



Lewes District Council



E Peters
3 Willingdon Close
Eastbourne
BN20 9AR

Our Ref: SDNP/23/01244/PRE
Contact Officer: Chris Wright
Tel. No.: 01273 415461

28 April 2023

Dear E Peters

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Applicant Name: E Peters
Proposal: Partial change of use from commercial back to residential (1-2 dwellings), with remaining hall for community use

Site Address: 26A Station Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2DB

Thank you for your correspondence received 17 March 2023 seeking pre-application advice.

Executive Summary

In my opinion the proposals to form a 2-bedroom house with retention of the hall separately for community use is more likely to be supported than the proposals to create 2 self-contained flats along with retention of the community hall.

The proposals to replace the lantern rooflight with an Edwardian/Victorian style lantern rooflight are likely to be supported subject to agreement of details and materials. A blackout blind or low transmittance glazing may be required in order to reduce upward light pollution.

Planning Policy

The policies most pertinent to these proposals include SD1, SD2, SD5, SD7, SD8, SD9, SD13, SD15, SD16, SD25, S26 and SD43 of the South Downs Local Plan and policies HC3A/B and PL2 of the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan. These can be found on the websites southdowns.gov.uk and lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk respectively.

Planning Assessment

Site Description

The site lies on the western side of Station Road and is both Grade II Listed and situated in the Lewes Conservation Area. The use is understood to be a community use which adjoins what would have originally been a dwelling.

Lewes and Eastbourne Councils, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB
Tel: 01273 471600 Email: customerfirst@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

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Assessment of Proposals

Plan One - Change of use to 2-bedroom dwelling with retention of hall

- o Creation of internal partitions to form lobby and storage room at the back of the hall, which will align with the existing passageway along the side of the building is likely to be acceptable because it is reversible intervention and would not have an adverse impact on the historic plan form of the listed building. Similarly this would apply to the formation of a disabled W.C. in the passageway.
- o The new entrance may involve the loss of some original historic fabric to the listed building. This should be sensitively designed but it is noted that this would help to preserve the community use on the ground floor.
- o With respect to the proposed kitchen this will need to be carefully considered as to the impact on original features internally.
- o Altering the windows / doors to this room is unlikely to be acceptable due to loss of historic fabric and effect on intrinsic and architectural character of the listed building.
- o If obscure glazing is required, a removal film should be applied to the windows / doors instead, as this is removable and would not involve damage or loss of original fabric.
- o Works to the W.C. facilities, or which there appear to be five, should be acceptable if these are modern partitions. Generally speaking creating new doorways and openings through original walls would not be acceptable and would result in the loss of historic fabric.
- o Retaining the door to the hall as an emergency escape only would be acceptable and its use in emergencies only would be a private agreement between the hall user and the neighbouring house. The neighbouring house does not appear to be connected internally with the proposal site and both sites have overlooked the same outdoor amenity space for some time.
- o Removal of glass panel and re-opening an old doorway at first floor level is likely to be acceptable.
- o The new partitions to form W.C./shower and bedroom at the back do not appear to follow the historic plan form of the listed building.

Plan Two - Change of use to 1-bed flat, a studio flat and retention of hall

- o This appears to involve a new doorway through an original wall between the living room and kitchen/diner at ground floor level and is not likely to be acceptable due to loss of historic fabric and erosion of original plan form.
- o Internal walls to create bathroom at first floor level do not appear to follow the historic plan form.

Generally speaking proposals which would create new openings (e.g. doorways) through original walls are not likely to be supported. This is because such works alter the plan form and the layout and proportions of rooms, and also result in the loss of original fabric.

For these reasons I would opt for the proposal which requires the least intervention in this regard, which would be 2-bed dwelling and retention of community hall.

Other Matters

Please be aware that any subsequent application for planning permission and listed building consent should be submitted with a Heritage Environmental Record report and a preliminary Archaeological Survey. In addition an Ecosystem Services statement should be submitted which details measures to enhance biodiversity within the site and measures to safeguard and enhance natural capital - for example composting, rainwater collection butts, bird boxes, Swift bricks etc. More information on this can be found on the website southdowns.gov.uk

Consultations

At this stage the local planning authority has not carried out any formal consultations. At such time as a planning application and an application for listed building consent have been submitted, the local planning authority will notify neighbouring residents/occupiers by letter, display a Public Site Notice, and consult with County Archaeology and the council's Conservation Specialist.

If you pursue a formal planning application please note that the requirements of the South Downs National Park Authority Local Validation List will apply with regard to the information required to be submitted. Further information is available at <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/making-an-application/local-validation-list/> .

It would be advisable to contact the Building Control department at your Local Authority to check if building regulation approval is required.

Please note that the advice contained within this letter constitutes an informal Officer's opinion and does not prejudice, nor is binding upon, any future decision taken by the South Downs National Park Authority.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Wright
Specialist Advisor
For and on behalf of South Downs National Park

Appendix

National Park Purposes

The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage,
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

Partnership Management Plan

The South Downs Partnership Management Plan (SDPMP) was adopted on 3 December 2013. It sets out a Vision and long term Outcomes for the National Park, as well as 5 year Policies and a continually updated Delivery Framework. The SDPMP is a material consideration in planning applications.

The following Policies and Outcomes are of particular relevance to this case:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Circular 2010

Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was issued on 24 July 2018. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection, and the NPPF states at paragraph 172 that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in national parks and that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations and should be given great weight in National Parks.

Development Plan

The development plan policies listed below have been assessed for their compliance with the NPPF and are considered to be compliant with the NPPF.

The following policies of the **South Downs Local Plan** are relevant to this application:

- Core Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development
- Core Policy SD2 - Ecosystems Services
- Strategic Policy SD5 - Design
- Strategic Policy SD7 - Relative Tranquillity
- Strategic Policy SD8 - Dark Night Skies
- Strategic Policy SD9 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Development Management Policy SD13 - Listed Buildings
- Development Management Policy SD15 - Conservation Areas

- Development Management Policy SD16 - Archaeology
- Strategic Policy SD25 - Development Strategy
- Development Management Policy SD43 - New and Existing Community Facilities

Other plans considered

- Lewes Neighbourhood Plan

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