

P715 ITEM 90

Rye F E

The Town Clerk
Rye Town Council

10 East Street
Rye
East Sussex
TN31 7JY

27th November 2010

Ref: RR/2004/3202/P and RR/2004/3206/L
The Further Education Centre, Lion Street.

With regard to the Hastings College proposal to demolish part of the the F E Centre, Rother District Council's decision to re-advertise the planning application is commendable. This effectively cures an apparent irregularity in the original planning procedure in 2004, whereby both the public and the statutory consultees were deprived of a clear understanding of what is at stake.

It is now clear that the College, supported by the Rye Partnership, wish to destroy a significant Victorian building in the centre of the Town. Built around 1897, in substantially the same style as the rest of the Lion Street Board School, the Art Room has been used by generations of artists over the last 50 years, who have appreciated the quality of its light.

The Art Room is of course a Listed Building, protected by law as part of the nation's heritage. It is also in a Conservation Area. There might be reasons for its demolition if, for example, it had deteriorated beyond repair, or no alternative viable use could be found for it. Even so, it would be a legal requirement that whatever replaced it must be shown to make a substantial enhancement to the character of the Conservation Area.

The current application fails all these tests: the building is soundly constructed and weather-tight; moreover, there is an assured life ahead for it, if the Fletcher Theatre proposal proceeds to fruition. The building is attractive in appearance in its own right and it contributes character to the complex of listed buildings of which it forms part. There is no way that Rye should allow the destruction of this building

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Bird.
Chairman

PTIS ITEM 90

Richard Wilson

Andrew Stuart

Planning Dept

Little Orchard House

Rother District Council

3 West St

Town Hall

Rye

Bexhill

TN31 7ES

TN39 3JX

27th Nov 2011

Ref: RR/2004/3202/P and RR/2004/3206L

Dear Mr Wilson

I am writing to object most strongly about the above proposals which, if passed, will result in the destruction of major architectural and cultural heritage to Rye, the loss of an important amenity to the people of Rye, and the loss of my personal privacy through overlooking my property.

Architectural significance

To frame my strong objections I refer to the Assessment of Significance provided by the applicant's agent C McGrath to RDC on 23 Nov 2010. Having been paid by the applicant to justify the demolition of a Grade II listed building he has understandably sought to paint the building in the poorest possible light, but displays a lack of knowledge of architectural history and provided erroneous information and a commentary that is at odds with the limited and highly selective photographic evidence he has provided. Remember, in the original application of 2004 he assured RDC that the building was a 'modern extension' and a '20th Century' Art Block. I have some knowledge of these matters as I have a BA in History of Art, having specialised in Victorian Art and Architecture in my final year and written my BA thesis on the Victorian architect Alfred Waterhouse with special reference to his educational buildings.

Mr McGrath claims the Art Block was jerry built and of poor design compared to the other buildings on the site. This is nonsense. In the 1880s and 1890s, architectural design had moved on from the pointed arch, highly decorative, polychromatic style that is the feature of the other, older buildings on the site. Red brick was now the height of fashion in all areas of Victorian architecture and in educational buildings in particular. For example, the university buildings of Liverpool and Manchester – hence the term 'red brick' universities – which were a source of great civic pride in these cities and highlighted the period's great passion for the vital importance of education. When building the Art Block, the Rye Board deliberately, therefore, chose the very latest style, as befitting the important site in the heart of the citadel, and its pride in the town.

Furthermore, they chose not to hide the building away, but made it significantly taller than the other buildings (at extra expense) so it can be clearly seen from the church tower and also so the top of the south gable can be seen from the yard outside the library. They also chose to add, at additional

cost, fine detailing that complements the other buildings in the range. For example, the dragons teeth dentils under the roof in the south gable end, and the squared off dentils under the eaves on the east and west facades (visible in the photos I supplied to Committee two weeks ago, and herewith attached (although cropped out of the photo supplied by Mr McGrath, taken from my garden)). These same details appear on the other buildings. The Art Block used to have a finial on the air vent, which is taller and more slender than the stubby one on the central block, as evidenced in the pre WWII photo I have supplied. This photo also shows that, like today, the library (like the Art Block) didn't have a diaper patterned roof, despite Mr McGrath's assertions to the contrary.

Further evidence of the attention that was taken to detail, and pride in the new building, can be seen in the brick arch over the South gable window in the Art Block – it is of a different type and tone of red brick to the elevations. The flattened arch reflects the latest design fashion and the timber joinery reflects the growing influence of the Arts & Crafts movement. The flattened arch design allows a much larger area of glass than pointed arches, letting in more light. This emphasis on additional light was due to the prevailing concerns at the time about health and the vital importance of light, and the Rye Board clearly wanted the best for the children under its care.

Quite clearly this building is of tremendous architectural significance and a vitally important part of Rye's architectural, historical and cultural heritage and must be saved for future generations.

As for other photos supplied by Mr McGrath, the picture showing ivy growing through the window frame is more a shocking indictment of the contempt the applicant holds for the Rye community and should be used as evidence of the years of wilful neglect of a Grade II listed building rather than as a case for demolition. It is quite shameful.

Cultural amenity

Rye has a rich artistic tradition. Edward Burra was born and lived his whole life in the town. John Piper and Paul Nash both lived and painted in the town. As well as the Rye Art Gallery, Rye has at least five commercial galleries. Today, there are hundreds of talented and keen amateur artists and many professional artists living and working in the town. These are served by a dedicated art supplies shop – unusual for a town of just 4,500 people. When Rye Academy was set up it decided to be a centre of excellence for arts, and the evidence is that this has been a success, so Rye has a pipeline of young talent that is being encouraged and nurtured. Rye has just one publicly-owned art studio (which to all intents and purposes could have been purpose built it is so ideally suited for the function) the Art block. It has been well used and enjoyed for over 50 years. Now the applicant seeks to destroy it. If granted permission for this cultural vandalism, the loss to Rye will be immeasurable.

Loss of privacy

The Art Block is at the end of my garden, and the permission being sought would mean an intolerable loss of privacy through overlooking, as well as light pollution.

With all these factors taken into account I insist the forthcoming site visit by the Planning Committee should include a visit to my property so a full and proper assessment can be made. Please notify me when this will occur so I can take steps to ensure access to the Committee should we not be in.

However, in conclusion I trust the committee and the RDC officers will take into account my very strong and valid objections to these permissions being sought by Sussex Coast College Hastings and the Rye Partnership.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stuart

PTIS ITEM 90

Rye Town Council

From: <richardfarhall@tiscali.co.uk>
To: "Rye Town Council" <ryetowncouncil@btconnect.com>
Sent: 26 November 2010 15:14
Subject: Fw: Lion St demolition

----- Original Message -----

From: niki davies
To: Richard Farhall
Sent: Friday, November 26, 2010 2:00 PM
Subject: Lion St demolition

Richard

Ref RR/2004/3202P & RR/2004/3206/L

Can you make the Town Councillors aware of the following information and that it debates the contents at the Planning Committee meeting on 6th Dec 2010.

On 18th Nov the Planning Committee deferred the application, subject to readvertising it, before considering it again at the next committee meeting. This was done because they were unhappy with the S106 and because I found late in the day (12th Nov) a map in the library dating the art block to at least 1897 - the original application in 2004 was simply for the demolition of 'modern extensions' and, in a supporting letter, a '20th c Art Block'. This misleading and inaccurate information was publicly advertised on Pinks in Rye, in the newspaper and also to statutory bodies such as English Heritage. No elevation drawings or photos of the art block were supplied with the application (these are expected) so it was hard to know exactly what was going to be knocked down. So, the RDC planning committee (asleep on the job? mislead?) passed the application in 2004.

In 2004 Rye Town Council objected to the permissions and hopefully it will do so again on the basis of

1/ The ongoing S106 and attempts by the applicant to water this down.

2/ Loss of architectural heritage - it is vicorian Grade 11 listed building, built as part of a homogenous complex in the heart of Rye. It is built in the same style as the rest (1873 built) of the buildings but probably a few years later, but certainly before 1897. However, it has an arched rather than pointed window on the south facing facade. This reflects changing architectural styles in the later 19th c, which is important, and utility - it lets in more light, and the Victorians were keen on light, as it was healthy. Hence the change in styling. Rye is unusually lucky to have such a complete grouping of complementary buildings in the heart of the town.

3/ Loss of amenity. It is the only publicly owned art room in Rye (a town with a tremendous artistic heritage - Edwar Burra, Piper, Nash - and a thriving contemporary artistic community (professional and amateur) that is available for public hire. Rye Academy majors on and din excels in the arts - so we concentrating our education in this area. This art room is ideal to be used for future generations of Rye-born artists once they leave the Academy at 16. We have a duty to save it for them.

In fact, so well suited to its current useage, and it has been a publicly used facility for at least 50 years - Louis Turpin used to teach there - it could have been purpose built.

In addition, this is a joint application between Rye Partnership and SCCH.

Therefore, will Rye Town Council call on The Rye Partnership to ensure that it has correctly and properly fulfilled its duties to the planning process. Namely,

That unlike 2004, the 2010 application is accompanied by full drawings of all exisiting elevations and photographs of all elevations including, most importantly, those to be demolished, but also everything

