

Bexhill Heritage

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Caring for Bexhill's past,
present and future.

3/12/2018

Dear Ms Edwards

Change of Use and extension from 1No. Retail unit and 1No. Flat to No. 3 commercial units' and 6 additional flats – 42 Cooden Sea Road, Bexhill. RR/2018/2876

The plans for this site have been changed following the withdrawal of appln no RR/2018/1857, perhaps in an attempt to address concerns raised by that scheme. If so the attempt has failed. Bexhill Heritage object to this new application because it will result in a substantial over development of this important corner site. It will appear dominant, extremely prominent, over bearing in relation to adjacent buildings and detrimental to the appearance of the locality and visually significant central area of Little Common.

Whilst we are aware of the extant planning permission for the site and accept that this is a material consideration, it is not overriding and the Council is able, indeed duty bound, to determine this present application on its merits.

The plans and further site visits reconfirms the introduction of a full storey on the existing building will result in the flat roofed structure being a half storey being above the ridge line of the building to the south. This difference assumes much greater significance because the existing adjoining building, with its pitched roof, recesses from first floor level, whereas the proposed building mass will rise directly to its flat roof. This will be a gross and unpleasant contrast and an extremely inharmonious element in this important part of the street scene. The buildings to the south on this side of the street are otherwise all two storey domestic scale with pitched roofs.

Turning the corner into Meads Road the aspect will again be very poor. The three storeys continue and being built off existing floor levels will be even higher than the building applied for in 2016. This contrast with the modest height of the two storey houses in Meads Road (no. 2 – 8) some of which are set slightly lower than road level, will be considerable giving an overbearing aspect to the raised building. This will be detrimental to the street scene at this prominent termination of Meads Road and detrimental to the residential amenity of the dwelling adjacent and those opposite.

On the opposite corner of Meads Road the third level of the three storey building is within a pitched roof with several planes which greatly modifies its bulk, in contrast to the building on the application site. On the opposite side of Cooden Sea Road the large three storey building comprising a Tesco store and flats above, Bonham Court, has its narrow end facing the street, is set well back and nearly half its site is open car parking for the shop and flats. It is pleasingly detailed above the retail level

with a pitched roof (false) projecting bays and good detailing. The design was a good response to its surroundings and it is thus not obtrusive or objectionable. To its south there is then a two storey pitched roof building being flats over shops and further along still, a redevelopment which involves the addition of a third storey of flats over retail. This building is much smaller than the application building, it is set a long way back from the road (15m approx.), and has a large tree in front which greatly softens its appearance. Many of the other buildings in Little Common centre are of domestic scale and appearance, those which are three storeys are pitch roofed sometimes with dormer windows and fit in well with the general character of the area. The mass of the building proposed for the application site does not respect the general nature of the area and is not harmonious with it.

The elevational treatment is not sufficiently developed to properly assess what is proposed, but the attempt to reduce the prominence of the building by setting back the upper storey and cladding it in a darker and different material is crude and inadequate. The setback is tiny and will make no difference to the apparent bulk, and the vertical faces, which are in any event incomplete will appear bizarre.

Thus the application should be refused as it clearly conflicts with several relevant policy elements of the Local Plan.

Yours sincerely

David Beales

Planning Officer for Bexhill Heritage.