

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee: Main P & T
Date: 29 May 2008

Ward: Micklegate
Parish: Micklegate Planning Panel

Reference: 08/00292/LBC
Application at: Former NER Headquarters Station Rise York YO1 6HT
For: Internal and external alterations in connection with conversion of building to hotel including erection of 6 storey and single storey rear extension, formation of terrace over car park and placement of external ventilation equipment
By: Acropolis Hotels Ltd
Application Type: Listed Building Consent
Target Date: 25 April 2008

1.0 PROPOSAL

Application site

1.1 The application concerns the former North Eastern Railway headquarters building, a purpose-built office block designed in 1904-6 for one of the most successful railway companies in Britain at the time. The building expresses the pride and confidence of the company at the height of the Edwardian period. The main entrance/front elevation to the building is from Station Rise but this large dominant building also has gable ends, fronting onto Station Road and Tanner Row.

1.2 The building is of significant architectural stature with a high standard of materials, detailing and applied artwork both inside and outside. The building is listed at grade II*.

The proposed development

1.3 The application is for listed building consent (a companion full application has also been submitted reference 08/00289/FULM) to convert the building into a hotel, although existing tenants would remain in part of the basement. The hotel would have 107 guest rooms and function as follows:

1.4 In the basement would be back of house facilities (staff and admin), plant rooms and a leisure/spa/treatment facility in the east wing (Tanner Row side).

1.5 At ground floor northwest from the entrance would be a lounge lobby area, leading through to the dining rooms, which would look out onto Station Road and the city walls. To the immediate southeast of the front entrance (toward Tanner Row) would be a front desk, otherwise guest rooms.

1.6 At 1st floor level conference rooms are proposed directly above the main entrance and in the meeting rooms (original boardroom) at the northwest end of the

floor. Two partition walls would be taken away to create a pre-meeting room space before the function rooms. Otherwise the rooms would be guest rooms.

1.7 The 2nd to 5th floors are dedicated to providing guest rooms.

1.8 Due to the original layout few internal changes are required to convert the building into a hotel. For the guest rooms, partition walls need to be inserted into rooms to create bathrooms and on the 4th and 5th floors it is proposed to add a mezzanine floor in rooms, to allow better views of the city from high level roof windows.

1.9 There are external alterations, which affect the appearance of the building and its setting/grounds. These are as follows:

1.10 It is proposed a Yorkstone pavement is laid which leads along the footpath to the main entrance. There would be a slight ramp up to the main entrance door, to create a level access (a lift is proposed in the entrance lobby). The existing entrance steps would be relocated at the edge of the pavement. To each side of the main entrance the windows openings would be enlarged. A luggage entrance is proposed in the opening to the southeast side of the entrance (to front desk area), on the other side to retain the symmetry of the building the opening size/detailing would be changed to match.

1.11 Two extensions are proposed at the rear, a single storey flat roof extension behind the spa/leisure area to accommodate the razul, and an extension tucked between the western wing and the gable on the rear elevation to provide a lift up to the top floor.

1.12 Behind the building at basement level is currently a tarmac flat parking area; this would accommodate a service area, parking spaces and plant. It is proposed to cover this area and create a garden area at ground floor level above.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Areas of Archaeological Interest City Centre Area 0006
Conservation Area Central Historic Core 0038
City Boundary York City Boundary 0001
DC Area Teams Central Area 0002
Floodzone 2 Flood Zone 2 CONF
Floodzone 3 Flood Zone 3
Listed Buildings Grade 2*; North Eastern Railway Co Offices Toft Green 0097
Listed Buildings Grade 2; Main Gates And Wicket Gates To North East Railway 0104

2.2 Policies:

CYHE4
Listed Buildings

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

Design, Conservation and Sustainable Development

3.1 Advise that Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) acknowledges that a degree of adaption is usually required to keep a listed building in active use through its life and that the economic viability of possible uses must be judged against the effect of any changes on the special architectural and historic interest of the building. The current scheme has come forward after an extensive period of examining the building's scope for opening up to provide more flexible office use. The cellular plan form and wide central corridor would not adapt on the principal floors without considerable loss of the interior arrangement and detail. It would appear that limiting alterations to the upper floors alone (above 1st floor level as alterations to the ground and first floors would be resisted due to the harm caused to the special historic interest of the building) would have resulted in a non-viable scheme.

3.2 Surprisingly the brief for the high status hotel appears to fit the existing plan with very little permanent adaption. The quality of the splendid interiors would be maintained and the special areas would be accessible to the general public.

3.3 Officers consider the extensions at the rear would not be prominent. They are acceptable additions to the building. The proposed rear garden would enhance the site and the conservation area.

3.4 Other benefits of the scheme for the building would be the removal of inserted partition walls, suspended ceilings, wiring and the reinstatement of some fireplaces (almost all have been removed). Wood block floors would be repaired and terrazzo floors would remain exposed. The existing ventilation stacks are to be reused for their original purpose in connection with heating and cooling systems drawing energy from combined services through heat exchangers.

3.5 The scheme submission is the result of considerable thought and research in connection with the building and officers. It is essential that this degree of consideration is given to the next stages of the project and we would urge the applicant to retain the architects should the scheme be successful in obtaining permission. Conservation officers suggested conditions have been added as requested.

External

Planning Panel

3.6 No objection, are in support of the sensitive alteration of this 'impressive building'.

Conservation Areas Advisory Panel (CAAP)

3.7 The panel would like to commend this proposal as it has very little effect on the building. The only objection the panel had is regarding the use of a glass balustrade

and ask that alternatives to the treatment of the steps are considered. The panel would also like the architects to submit the scheme for any signage or adverts that will be required.

English Heritage

3.8 English Heritage (EH) has had pre-application discussions about this proposal and supports the principle, subject to details. In particular ask that the alterations proposed for the main entrance and the adjacent pavement areas (in conjunction with wheelchair access) to be re-thought.

External entrance area

3.9 EH Regret the proposal to remove the curved steps at the main entrance, which are subtle but important features, the shape of which is very characteristic of their period. Also have concerns about the proposal to install glass balustrades at the outer edge of the pavement, which EH believe would look out of place in front of this fine late Victorian/Edwardian building. Ask whether it might be possible to move the curved steps outwards with the new ramp behind them and whether the road level might be slightly raised to avoid the need for a balustrade. If a balustrade remains necessary EH think a metal one might be more in keeping.

3.10 Suggest that the proposed basement swimming pool requires a structural report to confirm feasibility and establish what implications, if any, this has for the structure.

Lift at the entrance

3.11 Ask for justification as to the reasons for the extension of the upper platform and also the associated railings, and whether these changes are really necessary, as these are substantial changes to one of the most important spaces in the building. EH would wish alterations to be kept to a practical minimum and all new surfaces should match the existing ones, which EH expect to be retained in situ.

Proposed luggage entrance

3.12 EH note that the floor level inside is still higher than pavement level (presume a removable ramp would be needed for heavier luggage). A note on drawing 960/300 refers to the wall below the window being 'made good with concrete'. We would wish natural stone to be used for any surfaces that would be visible.

Guest rooms

3.13 Wish the alterations to be reversible wherever possible. Expect any new partitions, new ceilings, pipework, etc. to avoid cutting into any cornices or other decorative features. This should be covered by condition. With regard to drawing 960/311, clarification is required whether the present glazing would be reinstated in front of the new fireproof opaque partition (desirable).

Rear garden

3.14 There should be no exposed concrete walls in the rear garden.

Roofscape

3.15 Disappointed that the ugly telecoms tower is to remain on the roof. EH hope that this can be reconsidered (or at least, plans made to remove it at some future date).

Victorian Society

3.16 Support the application, which would help deliver a viable long term future for the building. Many of the alterations are sympathetic although there are reservations over the following -

- It is inappropriate to alter the windows immediately to each side of the entrance, as these are an important external feature of the building. Suggest the cills on the adjacent windows (away from the main entrance) are instead altered.
- The entrance lobby should be retained as existing, without the disabled lift. Disabled access should be through the aforementioned new entrance (to the side of the main entrance).
- Service lift - the existing dormer should be re-used if possible. Existing windows would preferably be retained and covered in this area, so the work is reversible.
- Original internal features should be retained where possible - timber doors, room numbers and radiators.
- Works in association with new bathrooms should be reversible.
- It is suggested where glazed walls/doors are to be removed (internally) and replaced with timber panels and then put back, it is suggested the panel behind the glazing is made fireproof, so the glazing can be retained as existing.

York Civic Trust

3.17 Support the proposed change of use to a high quality hotel. Raise the following points -

- If railings are to be used outside the building, they should be to match those existing on Station Rise, opposed to glass.
- Clarification is asked for of the following room 1 38 - no elevation drawing of conversion from window to door, the lift to the eastern side of the entrance would have a redundant door, a door to match the lobby bar to the west side of the building is suggested, windows are to be changed to doors in the bar lobby, but these are not shown on drawing 960/122, where cornices etc are to be removed, they should be kept for re-use, on the first floor hope that the alcove shelf in the ladies toilet is retained and the existing marble re-used, no details of how fireplaces will be re-instated, hope that panelled dado or fireplaces will be retained in areas where bathrooms are proposed, ask that strong rooms doors are retained where possible, as a feature of historic interest.

- Internal signs should be of quality and not an afterthought.
- Query whether the amount of on-site parking is adequate and ask that the developers look to gain further spaces (the developers may acquire/lease private parking spaces around the city).
- Would welcome the removal of the telecommunications mast on the roof.

Publicity

3.18 The application was publicised by site notice, press notice and letters of neighbour notification. No further representations have been received.

4.0 APPRAISAL

4.1 Key issues

- Justification
- Special historic interest of the listed building

4.2 Relevant planning policy

- PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment advises that applications for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals. They will need to show why works which would affect the character of a listed building would be desirable or necessary.
- It is a requirement of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve the special historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- Policy HE4 states that listed building consent will only be granted when there is no adverse effect on the character, appearance or setting of the building.

Main entrance

4.3 The main entrance would be adapted to receive a platform lift to one side of the lobby whilst the pavement would be raised slightly to overcome the two outside steps. In accordance with English Heritage's suggestion the external steps are to be retained (including design and shape) and moved toward the kerb with the ramp behind and the railings in the entrance lobby have been omitted. The windows either side of the main entrance are proposed to be altered so that one can receive luggage whilst the symmetry of the façade would be maintained. Other arrangements to give equal access into the building have been explored and discounted as the change in level from pavement to ground floor is too great to receive a ramp. The external glass balustrade has been opposed by English Heritage and others. Building Control advised the proposed glass balustrade can be replaced with a simple iron upstand and handrail and the plans have been revised accordingly.

Rear extensions

4.4 A new service zone would be required at each level of the building and this would be housed in an enlarged lift tower extension to be located on the rear elevation in the recess between the northwest wing and the central area. The tower would be set well back and would adopt the design of the wall and roof which it would cover up, so it would not compete with the architectural articulation of the building.

4.5 A single storey rear extension is proposed that would sit next to the plant room where the leisure/spa area is proposed. The plant room is an addition to the building, it is proposed to copy this extension.

4.6 Both extensions would be discreet and it is considered that, subject to materials and detailing, the extensions would not harm the special interest of the building.

Guestrooms

4.7 Individual guest rooms would fit within the cellular spaces of the building. A number of generic bathroom/lobby layouts have been explored to fit with the different positions of existing doors. This zoning arrangement would allow services to be integrated into rooms without damaging joinery. It also creates a fire-separation zone which means that existing doors can be retained without alteration. The cornice would be re-run around the sub-divided area to introduce a more intimate scale. A number of suites would be created on the upper floors and some of these would occupy the double height spaces of the attic floors, with mezzanine floors introduced. These would provide views out of the high level windows, thus the amenity of the rooms would be enhanced. The alterations would not affect existing architectural features, they would be reversible and would not harm the special historic interest of the building.

Ground floor

Redundant lift

4.8 The lift to the eastern side of the entrance will be rotated, making its existing entrance redundant. In accordance with the recommendation made by the Civic Trust, it has been agreed a door, that matches the door on the other side of the entrance, thus retaining symmetry, can be inserted to close off this opening. Details would be a condition of approval.

Dining area

4.9 The dining area adjacent the kitchen service area has been revised so the wall shared with the hall is retained, preserving the original form of the area.

First floor

4.10 In the pre-function room area (above the aforementioned dining room) partition walls will be removed to create a space where people can gather etc. This change is acceptable as it reverts to the original layout as there was an open space before the boardroom.

Service runs

4.11 Awaited is confirmation of how the extraction/filtration for the leisure area and kitchen would travel to the northeast point in the garden where it would be discharged. It is likely that the service runs would be hidden within/under the garden terrace. A condition requiring details of the routes, to ensure there is no harm to the buildings fabric is proposed.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The scheme submitted is the result of considerable thought and research in connection with the building. The proposed hotel and its associated facilities fit the existing plan and require few internal alterations. Alterations that are proposed are sympathetic, as are the proposed rear extensions. Officers have been advised that the architects shall be retained to follow through the scheme and are thus re-assured that conditions can be complied with to ensure works carried out will be sensitive to the building and in liaison with Conservation Officers.

5.2 It is proposed to remove recent unsympathetic additions such as partition walls and service runs. The scheme should help restore the building and make the most of its special historic interest by making it accessible to the general public.

5.3 Approval is recommended. Should members support the application it is to be sent to the Government Office to determine whether the Secretary of State wishes to call in the application as it concerns a grade II* listed building.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve following Sec of State Decision

1 TIMEL2 Development start within 3 yrs (LBC/CAC)

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved plans and other submitted details or any plans or details subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority as an amendment to the approved plans.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

3 The materials to be used externally on the service extension and the single storey extension to the leisure area shall match those of the existing building in colour, size, shape and texture.

Reason: To achieve a visually acceptable form of development.

4 Large scale details of the items listed below shall be submitted to and

approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development and the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- A) Blocking of original lift door area where lifts rotated (door to match lobby door on other side of reception area)
- B) Adapted windows and their surrounds either side of main entrance
- C) Entrance ramp including balustrade and planters
- D) Platform lift and alterations in the entrance lobby
- E) Blocking to glazed partitions including fire protection measures (method and materials to be agreed on site if necessary)
- F) New doors onto terrace including large scale details of joinery
- G) New access through the existing railings onto Station Rise
- H) New escape staircase in East wing
- I) Adaptions to corridor openings
- J) Internal lighting and luminaries
- K) Any fire-measures affecting the fabric of the building
- L) Any new internal doors

Reason: So that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied with these details.

- 5 New cornices within guest rooms shall match existing profiles.

Reason: To preserve the appearance of the listed building.

- 6 New partitions should be integrated so that they do not damage existing surfaces and details - by avoiding cornices, arises etc, and by being scribed around existing details.

Reason: To preserve the appearance of the listed building.

- 7 All disturbed surfaces must be made good to match surroundings (floors, walls and ceilings).

Reason: To preserve the appearance of the listed building.

- 8 A schedule of new openings and blocking of existing openings shall be provided including large scale details of any new joinery and making good.

Reason: To preserve the appearance of the listed building.

- 9 Prior to such development commencing a method statement for integrating plumbing routes and wiring shall be approved by the Local Planning Authority and the works implemented accordingly. Redundant pipework, cables and trunking must be removed.

Reason: So that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied with these details.

- 10 Prior to such development commencing a schedule for works/alterations to fireplaces including means of installation shall be approved by the Local Planning

Authority and the works implemented accordingly.

Reason: So that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied with these details.

11 All redundant doors and any other joinery shall be labelled for identification purposes and stored on site if they cannot be reused immediately in the building.

Reason: To protect items of special historic interest.

12 Prior to development of the leisure/spa facility the following details shall be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority,

- Structural engineers report to indicate the feasibility of such and any subsequent implications for the building.
- Details of the pool filtration system, including any external extract and ventilation.

Reason: To protect the listed building.

INFORMATIVE

The proposed pool/spa is subject to agreement of the aforementioned details. Should the aforementioned details be judged unduly harmful to the listed building, an alternative proposal for this part of the building would need to be considered.

13 Details of all machinery, plant and equipment (including service runs) to be installed in association with the kitchen facilities shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for written approval and the development carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the listed building and its appearance.

14 No development shall take place until there has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a detailed landscaping scheme for the garden area which shall illustrate hard (including confirmation of brickwork to the retaining wall) and soft measures, including the number, species, height and position of trees and shrubs to be planted.

This scheme shall be implemented within a period of six months of the completion of the development. Any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless alternatives are agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: So that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied with the variety, suitability and disposition of species within the site.

15 Prior to their installation a scheme for the adverts and signage to the building, including materials, size and means of fixing shall be approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the listed building and its appearance.

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

Notes to Applicant

1. REASON FOR APPROVAL

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposal, subject to the conditions listed above, would not cause undue harm to interests of acknowledged importance, with particular reference to the special historic interest of the listed building. As such the proposal complies with Policy HE4 of the City of York Local Plan Deposit Draft.

Contact details:

Author: Jonathan Kenyon Development Control Officer

Tel No: 01904 551323