



Planning Officer Report

Application Number

P/2016/0146

Site Address

Torre Station
Newton Road
Torquay
TQ2 5EU

Case Officer

Verity Clark

Ward

Tormohun

Description

Change of use from signal box to holiday maisonette (The proposed development to which the application relates is situated within 10 metres of relevant railway land).

Recommendation

Approval.

Site Details

The site, Signal Box, Torre Station, Newton Road, Torquay is a signal box on the south western platform of Torre Station. The building is three storeys in height and is constructed mainly from brick with the upper floor being largely glazed. At present the building is boarded up. The building is grade II listed and is located within the Torre Conservation area.

Detailed Proposals

The application seeks permission for the change of use from signal box to holiday maisonette.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Network Rail: No objection to proposal but there are a number of safety concerns. The signal box is at an unmanned station on an operational platform with the means of access along the platform leading to concerns with the associated risks. Access must not be blocked or restricted at any time. Because of the nature of the proposed development we consider that there will be an increased risk of trespass onto the railway. The developer must provide a suitable trespass proof fence adjacent to Network rail's boundary (minimum 1.8m high). Surface water run-off must drain away from the railway boundary. Safety, signalling and encroachment issues must be considered. All

excavations/earthworks carried out in the vicinity of the Network Rail's property/ structures must be designed and executed such that no interference with the integrity of that property/structure can occur.

Highways: No objection.

Conservation: While in almost all other cases the provision of polycarbonate placed over these ground floor windows would be inappropriate, this new proposal - to replace all the glazing with 8mm toughened glass - will not address the problem of vandalism, because the glazing bars will always be the weak point. Thus I am content with external over-glazing, which can be easily and much more cheaply replaced than multi-pane timber windows. The application has been revised in line with these comments and is now acceptable.

Designing Out Crime Officer: No comment to make.

Victorian Society: No response.

Twentieth Century Society: No response.

Summary Of Representations

Neutral: I am commenting as Estates Manager for Great Western Railway which is the train operating company responsible for Torre station. We do have concerns that the signal box is situated on an operational railway platform at an unmanned station with the only means of access being across the railway platform. If the signal box is converted to a holiday let then there is the potential for it be let to people who are not familiar with the risks associated with railways and there is no manned presence at the station to provide on-site management.

Also, as far as I am aware there is no electricity supply connection to the signal box and no foul drainage connection.

For any work activity outside of the signal box on the station platform consent from both Network Rail and Great Western Railway will be required.

- This has been officially submitted as a consultation response and will therefore not be considered as a separate public comment.

Applicant's comments in support of proposal.

Relevant Planning History

P/2016/0145 Change of use from signal box to holiday maisonette (The proposed development to which the application relates is situated within 10 metres of relevant railway land) Concurrent application

P/2010/0836 Alterations to existing redundant signal box to form one bedroom holiday maisonette. Approved 12/11/10

P/2010/0835 Alterations to existing redundant signal box to form one bedroom holiday maisonette. Approved 28/10/10

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The key issues to consider in relation to this application are the principle of the use, the impact it would have on the historic character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building within the context of the Torre Conservation Area, access and amenity considerations.

The proposal includes the change of use of a redundant signal box for use as holiday accommodation. The site does not include any external curtilage and is located on the south western platform of Torre Station. The location of the proposal on a railway platform means that it is unsuitable for a number of uses which require a building with access or curtilage. The proposed use of the building as a holiday home is considered to be appropriate as it is likely to appeal to railway enthusiasts who would arrive by train and would not need any vehicular access or curtilage. Given that any other use is unlikely to come forward for the site it is considered that this represents a good opportunity to restore the building which is considered to be a listed building at risk. As such the principle of the use is considered to be acceptable. The building would be restored as a result of its conversion and the key features of the building will be preserved including the levers.

Consultation from the Council's Senior Historic Environment Officer has noted that while in almost all other cases the provision of polycarbonate placed over these ground floor windows would be inappropriate, this new proposal to replace all the glazing with 8mm toughened glass will not address the problem of vandalism, because the glazing bars will always be the weak point. Thus external over-glazing is acceptable which can be easily and much more cheaply replaced than multi-pane timber windows. The application has been modified to include 4mm polycarbonate sheets over the existing ground floor windows in line with the Officer's comments and is now considered to be acceptable. As such the proposal is not considered to harm the historic character, setting and appearance of the Signal Box or Torre Station and will retain the quality of the built environment within the context of the Conservation Area.

Comment has been received from Network Rail to ensure the railway land is not disrupted. It is suggested that the use will result in an increased risk of trespass onto the railway and it has been suggested that the developer should provide a suitable trespass proof fence adjacent to Network rail's boundary. It is not considered to be appropriate to request this as part of the planning application due to the level of use proposed and as no external additions or extensions are proposed.

Conclusions

The proposed change of use to holiday accommodation is considered to be appropriate for listed building consent. The location of the signal box is highly sustainable for visitors who will be likely to use public transport and the use will restore and bring back into use a listed building which is considered to be at risk.

Approved Plans

OS Map/Site Location - P20160146-1 (Received 08/02/16)

Proposed Various - 7701-02B (Received 09/06/16) - (Version B)

Relevant Policies

DE1 - Design

HE1 - Listed Buildings

SS10 - Conservation and Historic Environment