

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee: West/Centre Area **Ward:** Guildhall
Date: 19th April 2007 **Parish:** Guildhall Planning Panel

Reference: 07/00345/LBC
Application at: Royal Oak Inn 18 Goodramgate York City Of York YO1 7LG
For: Removal of internal seating (Retrospective)
By: Darren Dickinson
Application Type: Listed Building Consent
Target Date: 23 April 2007

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The application relates to the Royal Oak public house in Goodramgate. The building is grade II listed, of C15 origin. It was extended in the C18th and C19th and was subject to restoration in 1934. It was originally built as a house, then converted to a public house.

1.2 The application is retrospective and concerns the snug area, a room to the right hand side of the Goodramgate entrance. The seating in the snug, which the applicant maintains was installed in the 1970's, has been removed and replaced with tables and chairs. The Council's Urban Design and Conservation section requested the application after the removal of the furniture was reported to the Council's enforcement section by CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale).

1.3 The application is brought to planning committee at the request of Councillor Brian Watson.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Conservation Area Central Historic Core
Listed building – grade II

2.2 Policies:

CYHE4 Listed Buildings

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Internal

Urban Design and Conservation – Support the application. State that the applicant has been unable to provide conclusive evidence that the seating had little historic value to the interior. Although written representations from customers state that the seating was installed in the 1970's, if the seating resembles that used in the backroom, as suggested by the applicant, then it is likely to be of 1930's origin. However, the integral features of the snug room are unchanged and the other two

rooms retain larger areas of seating of a similar type and have retained a more integrated interior design. It is considered the sacrifice of the snug, to make the public house a more family friendly place, is justified.

3.2 External

Planning Panel - No objection.

CAMRA - Have made representation as they are concerned that the removed seating was in keeping with the overall historic interior of the public house. CAMRA inform that the Royal Oak is one of only 13 public houses in York which substantially retains its historic interior. Although a formal objection has not been made, it is clear that CAMRA would prefer that the historic interior of the public house be retained.

Publicity (expiry date for comment 28.3) - No written representations have been made.

4.0 APPRAISAL

Key issues

4.1 The key issues are whether the proposed works are justified (desirable or necessary) and whether the affect on the special historic interest of the building is acceptable.

Relevant policy

4.2 PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment states that it is the role of the planning system to reconcile the need for economic growth with the need to protect the historic environment.

4.3 E4 of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan states that buildings and areas of special historic interest shall be afforded the strictest protection.

4.4 Policy HE4 of the Draft Local Plan, which states that listed building consent will only be granted when there is no adverse effect on the character, appearance or setting of the building.

Justification

4.5 The applicant states that the snug room is used as a family and dining room, where children are permitted. The room is suited to this use; it is the only area where children are legally permitted as it is the only one without a bar service area. The previous arrangement was cramped and limited, so it could not accommodate facilities such as high chairs. Furthermore it was unpopular with locals who prefer to use the two larger seating areas.

4.6 The revised layout provides a larger, spacious dining area; the room is now popular with families and is booked out on a regular basis. The applicant's stress that the facility enhances the economic prosperity of the public house as food sales

now make up a significant percentage of trade, without which the public house would struggle to be viable.

Affect on the special historic interest of the building

4.7 The applicant maintains and has provided written evidence that the removed seating was installed in the 1970's. One supporting letter comes from a solicitor (who resides on Lord Mayor's Walk), whom has been cross-examined by Conservation officers, another from a Master Mason at York Minster Stone Yard. The applicant states the seating was pushed up to the walls and not fixed in any way. The age of the seating is contended by Urban Design and Conservation officers, see 3.1. However, given that officers have not actually had sight of the removed seating, there is no conclusive evidence of when it was constructed or installed, or whether it was of any special historic importance. Importantly, although Conservation officers are unsure of the origin of the seating, they do not object to its removal.

4.8 It can be argued that the public house, as altered, has changed in character. The room with the appearance of a dining room has replaced the traditional snug area. However, the traditional public house ambience is retained in the two larger bar servery rooms. It is therefore considered that although the loss of the snug is regrettable, the alteration is a balance between retaining historic elements of the building and allowing it to change over time to remain viable and cater to modern demands.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 It is considered that the removal of the seating has provided an improved facility at the host premises which enhances its economic prosperity and appeals to a wider audience. Although the loss of the snug is regrettable, it is justified and the two main rooms of the public house adequately retain the historic character and interior of the building.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

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 E4 of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan (Alteration No.3 Adopted 1995) and Policy HE4 of the City of York Local Plan Deposit Draft.

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