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**Report to:** Planning Committee **Date of Meeting:** 08 February 2012

**Subject:** S/2011/1343  
Ribble Buildings Lord Street, Southport

**Proposal:** Conversion of existing building and erection of a six storey extension to the rear to create a 101 bed hotel, including mixed use at ground floor comprising: restaurant, (Class A3) retail, (Class A1) and / or leisure (Class D1), layout of car parking area, cycle storage, landscaping and external refurbishment works after removal of existing canopies

**Applicant:** Ribble Property Investments LLP **Agent:** The Planning Studio Limited

**Report of:** Head of Planning Services **Wards Affected:** (Dukes Ward)

**Is this a Key Decision?** No **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** No

**Exempt/Confidential** No

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## Summary

### Recommendation(s)

For Information Only

### Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee/Council/Working Group meeting

**Contact Officer:** Mrs S Tyldesley Telephone 0151 934 3569

**Case Officer:** Steve Faulkner Telephone 0151 934 3081

**Email:** planning.department@sefton.gov.uk

### Background Papers:

The following papers are available for inspection by contacting the above officer(s).

History and Policy referred to in the report

## FOR INFORMATION ONLY

S/2011/1343

### The Site

The site lies at the south east end of Lord Street, with the main elevation of the existing building fronting Lord Street itself. It is a building of substance, brick with slate and stone features, with a central clock tower that helps make a significant contribution to the street scene and wider setting. The building is widely visible from a number of vantage points beyond Lord Street, including Kingsway and further east along the Promenade.

The adjacent bingo hall to the north east side is listed, and is a classic art deco example. Morrisons Supermarket and its car park are to the north west of the site, and there is established pedestrian access through the building from Lord Street. There are smaller retail units to the south west.

The site lies within the Lord Street Conservation Area. The building is currently vacant and has been for some considerable time, and though partially renovated in the 1990s, is in need of restoration and a development which assists in driving the buildings re-use.

### Proposal

Conversion of existing building and erection of a six storey extension to the rear to create a 101 bed hotel, including mixed use at ground floor comprising: restaurant, (Class A3) retail, (Class A1) and / or leisure (Class D1), layout of car parking area, cycle storage, landscaping and external refurbishment works after removal of existing canopies

### History

The site has been subject to many applications over time, the most significant are as follows:

89/0716/N – Two storey shopping development with central mall, restaurant, facilities and department store, roller rink at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level, roof top and multi storey parking for 1,070 vehicles and associated goods/servicing arrangements – withdrawn 20 January 1993.

89/1231/N – Amendment to 89/0716 to provide revised mall arrangement and ancillary services suite behind retained façade to replace buildings – withdrawn 20 January 1993.

89/1232/N- Conservation Area Consent to demolish bus station except for tower and front façade – withdrawn 20 January 1993.

92/0336/N – Supermarket, petrol filling station, retail units and offices with car parking and restoration for future leisure use (now Morrisons) – approved 19 January 1993.

N/2002/0992 – Use of first and second floors as a night club – refused 12 December 2002.

N/2006/0675 - Conversion to a 96 bed hotel with cafe/bar, restaurant and retail unit on the ground floor, involving the erection of a six storey extension, and layout of 14 car parking spaces, to the rear of the premises – approved 27 September 2006.

N/2007/0048- Change of use of part of existing building to A1 retail on ground floor and office accommodation on first and second floors and construction of new access ramp to Lord Street elevation – approved 14 March 2007.

S/2010/1062 - Conversion of existing building and erection of a six storey extension to the rear to create a 92 bed hotel, including ground floor restaurant, layout of car parking area and external refurbishment works after removal of existing canopies – approved 1 October 2010.

## Consultations

*English Heritage* – no objection to the proposals.

*Highways Development Control* – no objection following removal of pavement café from proposal, build out of site frontage. Servicing and delivery management plan required by condition.

*Environmental Protection Director* – no objections subject to conditions on piling, noise/odour controls, pavement café restriction. No remaining contamination based on previous work undertaken, and it is recommended that a piling risk assessment be undertaken.

*Merseytravel* – no objection subject to no impact on bus traffic from servicing arrangements, attachment of a Travel Plan, access for Merseylink vehicles and improvements to two nearest bus stops.

*MEAS* – comment that an acceptable bat survey is in place but that it would require reappraisal in event that work commences post August 2012.

## Neighbour Representations

Last date for replies: 8 November 2011

Site Notice/Press Notice expiry: 23 November 2011.

Southport Civic Society – comment on loss of canopy, these are major features of Lord Street, suggest modification to allow retention, pavement cafes will block the pavement.

## Policy

The application site is situated in an area allocated as Town Centre on the Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan.

### *National Planning Policy*

PPS4            Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)

PPS5            Planning and Heritage (2010)

### *Local Plan Policies*

AD2	Ensuring Choice of Travel
CS1	Development and Regeneration
CS3	Development Principles
DQ1	Design
DQ2	Renewable Energy in Development
DQ3	Trees and Development
DQ4	Public Greenspace and Development
EDT13	Southport Central Area - Development Principles
EDT18	Retention of Local Employment Opportunities
EP2	Pollution
EP3	Development of Contaminated Land
EP6	Noise and Vibration
HC1	Development in Conservation Areas
HC4	Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building
R2	Southport Town Centre
R8	Upper Floors in Defined Centres and Shopping Parades
UP1	Development in Urban Priority Areas

## **Comments**

The application is presented to members for information purposes only at this stage.

The proposal is for a hotel partially within the Ribble Building as existing and accommodated within a six storey rear extension. A retail unit would be provided to the southern side of the existing building. Access to the hotel would be via the Lord Street frontage with access to the restaurant and bar off the public thoroughfare to the supermarket.

The detail of the scheme is explained throughout the report, however, there is a critical issue relating to Section 106 requirements, which is currently under discussion.

### Viability of proposals

The previous proposals required that a sum of £204,960.30 be paid via Section 106 Agreement towards trees and greenspace under Policies DQ3 and DQ4 of the Sefton UDP. The calculation was derived from the requirements of the Supplementary Planning Document 'Green Space, Trees and Development', which require total calculation of hotel bed space and other commercial areas for all major developments.

The applicants have submitted financial appraisal information to the effect that this requirement would undermine the ability for the buildings to be brought into use. The most recently approved scheme is understood not to have progressed for this reason. There have been previous planning approvals and there is pressure for some form of development to bring this long standing building of considerable significance into use.

The submission has been appraised by the Council's retained consultants, Three Dragons. They consider that some specific costs relating to rebuild and conversion, would benefit from being quantified in specific fashion. Additionally, the regeneration

benefits of bringing this building back into use after a prolonged period of vacancy have to be weighed in the consideration.

The comments of Three Dragons are not inherently critical of the figures presented and members are invited to note that discussion relating to the issue of financial viability is still ongoing.

### Planning application scheme

The proposals will involve the renovation of the existing buildings and introduce the new block to the rear which will take a contemporary form, projecting back to a point just beyond the rear elevation of the existing bingo hall. Limited car parking will be provided and accessed from Kingsway.

The principles are entirely the same as those granted previously, however, there would be a restaurant and retail/leisure unit fronting the walkway linking Lord Street to the supermarket behind, ensuring active frontages. There would also be new retail/leisure provision in the left half of the building fronting Lord Street. The pavement café originally proposed is now omitted (a point of objection raised by Southport Civic Society).

The scheme also proposes the removal of canopies and replacements to the Lord Street frontage. It is important to recognise that these do not represent part of the original building.

The previous application S/2006/0675 was partly implemented, due to some internal alteration to a staircase within the existing building, but is now in new ownership. The principle of development for this purpose is therefore not open to being challenged, however, the intended uses of the building as extended are consistent in any event with established policy requirements and there is no objection to the principle of the development.

The visual effects can be judged primarily on the basis of two factors; the implications from the existing building being brought back into use and the impact of the new six storey building, in particular having regard to its impact from a variety of positions both within and looking into the Conservation Area.

The existing building is, at present, boarded up on the Lord Street frontage. In addition, the clock is known not to be working, but it is also understood that the mechanism has been removed altogether. There is a canopy on the rear elevation, which dates back to 1993, which would be removed.

The proposals would revitalise the shop fronts, with the provision of new hardwood frames to the Lord Street elevations. A condition is attached requiring the reinstatement of the clock.

The removal of canopies will require a method statement for reinstating newly exposed brickwork on the rear of the building. This will represent a positive in respect of the Conservation Area's character and appearance.

The extension would represent an individual and contemporary insertion when compared against the existing. The rear elevation would be visible from the roundabout to the north looking across the supermarket car park from Kingsway, but this view would be set in the

context of the adjacent bingo hall and is framed by the supermarket immediately to the west and north of the site.

There are also views from the Duke Street/Lord Street roundabout looking across the site. From this point, though the extension will be taller than the existing building, it will be set back and the visual focus will remain that of the central tower. Views looking west will be obscured by the existing bingo hall, and from directly front on, the top floor will be visible to varying degrees depending on how far back from the building one would elect to stand.

The applicants have employed a variety of materials in the new building, and it is proposed to match the brick of the existing buildings to form the primary base of the extension, with terracotta rain screen cladding of a finish consistent with the stonework of the existing building.

Windows will be of long rectangular profile and these will be set in reveals, which help provide a vertical emphasis reflecting the fenestrative arrangements of the bingo hall adjacent, but again of modern interpretation. There is some further discussion required however to reduce the blank massing of the rear elevation which in part results from varied requirements of this hotel operator. This will be reported by late representation.

The proposal seeks to provide a distinct breakage between old and new and the extent to which the existing rear elevation of the Ribble Buildings will be covered by built form is minimised by taking advantage of the site's depth to run the extension north-west/southeast.

The scheme will also critically maintain the pedestrian walkway through the Ribble Buildings which links Lord Street directly to the supermarket. The link will be primarily glazed and will assist significantly in providing the level of distinction desired whilst suitably easing the transition between old and new.

The principal views of the adjacent listed building are taken from Lord Street and Kingsway. The rear elevation has clearly been subject to alteration over time to varied standards and has a patchwork appearance. Additionally, the potential for appreciating the south western elevation is limited all the more so due to being obscured by the extension.

There will be no physical attachment of development to this building and it is overall considered that the effects on the setting will be minimal and therefore there is no unacceptable impact on the setting of the listed building.

The proposal enables the provision of an outdoor seated café and a restaurant and bar fronting the walkway. The plan will achieve a lively, active frontage, removing one of the two display windows previously proposed to enhance views into an area of activity.

The rear elevation comprises a ground floor window and door but discussion is being undertaken with a view to improve this further, with recognition that there will be a need to accommodate certain functional requirements of both uses.

The overlooking and surveillance of this walkway is critical and will reduce the prospect of crime and anti-social behaviour, whilst bringing a general feel of safety and

encouragement for its usage. External uplighting at evening times will further assist in this aspect, and closed circuit television.

A restrictive covenant is known to exist on the land and has been varied to prevent the supermarket vetoing the ground floor bar/restaurant use, and also to prevent them from cordoning off the pedestrian walkway. This is also critical in the sense that level access to the development is derived from this entrance.

The acceptability of the principle does not raise significant amenity issues. However, as most activity will be to the Lord Street frontage, it will enable a natural continuation of active ground floor retail use and the proposal is effective in designing out crime and reducing the opportunity for anti-social behaviour, the possibility of vandalism is not a material planning consideration and there are other measures available to deal with such issues.

A total of 13 parking spaces are to be provided. This is entirely consistent with wider aims to reduce car dependence and increase reliance on other forms of transport. All access would utilise the existing arrangement available from Kingsway.

There are requirements for cycle parking in the building, and Highways Development Control has also advised that a Travel Plan should be provided as part of the scheme. This could enable consideration of such measures of car sharing, rental of vehicles and the prospect of subsidised travel for employees. In addition, there are minor improvements required to upgrade access kerbs and upgrading of the footway adjacent to the bus stop to the south east side of the site.

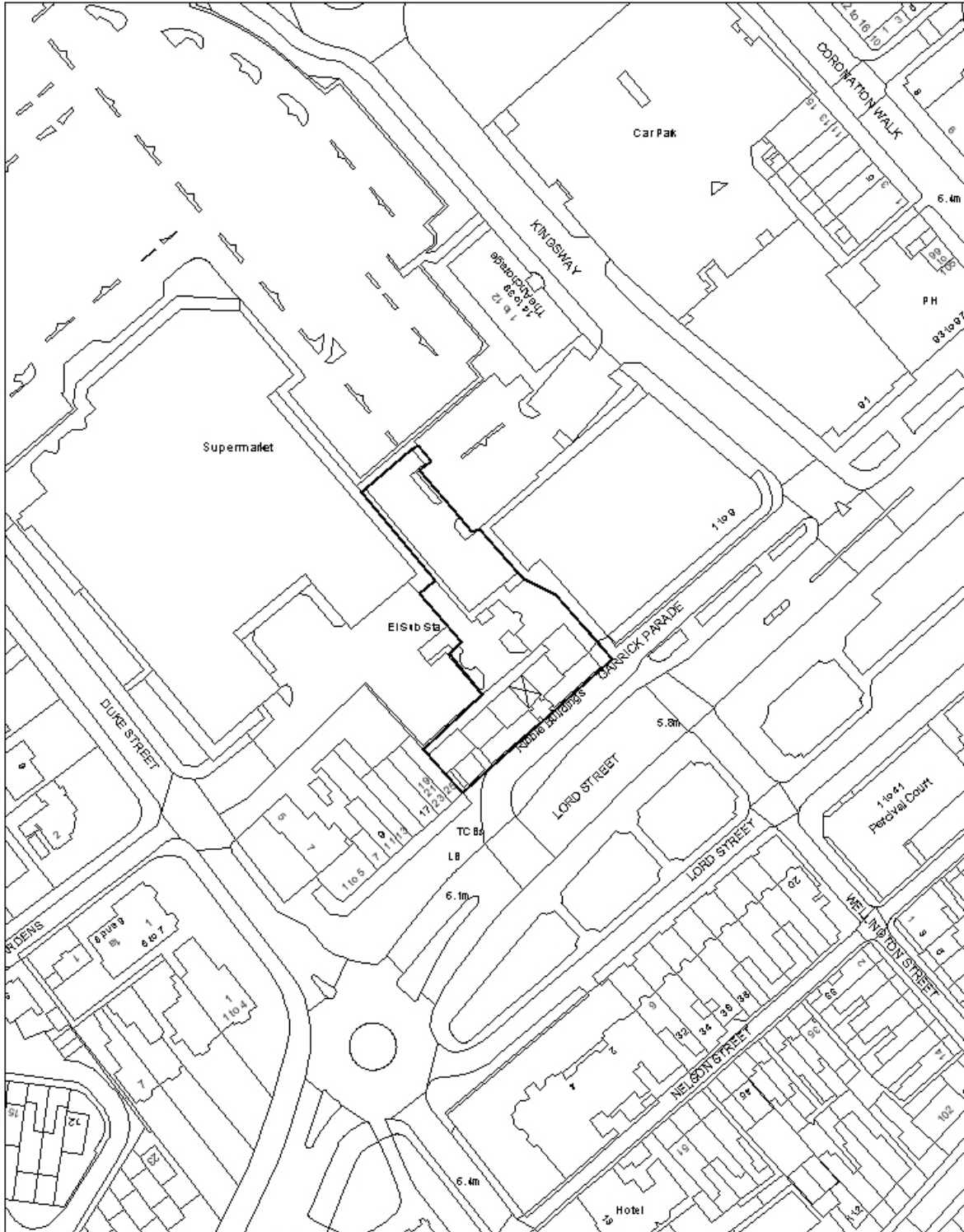
All bin and bottle storage is designed into the building and there is easy access for refuse vehicles to use the service road to the front of the hotel.

With regard to issues of contamination, the building formerly served as the frontage building for the Southport-Crosby-Liverpool Railway, and later, a bus station. Environmental reports have been reviewed by the Environmental Protection Director who considers that the planning conditions previously attached need not be reapplied. The scheme therefore complies with Policy EP3 of the UDP, nevertheless a note is added to inform the applicant that works should stop in the event of any unidentified contamination.

The scheme proposes the use of a combined heat/power plant to meet with renewable energy requirements (previous proposal intended to utilise solar power). This is considered to have no visual implications and is considered viable. The target for renewable energy per year is 68,166 kWh per annum and it is considered that the proposed equipment will achieve this requirement. A condition is attached.

Some other minor design/parking revisions have also been requested and where necessary, will be reported by way of late representation. Members are invited to note that the substance and principle of the scheme is acceptable but that further financial information is being sought to justify the rescinding of Section 106 requirements.

# Existing site plan



<b>Sefton Council</b> <b>Department of the Built Environment</b> Jane Gowing Head of Planning Services	S/2011/1343 Ribble Buildings Lord Street Southport		<b>Standard Site Plan</b> Scale: 1:1250 Date: 24/1/2012 Drawn By: RO BID on	
	OSGR: 333176, 416988	Sheet(s): 489B, 469A	Area: 1957 sqm	Ward(s): Dukes Postcode Sector(s): PR8 1 Polling District(s): W5 Parishes(s): None Found

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# Proposed site plan

