

ECOSYSTEMS SERVICES STATEMENT

PROJECT:

Partial demolition of existing storage building, conversion of existing ground floor and construction of a new first floor with pitched roof to form a self-contained accommodation unit.

SITE LOCATION:

4 Bear Yard, Lewes BN7 2AN

DATE:

29 February 2024

INTRODUCTION:

An original online planning application (via the Planning Portal) has been submitted and is now referenced as SDNP/24/00729/FUL. Pursuant to this application a pre-validation request has been issued via Lewes District Council for the submission of an Ecosystems Services Statement.

The proposed development is a small conversion project using an existing footprint and offering little scope for major contributions to the 'ecosystem environment', however, the following specific responses in regard to Policy SD2 will hopefully demonstrate that reasonable endeavours are proposed where practicable.

The following responses refer to Policy SD2 Criteria A-K.

Criteria A: Sustainably manage land and water environments.

The proposal uses the existing ground footprint with no additional site coverage. It is modest in scale and designed with reference to a riverside warehouse vernacular. The scale is entirely in-keeping with immediate neighbouring buildings and will afford an improved, albeit secluded backdrop to the adjacent River Ouse and Listed Buildings.

Criteria B: Protect and provide more, better and joined up habitats.

There is minimal opportunity to effectively improve any biodiverse habitats within the scope of the project – the existing structure to be adapted has none at present. The proposal will retain existing established trees within the application site and the proposed water storage barrels will enable more efficient watering of potted plants etc within the courtyard area. The applicant is considering the inclusion of nesting boxes subject to further species research.

Criteria C: Conserve water resources and improve water quality.

Plans are not yet advanced enough to confirm the retention and re-use of rainwater for grey water usage within the proposed development, although the applicant is very pro-environmental in outlook and is considering what might be feasible. Rainwater will be harvested via two large barrels to be situated between downpipes and final overflow discharge to the existing surface water drain serving the site. (see dwg no.308-P5). The

present flat roof (to be removed) offers a dilapidated and unhealthy mixture of materials, most of which are degrading into rainwater run-off. This will be markedly improved by the new pitched roof.

Criteria D: Manage and mitigate risk of flooding.

The site sits within Flood Zone 2. The existing footprint is not enlarged and with the inclusion of water retention barrels (see C above) the immediate run-off rate will be reduced. At worst, when the barrels are full, there will be no additional load placed on surface water volume as a result of the proposal.

Criteria E: Improve the National Park's resilience to and mitigation of climate change.

The proposed refurbishment and additional volumes will all be insulated to above minimum Building Regulations standards. Not only will this create a thermally efficient new accommodation it will have indirect benefit to the adjoining John Harvey Tavern providing second hand thermal insulation to the presently largely unprotected southern elevation. The use of sustainable timbers in the construction of the upper floor and new pitched roof, plus new timber fenestration, will further contribute to the longer term aspirations against climate change impact. The inclusion of solar panels (see dwg no.308-P7a) will make full use of the available solar power contribution to running the onsite power requirements.

Criteria F: Increase the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means.

Given the nature of the proposals and limitations of the available site, it is hard to provide meaningful carbon storage methods with planting. There are existing small scale trees on site which will be retained to at least keep the status quo. Within the actual construction there will be indirect benefits derived from the use of sustainable materials, efficient heating systems, insulation levels and the use of solar power. Airtightness and general performance levels of the envelope will all contribute.

Criteria G: Conserve and enhance soils.

It is not intended that any significant ground works will be required, except for drainage runs, In that regard, any soil gain will be assessed for quality and where suitable can be distributed within the site in existing flowerbeds and any new potted planting provision.

Criteria H: Support the sustainable production and use of food, forestry and raw materials.

The site does not offer the potential for meaningful food production, apart from the possibility of low quantity fruit and vegetables that might sensibly be grown in surface plant containers.

Criteria I: Reduce levels of pollution.

The inclusion of solar panels will contribute to the electrical demand of the new accommodation. A decision is yet to be made on heating systems within the unit but the avoidance of any gas boiler will be a positive contribution. As highlighted elsewhere, the removal of the decaying flat roof will reduce any harmful run off of polluted rainwater into the ground.

Criteria J: Improve opportunities for people's health and well-being.

The site is excellently located to offer fresh accommodation adjacent to the River Ouse, within the historic county town of Lewes and the South Downs National Park. A short distance away is the south coast. It is also worth noting the environmental improvement that will arise from a quality development immediately adjacent to a popular social venue (the John Harvey Tavern) in lieu of a decaying and unattractive structure.

Criteria K: Provide opportunities for access to the natural and cultural resources which contribute to the special qualities.

As 'J' above, by providing new, quality residential accommodation any new residents will have immediate and positive engagement with all the environmental and social benefits of the location. There can be few better places to live.