

Former Hampshire Constabulary Building and Station Mill, Station Road, Alresford, SO24 9JQ

14/02954/LIS



Winchester
City Council



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Scale:  Meters

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WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE AGENDA

Item No: 06
Case No: 14/02954/LIS / W13436/06
Proposal Description: Demolition of the police constabulary building and the erection of three storey detached building comprising 15 retirement apartments; conversion and extension of Station Mill to form 5 retirement apartments. Alterations to accesses; surface and basement level parking and landscaped grounds (AFFECTS THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING)
Address: Former Hampshire Constabulary Building And Station Mill
Station Road Alresford Hampshire SO24 9JQ
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: New Alresford
Applicants Name: McCarthy And Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd
Case Officer: Andrea Swain
Date Valid: 24 December 2014
Site Factors: New Alresford Conservation Area
Within 50 m of listed building.
Application Refused

Recommendation:

General Comments

This application is reported to Committee because of the number of letters of support received contrary to the officer's recommendation.

Amended plans were received on 2 March, 2015 to take on board the comments of the Highways Officer and the Design Review Panel. . A second set of amended plans were received on 13 March, 2015 which sought to overcome the concerns of the Head of Historic Environment.

Application reference 14/02953/FUL is also for consideration by the Planning Committee and is scheduled as item 5 on this agenda. That application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the police constabulary building and the erection of a three storey detached building comprising 15 retirement apartments and the conversion and extension of Station Mill to form 5 retirement apartments.

Site Description

The site lies to the southern side of the town centre, within both the settlement boundary and Alresford Conservation Area. It extends to 0.614 hectares and is made up of two separate parcels of land that both front onto Station Road. The smaller northern section is the site of the former Alresford Police Station which has been re-located to share emergency service facilities at the Fire Station on Pound Hill. The site currently consists of a pair of semi-detached former police houses dating from the 1960s with a single storey extension to the front (which formed the reception area of the police station), as well as a detached pair of single storey garages.

The larger Station Mill section is occupied by the Grade II listed four storey Mill building, with a separate single storey warehouse, and surface parking for 16 cars. Both the Mill building and warehouse are currently in use as serviced office and studio space, but the

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Mill building has an extant consent for conversion to form seven apartments with a new build three storey office block within the curtilage.

To the rear, on the north and eastern sides, is St John the Baptist parish church and cemetery. To the west, on the opposite side of Station Road is a medical centre and public conveniences. To the north, Station Road is made up of a mix of three storey blocks of flats and two storey houses and cottages leading up to the Swan Hotel. Immediately adjacent to the south is Alresford railway station and its forecourt and car park.

The site is generally on a slope, and, although the southern part of the site is comparatively level and consistent with the adjoining station forecourt and car park to the south, it appears to have been created by considerable cutting into the original ground surface, resulting in a chalk outcrop that marks a change in level of three metres on the eastern boundary and a slope of 1.5 – 2.0 metres up to the Police Station site. This northern part also slopes up 1.5 metres across its depth from the Station Road frontage.

The two sections are visually separated, in part, by a group of mixed beech and sycamore present in a diagonal linear pattern to the south west of the existing former Police Station. The north-eastern boundary is bordered by a line of mature trees located within the church yard.

Proposal

The proposed development comprises the conversion of the listed Mill building to create 5 apartments (4 no. two bedroom apartments at ground and first floor levels and a three bedroom duplex apartment on the uppermost floors). This will entail the demolition of an existing extension and a new extension to the side / rear of the building.

Relevant Planning History

Refer to Item 6 on the agenda for the detailed planning history of the site.

Consultations

Head of Historic Environment:

- New annexe too large and too far forward and will compete with the listed Mill Building in terms of prominence.
- Concern in respect of three storey extension abutting the listed building.
- Proposed landscape setting for the scheme will over domesticate the area immediately adjacent to the mill building and be harmful to the setting of the listed building.
- (Amended Plans) – Historic Environment Team still have significant concerns over the impact to both the special architectural and historic character and historic fabric of the building from the residential development as proposed.
- The removal of the existing building obscuring the southern elevation is welcomed as this removes an element that is harmful to the setting of the Mill building.
- The proposed annexe to the north of the Mill building causes significant harm to the character and historic fabric of the building.
- Recommends refusal.

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Design Review Panel:

"The apartment buildings were considered overall to be of a good design and orientated well to gain evening and morning light and the undercroft parking was welcomed. Questions were raised as to how the proposed new buildings relate to the character of Station Road and to the specific context of the site and surroundings. Concerns were held over the lack of communal landscaping on site. The frontage relationship is very important and strong concerns were raised over the front wall hard on the pavement boundary. It was suggested that this wall should be broken up or stepped to alleviate the impact. Additionally, there were concerns over how the apartment buildings engaged with the street more generally given the rising levels into the site. The front entrance appears potentially commercial or institutional in appearance, therefore it was suggested that this element be softened. Therefore the engagement of the apartment buildings with the public realm was felt to require refinement. The extension to the listed building was considered to be overpowering and the principle of a three storey flat roofed extension on the listed building was questioned. The potential loss of historic fabric due to the extensions was cause of concern. The elevation facing Station Road is very prominent and any extension shouldn't dominate the listed building and therefore needs to be subservient. The Panel questioned whether consideration had been given to other potential design approaches using a contrasting design or materials."

Representations:

New Alresford Town Council

- Supported but two Councillors raised concern in respect of the design and lack of light to rear of buildings.

9 letters received objecting to the application for the following reasons:

- Existing tenants off Mill building do not want to leave and need office accommodation in Alresford;
- Extension to Mill out of character with existing building;
- Contemporary building very angular – should be softened;
- Plans show unauthorised access onto adjoining land;
- No affordable housing provided;
- Adjacent car park will not be public for use by residents in 2020;
- Apartments should not be luxury but of mid range quality;
- Impact on highway safety;
- Provision for service and delivery vehicles should be made on site;
- Provision must be made for construction traffic;
- Increase in traffic;
- Loss of employment space will make Alresford a dormitory town;
- Existing pedestrian footway must be retained and extended.

30 letters of support received.

- Proposal in sympathy with surroundings;
- Improvement on existing building;
- Shortage of this type of housing;
- Walking distance to town centre and facilities;
- Will free up family homes;
- Retains architectural significance of Mill building;
- Will secure history of Mill building;
- Will not impact on car parking in area.

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Relevant Planning Policy:

Winchester District Local Plan Review
HE5, HE6, HE7, and HE8

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy
CP20

Supplementary Planning Guidance
New Alresford Design Statement

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:
National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Considerations

Impact on character to listed building

The issues for consideration in this application are the impact to the listed building and there are a number of issues raised by the Head of Historic Environment in respect of the conversion and extension of the listed Station Mill building that are considered to be unacceptable. The proposed annexe to the north of the Mill building is considered to be too large in terms of its scale and massing and will compete with the listed Mill building in terms of prominence. Any annexe will need to be much more subservient to the listed building and only lightly linked. As proposed, the simple symmetrical design of the Mill building will be significantly compromised by the proposed annexe. In addition, the proposed landscape setting for the scheme will over domesticate the area immediately adjacent to the Mill building and will, consequently, be harmful to the listed building. As such the impact on the character of the listed building is considered to be unacceptable and contrary to policies HE5 and HE8 of the WDLPR and policy CP20 of the LPP1.

The amended plans show a reduced extension to the Mill building which seeks to overcome the concerns as set out above. The overall height of the extension has been reduced from 7m to 5.3m, although the lift shaft element remains in the centre of the extension at 7m high. The length of the extension has been reduced from 15.6m to 12.6m. The width remains as previous.

The Head of Historic Environment has advised that the creation of living accommodation outside the envelope of the mill building significantly changes the internal character of the building and requires the removal of a significant amount of historic fabric to break through into the new annexe.

Visually the external character of the listed mill building is of a very simple and symmetrical form which reflects its industrial heritage. This forms an intrinsic part of its special architectural and historic character. Although the scheme has been amended, even in its revised form the proposed annex will still be a significant departure from the simple industrial character of the mill building and will, consequently, be harmful to the special character of the building. It will also introduce architectural elements that are at odds with the simple architectural style of the existing building.

Whilst the scheme has been slightly amended it does not overcome the Head of Historic Environments concerns and consequently the proposal is considered harmful to the

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special character of the building, and as such, its impact on the character of the listed building remains unacceptable and contrary to the policies as set out above.

Conclusion

The proposal is contrary to development plan policy and the advice contained in the NPPF and is recommended for refusal.

Recommendation

Application Refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposal, by way of extension to the historic Mill building is considered to be over dominant in form, scale and massing and requires considerable loss of historic fabric which is harmful to the significance of the Mill building as a building of architectural and historic interest, a grade II listed building. It is therefore considered contrary to advice given in section 12 of the NPPF and policy HE.14 of the WDLPR and policy CP20 of the LPP1.

Informatives:

The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Winchester District Local Plan Review 2006: DP3, DP4, DP5, HE5, HE6, HE7, HE8, HE.14, H3, SF1, T2, T4

Local Plan Part 1: DS1, MTRA1, MTRA2, CP1, CP2, CP3, CP6, CP9, CP10, CP11, CP13, CP14, CP20, CP21