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VARIATION OF CONDITION APPLICATION (planning reference – 3/2022/0637)

DEMOLITION STATEMENT FOR ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO KEEPERS COTTAGE TO CREATE AN 8 BED BOUTIQUE HOTEL ON NORTHCOTE ROAD, OLD LANGHO

This statement supports the Variation of Condition application to RVBC regarding the extent of the demolitions carried out following the recent events on site (February 2024) which included a partial collapse and safety demolitions.

Following the approval of the pre-commencement conditions and the subsequent suspension of the site works on 28 September 2023. The contractor was instructed to recommence the work in early 2024 on the basis of pre-ordering the steel work and the continuation of the excavations etc.

The site works recommenced w/c 12 February 2024 with groundworks to the existing building following the commencement of the demolitions in 2023.

The subsequent unfortunate events on site have been documented in an email to RVBC planning department on 27 February 2024 following the partial collapse and the further associated demolitions adjacent to Northcote Road.

The applicant has made it clear that there is no intention whatsoever to carry out any further demolitions and has re-iterated that this was a significant unfortunate event and all parties have acted responsibly to ensure that public safety is prioritised and that the planning department and Building Control are kept fully informed. The applicant has also clarified the importance of the development to support their existing business and to continue with the site works to ensure the re-development is completed as the planning approval.

Following this event, an investigation dig along Northcote road has revealed that it is highly likely that the collapse occurred as a result of subsidence under the pavement on Northcote Road and the general overall condition of the wall.

The site works for the re-development were immediately postponed as agreed with RVBC and following the subsequent correspondence, a meeting was held on site on 14 March 2024 between the relevant parties including the architect, applicant, contractor, structural engineer, and importantly Lyndsey Hayes and Ben Taylor from RVBC planning department.

The discussion focused on the extent of the approved demolitions when compared to the current situation on site and a study of the overall re-development of the plot which includes significant alterations and extensions.

This variation of condition application has been submitted in line with the agreement reached at the conclusion of the meeting.

In the meantime, the contractor has been allowed to continue to construct the foundations and walls up to DPC level only where the walls had collapsed while this application is being determined.

Following the meeting, the groundworkers had commenced exposing the foundations to this length of wall to Northcote road, which is relevant to the assessment of the condition of the wall and cracks which appeared in the building and the subsequent collapse. A fractured land drain was discovered located below the footings of the collapsed wall and immediately adjacent to the wall alignment under the footpath to Northcote Road, (full report to be carried out).

The alterations and extension/redevelopment remain as the approved design which involves significant wall demolitions and the removal of the entire roof structure to facilitate the new extensions and arrangement. The elevation to Northcote Road as approved demonstrates significant alterations to the façade and fenestration. The original proposal was to remove the render to the original cottage element, install the new window arrangement and clean/repoint the walls.

There are no significant building elements of any architectural merit with the exception of the historic post box which is to be retained and the general construction of the extensions was/is extremely rudimentary.

For clarification, the existing building was in poor condition and has been the subject of two previous extensions. The principal construction of the extensions being hollow blockwork cavity walls with a render finish. The original cottage is solid stone with rubble fill and a render finish. The roofs were/are a mix of stone to the cottage and concrete tile to the previous extensions.

Refer to the photographs and the two drawings showing the ground floor and first floor demolition works as approved and the current situation at the site. (PHA/750/100/1 & 100/2) Plus a supplementary drawing PHA/750/A6.7, which shows the existing elevations of the original building and the profile (pink hatched) of the redevelopment.

Refer also to the structural engineers supporting statement for further information regarding the site conditions etc which supports this application.

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