

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 9/2(f)**

<b>Parish:</b>	<b>King's Lynn</b>	
<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Listed Building Application: Retention of painted signage to rendered north facing external wall</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Hanse House South Quay King's Lynn Norfolk</b>	
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Mr James Lee</b>	
<b>Case No:</b>	<b>16/01316/LB (Listed Building Application)</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b>	<b>Mrs P Lynn</b>	<b>Date for Determination: 17 October 2016</b>

**Reason for Referral to Planning Committee** – Called in by Councillor Bambridge.

**Case Summary**

Hanse House, Listed Grade I, is a substantial property situated in a prominent location with St Margaret's Place to the east, South Quay to the west and St Margaret's Lane to the south.

Simply put, the building comprises two parallel wings linked at its east end (St Margaret's Place) by a Georgian house and towards its western end (quayside) by a late 16th century wing, the whole enclosing a central courtyard. The parallel wings are the former warehouses of the Hanse and were built following the gift of the site to the German merchants in London in 1475. There were four such warehouses in England but this is the only one remaining and its historic importance is undoubtedly the principal reason for its Grade I status.

This application seeks retrospective consent for a non-illuminated sign advertising Hanse House and the Rathskeller wine bar and bistro. It has been painted directly onto the north gable wall of the building and its overall dimensions are appx.3 5m wide by 1.9m deep

**Key Issues**

The only consideration in the determination of this application is the impact of the proposal on the significance of the building, a designated heritage asset of the highest order.

**Recommendation**

**APPROVE**

**THE APPLICATION**

Hanse House is a substantial building of varying height essentially comprised of two parallel wings linked at the western end (South Quay) by a late 16th century wing and at the eastern end (St Margaret's Place) by a domestic wing which is the subject of this application.

Early details of the domestic east wing (formerly known as St Margaret's House) are not clear but it is known to have been bought and re-modelled by Edward Everard in 1751. It has

a fine Georgian façade with rusticated quoins, pedimented door case and large sash windows with original glazing bars. The interior has elegant rooms which retain a good deal of architectural detailing. There is a very elegant stair in an apsidal space with an open string and iron stick balusters with occasional panels of decorative wrought iron. The south gable wall facing Nelson Street/St Margaret's Lane has sash window to ground and first floor and an attic dormer whilst the north gable facing St Margaret's Vicarage/Saturday market Place is blank.

## **SUPPORTING CASE**

The application is supported by (i) a Design & Access Statement submitted with the original application for works to Hanse House in 2012 which has not been updated and so makes no mention of the sign, and (ii) a Background Design Strategy & Planning Statement which briefly describes the property and goes on to detail its uses of the past 6 years and its commercial location. The latter section comments that continuing use of the building is important but that it is large, costly to run and must be economically viable. The building is most visible from South Quay where the main access is located and the bar, bistro etc. are visually well advertised.

The building is also visible from the Saturday Market Place and there is a separate entrance from St Margaret's Place hence the services provided are less obvious from this location hence the new high level sign on part of the north elevation. The statement concludes "The signage is painted onto an existing rendered surface and although easy to see it is not obtrusive in size or of detriment to the building".

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

16/01317/A: Retention of non-illuminated painted signage on North facing external wall – Corresponding application for Advertisement Consent before this Committee with a recommendation for approval.

16/01297/F & 16/01298/LB: Conversion of parts of first and second floors to four self-contained flats – Live applications currently under consideration.

16/01207/LB: Construction of timber stud partition walls, levelling the floor, installation of two base kitchen units with work surface, plumbing and electrical works - Approved September 2016

15/00393/F & 15/00397/LB: Demolition and replacement of existing South Quay entrance porch and additional lobby to bistro – Withdrawn May 2015

14/00167/F & 14/00168/LB: : General refurbishment and works to facilitate the change of use to 3 dwellings, bistro, under-croft bar, exhibition space/art gallery, retail/indoor market, registry office and commercial office space 12/00618/LB and 12/00616/F minor amendments (retrospective)-  
Application not determined

14/0025/F & 14/0026/LB: Raise window to facilitate construction of access ramp to bistro entrance, enlarge window to original proportions to gable end and minor amendments to approved planning application Ref: 12/00616/F and 12/00618/LB – Withdrawn February 2014

13/00870/F & 13/00870/LB: Raise window to facilitate construction of access ramp to bistro entrance, enlarge window to original proportions at gable end. Minor amendments to approved planning application 12/00616/F and 12/00618/LB – Withdrawn August 2013.

12/00618/LB: General refurbishment and works to facilitate the change of use to three dwellings, bistro, under-croft bar exhibition space/art gallery, retail/indoor market, registry office and commercial office space. Approved 30 July 2012

12/00616/F: General refurbishment and works to facilitate the change of use to three dwellings, bistro, under-croft bar exhibition space/art gallery, retail/indoor market, registry office and commercial office space. Approved 30 July 2012

02/2042/CM: Installation of two external security cameras – Approved December 2012

00/1384/LB: Installation of 2 stair lifts – Approved November 2000

98/0813/LB: Installation of two security grills to windows – Approved September 1998

97/1373/LB & 97/1378/CM: Replacement external doors and timber infill panel - Approved November 1997

97/0657/LB: Internal alterations to provide new office to rear foyer – Approved June 1997

95/0642/CM: Proposed erection of non-illuminated public information board - Approved March 1999

## RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

**Historic England:** previously recommended that the Council determine the application with regard to the NPPF and the Councils own conservation advice but reiterate the points raised on site which are available to view in full on file but which are precised as follows:

- When looking from Saturday Market Place Hanse House is an important element in a historic space of national significance. This group of listed buildings is designated in the top 5% of buildings nationally but the space they frame and the history of urban development it illustrates gives them additional value.
- The recently completed scheme in the Market Place has brought
- high quality materials, simple elegant detailing and an uncluttered appearance which sets off the formal architecture of the buildings.
- The eastern facade of Hanse House was added in the 18th century when this part of the building became the owner's family town house
- The formal, symmetrical architectural composition applied to the earlier ranges reflects that of the adjacent Rectory (also listed) giving the western side of the place elegance and formality
- \*
- The painted sign is large and appears prominently in this line of building.
- Painting commercial signage directly onto buildings has a long history but the render has become textured with age and the lettering has an informal quality which is emphasized by the typeface and which echoes the way rural restaurants/hotels in older buildings have reactivated this traditional
- The design and quality of signs at Hanse House are of a good standard but the context for this sign is far more formal than traditional rural buildings/townscapes and is part of the setting
- of several other listed buildings.

- The sign, particularly because of its scale, could draw undue attention to part of Hanse House which is currently neutral and deliberately understated.
- Advertising a commercial offer contained in the rear ranges of the complex could undermine appreciation of that the front (west) range was residential
- Other premises on the Market Place do not feature signage of such
- scale.

Historic England go on to note the relevant parts of the NPPF and advise as follows:- Carefully consideration should be given to the significance of these aspects of Hanse House which are affected by the sign and the qualities of the surrounding historic space and listed buildings to identify if any harm to that significance has resulted. If 'any' harm is found the public benefit of the development should be weighed against it.

Making Hanse House an economically viable site which is kept in good repair could be such a public benefit and the signage might help in this. However, it might be noted that another current application proposes residential conversion of some of the commercial space the signage might help advertise. Also, the current commercial use might not deliver a secure future for the buildings: this is suggested by the lack of maintenance in recent years that has resulted in extensive growth of vegetation (including sapling trees) on the roofs of the courtyard.

All these factors must be considered when looking for the 'clear and convincing' justification for any harm to historic significance that might be identified.

It is suggested that if there is concern about the impact of the sign permission might be issued for a fixed period only, perhaps to be reviewed in light of the developing use of the building.

**Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings: NO COMMENT** received

**Ancient Monument Society: NO COMMENT** received

**Council for British Archaeology: NO COMMENT** received

**Georgian Group: NO COMMENT** received

**Victorian Society: NO COMMENT** received

**REPRESENTATIONS TWO** objections have been received making the following points/comments

- In itself the sign has been painted well and is an attractive design but it has changed the focus from the street scene as a whole to the sign itself.
- It is out of character for this primarily residential area
- As it is painted on rendered wall which seems to be flaking in parts, it will need repainting in a few years time otherwise it could look tatty.
- If retrospective approval is granted can regular repainting be a condition?
- I object to this signage being painted before an application had been submitted by the property owner.
- \* This is an important grade one listed building in a Conservation Area, and the property owner must comply with planning regulations pertaining to such historic buildings.
- Immediate residential neighbours are potentially impacted by the sign, particularly the vicarage, and it is worrying that the property owner thought it was perfectly

acceptable for him to undertake this work without the need to consult his neighbours by submitting a planning application.

- The application is for the name of the building to be painted on the rendered wall. What is in place is far more than this and is clearly a very large advertisement.
- The photographs supplied with the application obscure some of the wording, the telephone number and social media symbols.
- This large advertisement is quite inappropriate on a grade 1 listed building in the context of a group of listed buildings that form the heart of the St Margaret's Conservation area one of the most significant group of buildings in the country.
- The design and access statement says that apart from alterations at the western part of the building, that the exterior of the building will not be altered - this is a very significant and obtrusive alteration to the external appearance of the building.
- The applicant states that consultation with neighbours and local community is underway - no such consultation has taken place.
- Permission was given for scaffold access to the wall from the Vicarage garden in response to a request for access to carry out maintenance - no indication was given of any intention to alter the appearance of the wall in any way.

## **NATIONAL GUIDANCE**

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

## **LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES**

**CS12** - Environmental Assets

## **OTHER GUIDANCE**

Conservation Area Character Statement – St Margaret's Area

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The only considerations in the determination of this application are the impact of the sign on the significance of the grade I listed building and the setting of the adjacent listed buildings (Hampton Court Grade I, The Valiant Sailor, Grade II\*, St Margaret's Vicarage, garden wall & gates all Grade II, St Margaret's Minster Grade I, Priory Cottages Grade II)

The NPPF identifies protection and enhancement of the historic environment as an important element of sustainable development and establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system (paras. 6, 7 and 14). It requires that in determining applications relating to designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation, but also bear in mind that the significance of listed buildings can be harmed by alteration to them and by development in their setting (para. 132). The conservation of heritage assets is a core principle of the planning system (para. 17) and where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (para. 134).

The key issues in respect of this sign and the benefits which it might deliver have been detailed by Historic England and precised above so do not need to be repeated. Two members of the public have raised similar objections.

This case is finely balanced. The sign undoubtedly causes some visual harm to the significance of both a listed building of the highest order and to setting of those adjacent and it has been put in place without listed building consent, which is an offence in its own right. On the other hand, if it supports the businesses it will deliver public benefits and possibly draw more visitors to further explore the historic core. Furthermore it does not impact on the actual structure of the building which is no longer a residence, it is not illuminated and it can be easily covered – points not previously made but nonetheless relevant.

Responses to consultation have been noted. However the proposal for a temporary consent is not considered to be justifiable and should the sign or the wall deteriorate to an unacceptable degree other legislation comes it play. Unfortunately comments regarding access are civil matters and cannot be considered.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, when all of the above is set against the advice of the NPPF it is considered that although large, the sign does not cause substantial harm to the character or appearance of the building. It should also deliver some public benefit, in publicising the commercial use of the building, therefore on balance, it is considered to be acceptable.

In addition the sign can simply be painted over in the future, which is another mitigating factor.

It is therefore recommended that Listed Building Consent be granted.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

### **APPROVE**