

AGENDA ITEM NO: 9/2(g)

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| Parish: | King's Lynn | |
| Proposal: | Advertisement application: Retention of non-illuminated painted signage on North facing external wall | |
| Location: | Hanse House South Quay King's Lynn Norfolk | |
| Applicant: | Mr James Lee | |
| Case No: | 16/01317/A (Advertisement Application) | |
| Case Officer: | Mr M Broughton | Date for Determination: 17 October 2016 |

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

Case Summary

The land is situated on the western side of St Margaret's Place, King's Lynn, at the junction with St Margaret's Lane, Priory Lane and Nelson Street and within the Conservation Area.

The site comprises a two storey combined former warehouse / Georgian dwelling called Hanse House (Listed Building Grade I) which extends between St Margaret's Place and South Quay

The application relates to the retention of a dark blue, hand painted advertisement applied to the higher level of the north-eastern, cream rendered wall of Hanse House, comprising wording:

'HANSE HOUSE – Weddings – Christenings – The Rathskeller wine bar and bistro – Function Rooms- (and telephone contact details)'

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012, the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Core Strategy 2011 and the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Development Management Policies 2015 are relevant to this application

Key Issues

Principle of development

Impact on amenity: form and character and the significance of the building

Highway safety

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The land is situated on the western side of St Margaret's Place, King's Lynn, at the junction with St Margaret's Lane, Priory Lane and Nelson Street.

The site comprises a two storey combined former warehouse / Georgian dwelling called Hanse House (Listed Building Grade I) which extends between St Margaret's Place and South Quay and is within the Conservation Area.

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.

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, pediment door case and large sash windows with original glazing bars. The eastern ends of the warehouse ranges were incorporated into the house and the first floor of the north range accommodates a fine room with a high coved ceiling, a pair of large sash windows, and a palmette cornice.

The application relates to the retention of a non-illuminated, dark blue, hand painted advertisement (overall approximately 3.5m wide by 1.9m deep), applied at the higher level of the north-eastern, cream rendered, gabled wall of Hanse House, comprising wording in differing font:

'H - HANSE HOUSE – Weddings – Christenings – The Rathskeller wine bar and bistro – Function Rooms - (and including contact details)'

There is customer and trade access (with advertisement) to Hanse House from South Quay (west) directly to the Rathskeller wine bar / bistro / shop and courtyard facility operating from the west side of the premises and a customer access door from St Margaret's Place.

SUPPORTING CASE

The supporting statement advises that Hanse House, formally occupied by the Norfolk County Council, was purchased approximately 6 years ago by a local investor who has since adapted the layout, part of which incorporates the Rathskeller wine bar, bistro courtyard and shop fronting the South Quay area. This is an open area with courtyard tables readily on view to the passer-by and visually well-advertised by way of layout.

Refurbishment of residential and office accommodation in the building has also been achieved.

The building is costly to run. It is essential it is economically viable and that the services it provides are promoted. Whilst this is achieved by an active presence 'on-line' and in local papers, there is a need, through visual advertising, to promote the business from the fabric of the building itself.

The north-east of the building is visible from the Saturday Market Place (north) and there is an entrance to Hanse House from St Margaret's Place. The services provided by the building are currently less obvious from this area.

The higher level signage painted onto the north elevation advertising HANSE HOUSE (and its facilities) is not obtrusive in size or colour and is not detrimental to the building and its surroundings. The signage will promote the existing facilities and indeed those proposed in ongoing applications for an increase in accommodation facilities.

PLANNING HISTORY

16/01316/LB: Planning Committee 4/10/16 – recommended for approval: corresponding Listed Building application: Painted signage to rendered north facing external wall - Hanse House

Ongoing applications:

16/01298/LB and 16/01297/F: conversion of parts of first and second floors to create four self-contained flats - Hanse House

Recent applications:

16/01207/LB: Permitted: 07/09/16 - Construction of timber stud partition walls, levelling the floor, installation of two base kitchen units with work surface, plumbing and electrical works - Hanse House

15/00397/LB and 15/00393/F: Withdrawn: 20/05/15 - Demolition and replacement of existing South Quay entrance porch and additional lobby to bistro - Hanse House

14/00168/LB and 14/00167/F: 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) - Hanse House

13/00871/LB and 13/00870/F: Withdrawn: 16/08/13 - 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 - Hanse House

12/00618/LB and 12/00616/F: Permitted: 03/08/12 and 06/08/12: 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 - Hanse House

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION:

Historic Environment Service: NO OBJECTION:

Conservation Officer: NO OBJECTION:

See corresponding Listed Building report attached to application 16/01316/LB, also presented to the Planning Committee 4/10/16

Historic England: Comments:

Viewed 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 as a group.

The recently completed re-paving scheme in the Saturday Market Place has brought a high quality of materials, simple elegant detailing and an uncluttered appearance to the square 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 a town house for the family of brewers which owned it. 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. Painted directly onto render which has become textured with age, the lettering has an informal quality which is emphasized by the type-face. Painting commercial signage directly onto buildings has a long history. The texture of the render and the design chosen in fact echoes the way rural restaurants or hotels occupying traditional buildings have reactivated this tradition in recent years.

The design and quality of sign painting at Hanse House are of a good standard. However, the context for this sign is far more formal than traditional rural buildings or 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 understated (the Georgian owners' intention was to emphasize the front façade).

Moreover, the western range of the property was residential, so advertising a commercial offer which is contained in the rear ranges of the complex could undermine an appreciation of that.

In addition, the other premises on the Market Place do not feature signage of such scale.

The National Planning Policy Framework (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 (paragraphs 6, 7 and 14).

The NPPF also states that the significance of listed buildings and conservation areas can be harmed by alteration to them and by development in their setting (paragraph 132) and that the conservation of heritage assets is a core principle of the planning system (paragraph 17).

Furthermore, paragraph 137 states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal, the significance of the heritage assets should be treated favourably.

In this instance 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, paragraph 134 states that 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.

When considering this the Council might note that the other applications now current propose residential conversion of some of the commercial space that the signage subject to this application might help to 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).

REPRESENTATIONS Two objections:

- Borough Councillor Bambridge comments:

This retrospective application should be refused. As Ward member I am very concerned that the signage is out of keeping with the Conservation Area. The building is listed as are many in the surrounding area. It overlooks the vicarage garden and is visible from the garden and the vicarage itself. It is also visible from the Town Hall. It is totally out of keeping and is detrimental to the Conservation Area.

- Neighbour comments:

This large advertisement is quite inappropriate on the exterior of a grade 1 listed building in the context of a grouping of listed buildings that forms the heart of the St Margaret's Conservation area - one of the most significant groups of buildings in the country.

The applicant's 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.

I gave permission 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.

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 the wording advertising weddings, christenings, the Rathskeller and function rooms together with the telephone number, website and "twitter" and "facebook" symbols.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

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

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS11 - Transport

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PRE-SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Key Issues

- Principle of development
- Impact on amenity: form and character and significance of the building
- Highway safety

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) - Paragraph 67 advises:

‘Poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority’s detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts’

A Local Planning Authority should therefore have regard to an advertisement’s effect on the appearance of a building or on visual amenity in the immediate neighbourhood where it is to be displayed and have regard to the advertisement’s effect upon the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport on land (including the safety of pedestrians). A proposal should be sympathetic in relation to size, appearance, design and position to the site on which it is displayed and should not be unduly prominent.

The principle of a painted advertisement is generally considered acceptable provided that signage would not have any detrimental impact on:

- amenity or
- highway safety.

Impact on amenity: form and character and significance of the building:

It is acknowledged, by the historical nature of this locality, this is an area of the Town of considerable interest to visitors.

Hanse House is a substantial property of varying height situated in a prominent location of the Town, with other Listed Buildings in the locality, including St Margaret’s Church (opposite east), St Margaret’s Vicarage (neighbouring walled garden and dwelling north), Hampton Court (Nelson Street – south) and various other notable dwellings to the south.

The approach to the site, and the only significant view-point of the signage to the passer-by, is south along St Margaret’s Place from the recently re-furbished Saturday Market Place, itself bordered on its northern edge by the Guildhall, Museum, Market Bistro and the former Wennis Hotel and other commercial uses close-by.

Although prominent on the north facing, cream painted wall, as seen from the aforementioned view point, the dark blue painted signage is not considered to be garish or

unsightly when viewed in context with the cream painted façade and north-western walls (adjoining the signage wall) in a dark brown brick. Notwithstanding similar signage is not a feature seen in this particular area, this view was backed in the comments issued by Historic England in that 'the design and quality of the painting is considered to be of good standard'.

In terms of impact on the amenity of the locality, the size and appearance of the proposed signage is considered to be acceptable for the site and its surroundings, taking into account the site, its economic status and layout of the overall locality.

In terms of the Listed Building status, 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 in the response issued by Historic England

The sign undoubtedly causes an element of visual harm to the significance of both a listed building of the highest order and to the setting of those adjacent. The objections of a neighbour are noted in this respect.

However, if the signage supports the Hanse House business uses it will deliver public benefits and possibly draw more visitors to further explore this historic core of the Town. Furthermore, and of relevance, the signage 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.

It is considered that any impact on visual amenity will be minimal and thus acceptable. This application is supported with a recommendation that Listed Building Consent also be granted.

Highway Safety:

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 advises that Advertisements should be subject to control 'only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts'. Highway safety is a material consideration in regards to 'public safety' in deciding whether outdoor advertisements are acceptable.

The site is in a relatively prominent position in the street scene on approach from Saturday Market Place. However, the painted signage is non-illuminated and of an acceptable scale. Given the locality, is unlikely to cause a distraction to road users or cause inconvenience to pedestrians. Thus the proposal is acceptable on Public Safety Grounds

The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposal.

Civil issues regarding access to the site are not a consideration for this application.

CONCLUSION:

Given the location of the site, the signage results in a relatively limited impact on the built form and does not detract from the amenity of the adjoining vista. Thus, set against the advice of the NPPF, it is considered that the sign causes less than substantial harm to the Listed Building itself and the overall setting of this historic area, and the benefits of promoting the business and the building are considered to outweigh the harm.

As a result the proposal complies with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Core Strategy 2011 and the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Development Management Policies 2015 and it is therefore recommended that advertisement consent be granted.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - North elevation – drawing 840/3 - 220 – receipt dated 12/9/16
 - Signage detail – drawing scale 1:20 – receipt dated 12/09/16
- 1 Reason For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.