanies the planning application and associated drawings (03:1423:11/12/13/14 for the:

- demolition of the existing single storey 'small boat' shed;
- construction of two-storey building with 'small boat' shed and riggers loft over;
- installation of sheet piling (seawall) and back-fill to create a new hardstanding.

The existing slipway that was used to maintain the old floating bridge has not been used for at least ten years and is no longer fit for purpose.

A 'Pre App' application was submitted (iw/22/11/2691) and the feedback supported, in principle, the application:

"The site forms a long-established business within the centre Cowes. The proposals seek to improve the on-site facilities and therefore assist in the longevity of the business, which would contribute to the wider economy. As such, it is considered that the broad principle of this development is acceptable, subject to the consideration of all other relevant planning policies and material planning considerations."

BACKGROUND

Clare Lallow was established in 1867 and remained a family-run business until 1996 when it was sold to the present owner/director Lawrence Boarer.

Historically, the boatyard built traditional motor launches and yachts of various sizes. During the Second World War the yard built motor launches for the Admiralty. The thirty-five-year period following the war was the yard's heyday. During this period many famous boats were built including winning racing yachts and even two yachts for a reining prime minister. The yard then went into decline and stagnation, employee numbers dropped from 28 to 12 and when the yard was sold in 1996 most of the staff were nearing retirement.

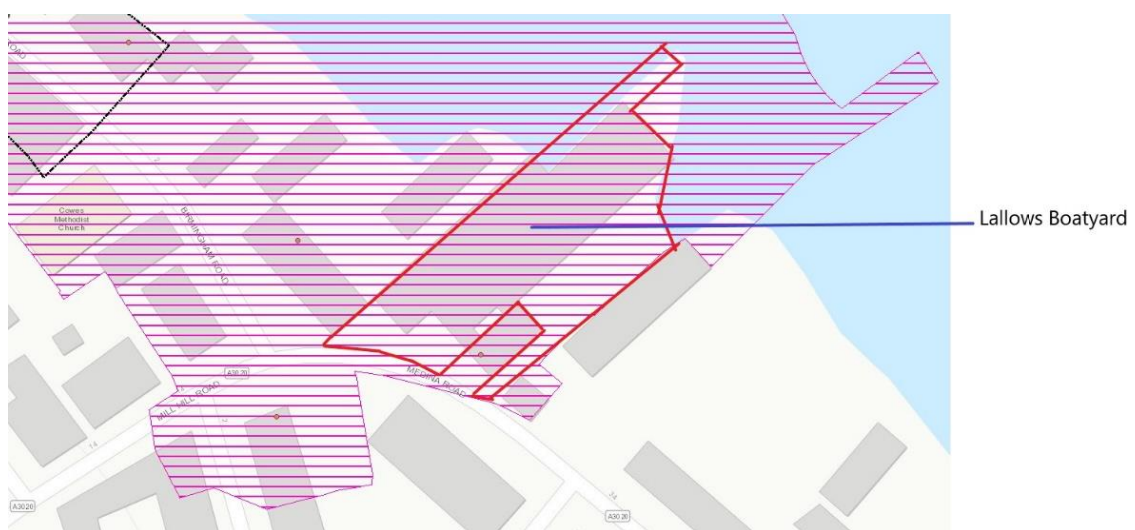
Today, the yard consists of eight sheds and the offices, four of which are original, three were formed by simply roofing over open spaces between existing sheds and one was built just to build a yacht called Drumbeat. The offices were built in 1964. The yard is therefore a rabbit warren of differently constructed sheds in need of constant maintenance.

In February 1996 Lawrence Boarer bought the boatyard and set about the most essential repairs but the resources were not available to demolish and re-build which would have been the best course of action. However, apprentices were employed every year, and of those that have stayed with Lallows one is now yard foreman and one acting manager. The yard has always had a loyal customer base and over the years this has grown so much so that for the last two years it has had to turn winter work away through lack of space.

Unfortunately, there is now little demand for traditionally-built new boats. However, the boatyard is thriving on repairs and restoration of all types of boats but specialises in traditional craft. The existing business has now grown from boat repairs and maintenance to timber merchant and joiner. The yard now boasts the best stock of hardwood on the island, has full order books for joinery and not enough space for boat building work over the winter.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

The boatyard lies on the eastern edge of the Cowes Town Centre Character Area.



Cowes Town Centre Character Area

The extract from the Town Centre Character Area describes the area as:

Character

This is the small scale, historic and lively centre of a town which is tied strongly to its waterfront and to waterborne activity in many forms. Its steep streets leading off the High Street afford views to the Solent and mainland.

History of development

Cowes has thrived as a town, port and centre for ship and boat building since the 17th century. This part of the conservation area relates generally to the core of the town which developed from that time through the 18th and 19th centuries.

Archaeology

The archaeology of the town centre is remarkable in that the old sea wall appears to follow the line of what is now the High Street. This would have been the focus for much of the activity in the 17th century when trade links with the American colonies made Cowes a prosperous centre of commerce.

Setting

The town forming this part of the conservation area is set on a northeast facing slope at the entrance to the river Medina. The waterfront and Cowes Roads form a vital part of the towns' character and thus the setting provided by the waterway is crucial.....To the southeast, along Medina Road, the historic character has been lost by clearance for boatyard use and with the construction of modern apartment blocks. Isolated early buildings remain leading to the floating bridge, but there is no consistent strength of character remaining until one nears the floating bridge.

LISTED BUILDINGS

There are two listings in the immediate vicinity:

Alma House and Rydon, number 7 and 9 Medina Road - Grade II listed residential terrace built of Ashlar stone dating to the early 19th Century.

Westbourne House, 43 Birmingham Road - Grade II red brick residential property dating to the mid 18th century

PROPOSAL

The proposed expansion of the yard is essential to its long-term future. It will give the boatyard additional storage space and also enable it to change the way boats are moved around the yard.

The proposed works will need to be carried out in at least three stages over several years:

Stage 1

- a Remove one of the original buildings (Boat Shed 2) and one of the roofed-over lean-to areas (Boat Shed 1). Boat Shed 2 is in a very poor state of structural repair with extensive rebuilding works required to make it safe (see attached structural engineer's report).
- B Replace the lean-to area with a new two-storey workshop and storage area and replace the old two-storey building with an open access into the main boatshed.
- C Concrete the remaining disused open yard and access to provide both the access and storage for additional boats. Access to this newly concreted area would be via the existing road access from Medina Road for trailer-based boats and via the existing small boat slipways that would be removed in Stage 2.

New Boat Hoist/Lift

Currently, boats are moved manually by the yard team. This is no longer regarded as acceptable from a health and safety perspective and is also very inefficient.

A new boat hoist/lift will be needed to move the boats around the yard (see examples in Appendix below). Additional space will be needed to manoeuvre the hoist/lift and 'block off' the boats for storage and relaunch. The only way this extra space can be created is if the old boat shed is demolished.

The 'Pre App' feedback relating to the staircase and entrance to the first floor has been noted and it has been moved away from the shared boundary.

Stage 2

To extend the concreted area including removal of the small slipways. The concreted area to extend to new sheet piling from where boats can be lifted onto the concrete hardstanding with a mobile crane.

Stage 3

To dredge the seaward area up to the new sheet piling and install pontoons for use as both private berths and a working pontoon for yard use.

THE FUTURE OF THE BUSINESS AND ITS EXPANSION

Although Stage 1 may not create extra jobs it would mean extra space to move and then store boats over the winter and therefore help to maintain the existing staff levels. It would provide additional profit to fund Stage 2. This stage would provide at least three new jobs:

- a trained crane driver who would also assist with moving boats
- two extra boatbuilders to carry out the extra work generated from the facility to crane larger boats onto the concreted area all year round.

It is expected that an entirely new job in the form of an engineer would be created between Stage 2 and 3. It would not be expected that Stage 3 will generate extra yard jobs, but one extra clerical person would be required as the business expands.

IMPACT ON THE STREET SCENE

The proposal would see an increase in the overall building mass. However, it would not be readily visible within the street scene. Given the location of the proposed building within the site and the surrounding area, including those of a significantly greater scale, it is not considered that the increase in height would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area. The proposed enlargement of the concrete hardstanding to the east of the building would have a minimal visual impact on the character of the area as it would be screened by existing built structures.



Street Scene looking west toward Shepards Wharf Marina and the floating bridge



Street Scene looking West toward Birmingham Road

IMPACT ON THE WATERFRONT

Two elevations are visible from the waterfront. The front (NE) elevation is clad in two types of white-painted wooden cladding and the roof is modern corrugated steel.

The waterfront view will change. However, the demolition of Boat Shed 2 will allow an older section of the boat yard to come into view.

Boat Shed 2
(to be demolished)



Waterfront view – showing boatshed to be demolished



Modern white-painted timber cladding on waterfront elevation of boatshed 2

CONCLUSION

Lallows is a well-established business that has been trading in Cowes for over 150 years. These proposals are regarded as essential for the long-term future and growth of the business.

APPENDIX

PHOTOGRAPHS



Sheds 1 & 2 to be demolished



Boat Shed 1 to be replaced and area for boat hardstanding created



Boat shed 2 to be demolished



Existing disused maintenance slip – works scheduled for Stage 3

BOAT HOIST/LIFT - examples

