

Committee: **PLANNING**

Date of Meeting: **20 August 2008**

Title of Report: **N/2008/0531**
Funland Pier Forecourt, Promenade,
Southport
(Dukes Ward)

Proposal: Erection of a single storey extension to the north east side and rear of the premises and external refurbishment

Applicant: Silcock Leisure Group Limited

Executive Summary

The issues relate to the design and external appearance of the building having regard to the character of the surrounding area, and the impact on the character and appearance of the Promenade Conservation Area.

Recommendation(s) Refusal

Reasons

1. The proposed side extension by virtue of the use of inappropriate materials, weak elevational detailing and a confusion and inconsistency of architectural styles results in a form of development that fails to present a unified design approach resulting in harm to wider visual character and views within, into and out of the Promenade Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DQ1, EDT13, EDT15 and HC1 of the Sefton UDP.
2. The proposed art deco approach to the main elevations of the extensions would be inconsistent with the modern more contemporary setting afforded by the Marine Way Bridge to the north east of the site resulting in an incongruous appearance and setting for the extension. The proposal is contrary to Policies DQ1, HC1, EDT13 and EDT15 of the Sefton UDP.
3. The proposed rear extension (in addition to the concerns raised in reason (1)) will by virtue of the lack of balance, symmetry and overall detailing both at ground and first floor level added to its incongruous appearance relative to Marine Parade will adversely resulting in harm to wider visual character and views within, into and out of the Promenade Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DQ1, EDT13, EDT15 and HC1 of the Sefton UDP.

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Drawing Numbers

Dwgs SS/C/001, 002, 003, 004, 092, 110, 301, 302, Planning Statement, Conservation Impact Assessment, Brochure, DAS, Location plan

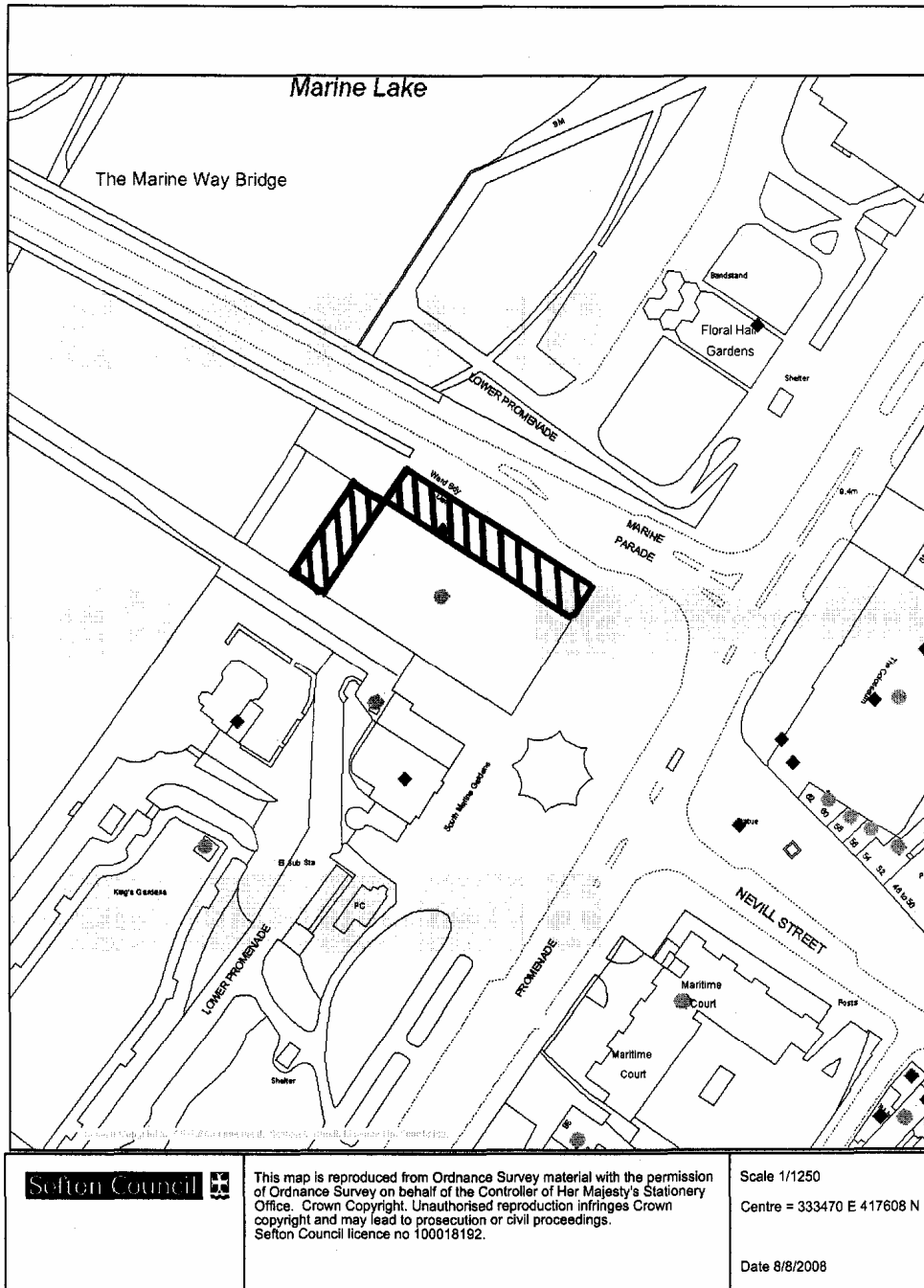
Financial Implications

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
REVENUE IMPLICATIONS				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

List of Background Papers relied upon in the preparation of this report

History referred to
Policy referred to

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Proposal

Erection of a single storey extension to the north east side and rear of the premises and external refurbishment

Consultations

Head of Tourism – supports from tourism point of view, would be useful to understand intentions with existing building and adjacent café, comprehensive improvement project will do justice. No remit or experience to comment on proposed design.

Director of Technical Services – no objection subject to licences being granted where building projects over public highway.

Neighbour Representations

Last date for replies: 23 July 2008.

Letter raising no objection from proprietor of Marine Gate Café.

Policy

The application site is situated in an area allocated as Urban Greenspace and within the Southport Seafront and Southport Central Area on the Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan.

CPZ1	DEVELOPMENT IN THE COASTAL PLANNING ZONE
CS1	DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION
CS3	DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
DQ1	DESIGN
DQ3	TREES AND DEVELOPMENT
DQ4	PUBLIC GREENSPACE AND DEVELOPMENT
EDT13	SOUTHPORT CENTRAL AREA - DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
EDT15	SOUTHPORT SEAFRONT
G1	PROTECTION OF URBAN GREENSPACE
HC1	DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS
HC4	DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING

The site also lies within the Promenade Conservation Area and there is a statutory duty on the part of the Council to ensure that development preserves and/or enhances character and appearance therein.

Comments

The application represents the latest attempt at providing an extension to the existing Funland premises. There have been two refusals of reserved matters appertaining to a 2004 outline permission; these have been appealed and a Public Inquiry is scheduled for the 26-27 August 2008.

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The design merits of the latest scheme are not significantly different to those previously considered. On this basis, the delegated report relating to the most recent reserved matters refusal is attached to this report. This also includes the site description and history. The only major discernable differences to the latest submission is a widened entrance feature to the side elevation, and an additional extension is now proposed to the rear.

The rear of Funland will benefit from significant views the west of the Marine Lake. Due to these important views the quality of the design need to be of a high quality whilst tying in to the side elevation with which it connects.

The proposals as submitted, whilst tying into the corner on the pier, fails to connect appropriately to the corner of Marine Parade. This is due to a significant gap in any detailing at ground floor and the upper floor between these spaces. This effectively separates the elevation enough to give it an unbalanced, blank and poor elevation.

The lack of detail at this part of the first floor serves to elongate the building further making its horizontal mass seem inappropriate, given that the floral hall hotel has a narrow but vertical mass.

The features and details of the elevation are grouped together towards the pier, this gives an unbalance and asymmetrical view which leaves the building looking unfinished. There are issues with the rear elevation which add to the concerns already expressed to the side.

Overall the proposals remain of a character that fails to pay appropriate regard to key vantage points, fail to address corners and present deadening and false elevations whilst perpetuating the confusion of architectural styles prevalent on the schemes previously discussed.

The applicants have been offered substantial advice in recent months having regard to the qualities that would be expected of an alternative scheme for the site. The principle of development is acceptable. However, a scheme has yet to be submitted that would accord with the requirements of Council policy.

The Planning and Economic Regeneration Director is of the view that the refusal of this and the other previous applications is fully justified. A very firm case will be presented at the forthcoming Public Inquiry that the appeal proposals and the current application remain unacceptable forms of development which are harmful to visual amenity and the character and appearance of the Promenade Conservation Area.

Previous Officer Report - N/2007/0869

The Site

The site is the Funland Amusement Arcade, on the Pier Forecourt, Southport. The recently constructed Marine Gate runs parallel to the north and east side of the building, opposite which the major Floral Hall mixed leisure scheme is being constructed. The site is in a key position and views are distinctly obtainable in particular from the pier, the bridge, from Nevill Street towards the front and also at angles looking both ways from the Promenade.

Proposal

Approval of reserved matters for the erection of a single storey extension to the North East side of the premises, (details pursuant to outline planning permission N/2004/0608 approved 20/08/2004)

History

95/0603/N – Erection of extension to rear, new canopy to side and installation of 4 retail units to side – approved 6 February 1997.

N/2002/0086 – Erection of extension to rear, new canopy to side, installation of 4 retail units to side (renewal of 95/0603) – refused 3 July 2003. Appeal subsequently withdrawn.

N/2004/0608 – Outline application for the erection of a single storey extension to the north east side of the premises – approved 20 August 2004.

N/2007/0598 – Approval of reserved matters for the erection of a single storey extension to the north east side of the premises – refused 3 August 2007.

Consultations

Technical Services – no objection.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue – no objection.

Neighbour Representations

Last date for replies: 18 September 2007
Site/press notice 10 October 2007

Petition signed by residents of Maritime Court – 32 signatures. Not wishing to address Planning Committee.

On the basis that residents have troubles with the obstruction of the sidewalk outside Funland.

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Policy

The application site is situated in an area allocated as Urban Greenspace and within the Southport Seafront and Southport Central Area as set out on the Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan.

CPZ1	DEVELOPMENT IN THE COASTAL PLANNING ZONE
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Comments

The principle of an extension to the side of the building was agreed by the granting of outline planning permission in 2004. As the approval solely relates to the principle, the issues associated relate to the visual impact of the proposals in street scene terms, having regard to wider views across, into and out of the Promenade Conservation Area, and the effect of the proposals on the setting of nearby listed fabric.

The existing Funland site includes a single storey building in use as an amusement arcade, with a glazed frontage and access via the Promenade level. A deck is provided to the rear of the building supported on steel girders and columns. The area underneath is currently unused.

The principle of allowing extension to the existing building is founded on there being no adverse effect through the design approach on the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed pier.

The building ought to be regarded as of substandard appearance when viewed in the context of other existing buildings within the Conservation Area. Development proposals need to consider significant upgrades to the existing building and tie any extension into those operations.

The applicant has attempted to amend the proposals on the basis of the previous concerns. Key to these are the following;

- A black ceramic shadow detail, to the side elevation, separating old and new,
- Glazing and balconies at first floor level,
- The art deco features of the main elevation are carried round to the rear, with features to replicate the design elements of the Floral Hall scheme,

- Some metal cladding on main elevations replaced by glazing.

The front elevation is prominent within the Conservation Area as it is the termination point of the vista up Neville Street, and also amounts to a large frontage on the Promenade itself. There is scope for improvement on the existing front elevation in respect of architectural detail, however, it does at least give the building symmetry, most prevalent on the ground floor elevation.

The extension still maintains the same theme of replicating the existing when viewed from the front, owing to the fact that it repeats the treatment of the right hand half of the existing gives rise to a loss of symmetry and as such it is reasonable to argue that extension when viewed from the front fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Promenade Conservation Area. Given the identified lack of quality within the building, the further extension along the same theme as the existing frontage is not desirable. The extension will not address the need to provide a focus to the corner.

The side elevation is also very prominent and in particular, highly visible travelling south down the Promenade and also travelling East across the Marine Bridge. The existing comprises a varied mix of windows and architectural treatments. It is not an elevation which at present befits the adjacent pier.

An attempt has been made to divorce the old from the new with a ceramic shadowing detail. This will emphasise the poor quality of the existing as a stand alone feature, and in addition, offsets the attempts made elsewhere to reduce the variety of materials, in particular to the rear elevation.

The proposed side elevation could easily in some respects be passed as improvement on what is there, however, though the elevation is prominent, the lack of quality can only be appreciated from close quarters. The scale of alteration is such that it will be closer to the bridge and far more readily visible than is presently the case.

The composition of the elevation remains seriously blighted by the two ends of the proposals. One side of the extension represents a continuation of the front elevation with no architectural treatment of any description, the other side is an art-deco copy of the entrance to the main side elevation.

The elevation has no symmetry, made worse by the two bookends and also the ground floor treatment. Windows have been introduced in an attempt to add interest above ground floor level but these will not serve any internal floorspace and the balconies will appear scruffy in time, with large solid areas maintained.

The large signage areas proposed will remain and the frontage will still have significant solid to void ratio. The applicants have also omitted metal cladding above two of the three entrances to introduce glazing, however, these address more minor criticisms of the previous scheme and do not advance the case for the proposal at all.

The rear elevation is very prominent when travelling from the Coast Road to the Promenade via the Marine Bridge and that with Victoria Baths is the first glimpse to the public travelling to the Promenade.

The rear elevation is a marked improvement on the previous proposal with an attempt made to create an art deco feature that would to some extent read as a corner building when approaching Southport from the seafront over Marine Bridge. However, this is of narrow

