

APPLICATION NUMBER:	LW/07/1177	ITEM NUMBER:	14
APPLICANTS NAME(S):	Dr S White	PARISH / WARD:	Lewes / Lewes Castle
PROPOSAL:	Listed Building Application for Construction of Visitor Pavilion in the Gun Garden together with reforming of steps, formation of path to perimeter of Gun Garden, installation of interpretation boards and signage, recladding of Educational Resources Centre, plus internal alterations		
SITE ADDRESS:	Lewes Castle, Castle Precincts, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1YT		
GRID REF:	TQ 4110		

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1. SITE DESCRIPTION / PROPOSAL

1.1 Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent is sought for the erection of a visitor pavilion, reforming of steps with new handrails, new perimeter path around the Gun Garden, interpretation boards & signage, re cladding of existing education centre and various internal alterations at Lewes Castle and Barbican House, Lewes. The Castle is located in the centre of Lewes and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument of both local and national importance. It is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the District and of considerable historical importance.

1.2 The proposals were submitted following pre-application discussions between this Council and the applicant. The proposed visitor pavilion would be located south east corner of the Gun garden and run flush to the inside of the perimeter wall. The building would be adjacent to the Castle entrance and also incorporate a refuse and garden store. It would largely be obscured from public view behind the Castle walls, although it would be visible from within the public realm of the castle. The proposed design has a slight curve and would measure approximately 12.7 metres at the widest point by 5 metres at the deepest point, providing just under 30 square metres floorspace. There would be a small flat roofed section hidden behind the Castle wall measuring approximately 2.2 metres high. The main bulk of the building would have a mono-pitched roof to a maximum ridge height of 2.65 metres. The northern end of roof would be slightly lower than the southern end. It would be constructed from a mortise & pegged oak frame with mature oak boarding with hard wood spacers, while the roof would be a terne coated stainless steel.

1.3 From the Gun Garden the existing access steps and path way to the two towers take a zig-zag course to the Castle Garden across 15 different levels. The steps and path are currently constructed from a range of materials and are in a poor state of repair. The existing handrails do not meet safety standard heights. The proposed replacement steps would follow an identical path, being widened where needed and altering the profile of the steps in order to make them even. A resin bonded gravel surface, with natural stone edging is proposed for the entire re-construction. The proposed new Gun Garden path will run around the perimeter of the garden and pass in front of the visitor pavilion. It would have a resin-bonded gravel surface with natural stone edging. Works are also required to the retaining walls which support the path and steps. The proposed handrails will also follow the new path and be constructed out of oak, to match the visitor pavilion.

2. RELEVANT POLICIES

LDLP: – ST03 – Design, Form and Setting of Development

LDLP: – H02 – Listed Buildings

LDLP: – H05 – Conservation Areas

LDLP: – PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

LDLP: – PPG15 – Planning & the Historic Environment

3. PLANNING HISTORY

LW/97/1797 - Listed Building application for urgent repair work to stairs and flat roof in south tower. - **Application not Required**

LW/93/0927 - Listed Building Consent for controlled turnstile access linked to second shed and provision of garden bins etc. within trellis fencing. - **Withdrawn**

LW/93/0926 - Installation of turnstile beside repositioned entrance gates and S.73(a) retrospective application for the retention of a small wooden shed to North of turnstile. - **Withdrawn**

LW/92/1516 - Installation of turnstile 1040mm high to replace existing gate. - **Refused**

4. REPRESENTATIONS FROM STANDARD CONSULTEES

Main Town Or Parish Council – Members received a letter from the Friends Of Lewes objecting to the proposal. Councillors generally concurred with the points raised by the Friends of Lewes, and whilst welcoming the improvements to the steps and the re-cladding of the education centre, objected strongly to the design, location and roofing materials proposed for the visitor pavilion.

Design & Conservation Officer – The Visitor Pavilion is a single storey building that has a contemporary appearance, although it references historic materials through the use of oak, a material that would have historically been found in castles. The use of oak would be sympathetic to the character of the Lewes Castle as it weathers into a natural silvery grey colour and blend into the other natural materials found in the Castle.

The proposed Visitor Pavilion will result in an expanse of roof that would be easily visible from Castle Gate and Lewes High Street. However it is considered that the form of the roof, which is curved and sloping upwards will give visual interest to it. The roof is not considered to be to the detriment of the special interest of this site.

It is acknowledged that the view of the Gun Garden from Castle Gate will be diminished as a result of this development however this is not considered to be of detriment to special interest of Castle itself, although it would impact upon an attractive view from within the conservation area.

Alternative locations for the Visitor Pavilion have been discussed with the applicant and agent however it was concluded that the location proposed is the most sensitive in terms of its impact on the appearance of the Lewes Castle and the way in which the site functions.

Concern is raised over the appearance and materials roof . It is considered that the roof of the Educational Resource Centre and the Visitor Pavilion need

to match in terms of their materials and detailing. A condition needs to be attached to any approval stating that details of the proposed upgraded roof of both the ERC and the Visitor Centre have yet to be fully agreed and that agreement need to be reached prior to commencement of the development.

The Educational Resource Centre (ERC) is an existing single storey building which it to be upgraded. The Educational Resource Centre will echo the character of the proposed Visitor Pavilion through its modern appearance.

East Sussex County Archaeologist – Suggest programme of archaeological works.

English Heritage – Generally, English heritage supports the proposals, which we believe to be a well balanced mix of works, effectively aimed at creating a sustainable heritage asset. We do have some reservations, particularly with regards to the roofing of the pavilion and the education resource centre. However, if these concerns are satisfactorily addressed we would recommend that the application is approved, subject to some conditions, including the implementation of a programme of archaeological works.

We have no objection to the improvements to the motte path and steps, however, we will be seeking confirmation that the flint walls are structurally sound, or that an appropriate engineering solution has been found. If substantive work is required, there might be an effect on buried archaeological remains and visual amenity that ought to be understood before planning permission is granted.

There are a number of details that are acceptable in principle, although we will wish to agree details in due course, including: the proposed paving materials; the design of the handrails on the motte steps; the design and fixing of the handrail in the keep; and the method and materials of re-pointing in the keep.

5. REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

5.1 One letter received from a neighbouring business stating that they had no objection.

5.2 One letter received from a neighbouring resident stating that the proposal will enhance the current appearance of the Castle. Concern raised over possible future drainage issues at the site and the possibility that the visitor pavilion will lead to trespassers accessing the Castle Grounds. The proposed design of the pavilion will allow access to the site as it will be located adjacent to the lowest part of the Castle Wall and there are no security measures in place. The Police should be consulted with regards to the safety aspect of the proposal.

5.3 One letter of objection received from a local resident. The building will not blend in with its surroundings. The proposed roof materials will be an eyesore and allow vandals to climb over the walls of the Castle. The main need for a building of such size is to house a panoramic photo of views from the top of

the Castle, for the benefit of disabled tourists, which could be better achieved. The Gun Garden is of limited size and its loss would restrict its uses and enjoyment. The application should be refused.

5.4 One letter of objection received from the Friends of Lewes: Vehemently object to the proposals which are insensitive to the Castle. The visitor centre should be more sensitively designed and sited in the north eastern corner of site in traditional materials. The visitor centre which is clad in inappropriate materials will spoil views of the Gun Garden from Castle Gate. The proposed footpath is objectionable as is the proposed resin-bonded surfacing materials. The quality is lacking and the application should be refused.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 It is considered that the following matters are relevant to the assessment of each of the separate elements of this application: Impact on Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), impact on Listed Building, impact on Conservation Area, need, design, materials and tourism.

Visitor Pavilion.

6.2 The crucial aspect of the development is on the impact the proposal will have on a nationally important SAM. In principle the development has not be objected to by either English Heritage or the Design and Conservation Officer. Both parties have suggested a range of conditions, including materials, surfacing materials and archaeological works. The Design and Conservation officer has suggested that the proposal will have no adverse impact on the SAM or Listed Buildings, while the location and design of the visitor centre will not result in any detrimental visual impact on the wider Conservation Area. He stated: "The proposed pavilion will result in an expanse of roof that would be easily visible from Castle Gate and Lewes High Street. However, it is considered that the form of the roof, which is curved and sloping upwards will give visual interest to it. The roof (in principle) is not considered to be to the detriment of the special interest of the site". However, a condition has been recommended requiring submission of samples to be approved.

6.3 Following pre-application discussions it was felt that the proposed location for the visitor pavilion was the most appropriate as it is adjacent to the Castle entrance. The Castle wall is also higher in this location, so can provide greater screening of the building. It was the most appropriate and sensitive location for the pavilion and will lessen the impact on the wider area. It was felt that a contemporary design may be acceptable and that the use of oak would reflect a historical material.

6.4 The Castle is a vitally important local tourist attraction, important to both Lewes and the wider district. Local Plan Policy E10 states "planning permission will be granted for tourism facilities which make the most effective economic use of the District's...historical assets". The visitor pavilion will provide a much needed facility needed to support the Castles function as a visitor attraction with wider economic benefits from tourism.

Reformed steps/new path/retaining walls/railings.

6.5 No objection has been raised to the reformed steps and path or railings which will be the subject of a condition. They are required from a safety point of view and will be an improvement on the existing railings and therefore result in no detrimental visual intrusion. Works to the retaining wall will also not have any detrimental impact on visual amenities or the SAM. A survey of the required works will be conditioned.

Education Resource Centre.

6.6 The proposed re cladding of the Education Resource Centre has been welcomed, as it will improve what is currently an unsightly and out-of-character development. The Design & Conservation Officer has objected to the proposed rooflight and sunpipe as they are considered incongruous features which will detract from Castle Gate. At the pre-application stage, it was agreed that the Education Resource Centre's unsightly roof needed re-roofing in the same material as the visitor pavilion in order to create some rhythm to the modern buildings. This aspect of the development has been omitted on plan, and so a condition requiring a new roofing material will be added. A condition will be added so that any grant of consent omits the rooflights and sunpipe.

Internal alterations.

6.7 The proposed internal alterations solely relate to the Listed Building application. The most significant proposed internal alteration is the introduction of a fully glazed screen and door set back from the original High Street entrance to form a vestibule. This is not considered to have a significant impact on the character of the listed building although there are a few details concerning its appearance contained within the application. A condition will be attached to any approval requiring additional information.

Conclusion.

6.8 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment, states that "conservation and sustainable economic growth are complementary objective and should not generally be seen in opposition to one another". In this instance the works to the steps and hand rails are needed in order to bring access to the Castle towers up to modern safety and Building Regulation standard. The steps are uneven and steep and the hand rails in places are broken and also too low to be of any use. The Castles current visitor area is located outside the Castle walls in Barbican House. This is not an ideal situation, with people often wandering into the site having not paid. It will provide a vital, low key addition to the site which will provide this important local tourist attraction with additional visitor space and allow the Castle to make the most effective economic use of its historical assets. The works to the Education Resource Centre will improve its appearance, whilst there is no objection to any internal alterations.

7. RECOMMENDATION

The application is approved.

The application is subject to the following conditions:

1. Before the development hereby approved is commenced on site, details and samples of all external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and carried out in accordance with that consent.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development in keeping with the locality having regard to Policies ST3, H2 & H5; of the Lewes District Local Plan and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 of the National Policy Guidance.

2. Notwithstanding the proposed roof materials for the visitor pavilion and Education Resource Centre noted on drawing number 1702.03 Rev D & 1702.06 Rev E, both dated August 2007, which are not approved with this permission, no development shall take place on site until details and samples of the proposed roofing materials have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the works then carried out in accordance with that consent. The proposed materials should be used on both the visitor pavilion and Education Resource Centre.

Reason: Having regard to the adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument, Listed Building and Wider Conservation Area and in Accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 and Policies ST3, H2 & H5 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

3. Notwithstanding the proposed rooflights and sunpipe on the Education Resource Centre as shown on drawing number 1702.06 Rev E, dated August 2007, these details are not approved with this permission.

Reason: The insertion of rooflights and a sunpipe on the roof of the Education Resource Centre would have a detrimental impact on the adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument and wider Conservation Area, having regard to Policies ST3, H2 and H5 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

4. Before any development commences on site all new joinery; including window and door details, showing elevations to a scale of at least 1:20 and vertical and horizontal cross sections to a scale of 1:1 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and carried out in accordance with that Consent.

Reason: To protect the historic fabric and character of the Scheduled Ancient Monument; having regard to Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 and Policies ST3, H2 & H5 of the Lewes District Local Plan

5. Before the development hereby approved is commenced on site, details and samples of all surfacing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and carried out in accordance with that consent.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development in keeping with the locality having regard to Policies ST3, H2 & H5 of the Lewes District Local Plan and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 of the National Policy Guidance.

6. Before the development hereby approved commences on site, a survey of the retaining walls that run along side the path shall be carried out which identifies the alterations required. Where the retaining walls are to be altered or extended this should be in materials matching the existing (red clay brick, flint and lime mortar) with full details and materials submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and carried out in accordance with that consent.

Reason: To ensure that works carried out are sympathetic to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 and Policy ST3 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

7. Before the development hereby approved is commenced on site, full details of means of fixing railings to the ground shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter carried out in accordance with that consent.

Reason: To ensure that works carried out are sympathetic to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 and Policy ST3 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

8. Before the development hereby approved is commenced on site full details of the balustrade to be erected in the north eastern corner of the Gun Garden shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter carried out in accordance with that consent.

Reason: To ensure appropriate design and materials are used and having regard to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 and Policy ST3 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

9. Before the development hereby approved is commenced on site, full details of the proposed glazed screen to be erected in Barbican House shall be submitted to and approved in writing by Local Planning Authority and thereafter carried out in accordance with that consent.

Reason: To protect the historic fabric and character of the Grade II* Listed Building in accordance with Policies ST3 & H2 of the Lewes District Local Plan and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 of the National Policy Guidance.

This decision is based on the following submitted plans/documents:

<u>PLAN TYPE</u>	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>REFERENCE</u>
Proposed Elevations	19 September 2007	1:25
Other	19 September 2007	540/01 REVA

Proposed Floor Plans	19 September 2007	1:25
Other	19 September 2007	ISOMETRIC VIEW
Design & Access Statement	7 September 2007	
Other	7 September 2007	1702.05 REVA
Planning Layout	7 September 2007	1702.01 REVA
Proposed Elevations	7 September 2007	1702.01 REVA
Proposed Floor Plans	7 September 2007	1702.01 REVA
Planning Layout	7 September 2007	1702.02 REVE
Sections	7 September 2007	1702.02 REVE
Proposed Elevations	7 September 2007	1702.03 REVD
Proposed Floor Plans	7 September 2007	1702.03 REVD
Roof Plans	7 September 2007	1702.03 REVD
Block Plans	7 September 2007	1702.06 REVE
Location Plan	7 September 2007	1702.06 REVE
Roof Plans	7 September 2007	1702.06 REVE
Proposed Elevations	7 September 2007	1702.06 REVE
Proposed Floor Plans	7 September 2007	1702.06 REVE
Proposed Floor Plans	7 September 2007	1702.08 REVA
Survey	7 September 2007	1702.001

Summary of reasons for decision and any relevant development plan policies/proposal:

It is considered that the proposal meets the aims and objectives of Local Plan Policy and respects the character of the location, complying with Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, and Policies ST3, H2, H5 & E10 ; of the Lewes District Local Plan.