

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**Date:** 6 June 2013                      **Ward:** Bishopthorpe  
**Team:** Major and                      **Parish:** Bishopthorpe Parish  
                    Commercial Team                      Council

**Reference:** 13/00629/LBC  
**Application at:** The Palace Bishopthorpe Road York YO23 2QE  
**For:** Installation of 2no. chandeliers in Great Hall following  
removal of 2no. plaster rose details on ceiling  
**By:** Church of England Church Commissioners  
**Application Type:** Listed Building Consent  
**Target Date:** 15 May 2013  
**Recommendation:** Approve

### 1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The Palace at Bishopthorpe is a building of high historic and architectural value dating from the 13th century and listed at grade I. It is situated within its own grounds close to the River Ouse in the Bishopthorpe conservation area. The building exhibits successive phases of construction and remodelling from the C13th to the present day.

1.2 It is proposed to introduce additional lighting into the Great Hall to enable the room to be used more effectively for conferences, other 'round table' meetings and by residents.

1.3 This application has been called in to Committee with a site visit by Councillor Brian Watson as he is concerned with the possible harm caused to the building by the proposal.

### 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Conservation Area GMS Constraints: Bishopthorpe CONF  
Listed Buildings GMS Constraints: Grade 1; Bishopthorpe Palace and Chapel  
Bishopthorpe Road

2.2 Policies: CYHE4Listed Buildings

### **3.0 CONSULTATIONS**

#### DESIGN, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 There is strong justification for improving the lighting in the hall and alternative schemes would be considered less effective and more harmful to the historic fabric. Proposals would cause minor harm to two of the altered C19th pendants by the removal of the bud terminals and there is the possibility of harm through general disturbance during fixing. In addition the general appearance of the ceiling would be adversely affected if the chandelier itself was hung too close to the ceiling. These issues should be covered through conditions. There are examples of similar schemes in houses with C17th interiors which have been successfully implemented and do not adversely affect aesthetic appreciation of the space eg Sudbury Derbyshire. Indeed improved lighting should better reveal the qualities of the interior.

#### ENGLISH HERITAGE

3.2 We regret that it is considered necessary to intervene in this elaborate ceiling in this manner, and we would have preferred a free-standing lighting arrangement, clear of the ceiling, to have been used. However it is our understanding that this is not considered to deliver the kind of lighting required in this case. We recommend that the bud details which are to be removed are carefully stored (as proposed) for future re-instatement.

#### BISHOPTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

3.3 The Parish Council have no objections to the scheme.

#### PUBLICITY

3.4 The application was advertised by site notice and press advert. No comments have been received.

### **4.0 APPRAISAL**

#### KEY ISSUES

- Impact on visual amenity and historic character of the listed building

#### RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Development Control Local Plan Policy HE4 states with regard to listed buildings that consent will only be granted for development where there is no adverse effect on the character, appearance or setting of the building.

4.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF), MARCH 2012, CHAPTER 12, PARAGRAPH 132 - National Planning Policy is now contained in the National Planning Policy Framework ( 2005) states that considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed by or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

#### IMPACT ON VISUAL AMENITY AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE LISTED BUILDING

4.3 The proposal to introduce additional lighting into the Great Hall is considered to be necessary as the existing lighting comes from the perimeter of this large room which results in low ambient light levels. In addition there is no 'task lighting' at all. Conditions for reading paperwork etc. in the central area are extremely poor and this limits the use of the wonderful space. The proposal is to hang two chandeliers from the ceiling in a manner similar to the single chandelier in the drawing room. To be effective the chandeliers would need to be located at two intersections of the beams rather than in the middle of the panels (as in the C18th drawing room) and their attachment would affect the decorative pendants as well as the appearance of the ceiling as a whole.

4.4 The Great Hall and Chapel formed the heart of the medieval palace building complex and therefore the Great Hall is of high evidential value, especially in its plan form, location and structural fabric. However the interior was entirely remodelled in the C17th after rebuilding of the east wall (facing the river) around 1660 by Archbishop Frewen (ref Historic Buildings Assessment, FAS Report July 2006). Although there have been further C18th and minor C19th alterations within the Hall, the highly ornate plaster ceiling with its irregularly spaced spine and cross beams and decorative panels is a C17th scheme, although the pendants themselves were reduced in size in the C19th. The room interior is of high aesthetic value and of historical importance.

4.5 To avoid making the proposed alterations to the ceiling, the agent has explored other options with the electrical contractors. Using additional perimeter sockets instead would require a new lighting circuit to be installed; this would affect the wood panelled walls and is likely to result in unsatisfactory surface cabling across the floor. Alternatively the introduction of floor sockets would damage the wide C18th floor boards and still lead to trailing cables. These measures would be regarded as being more invasive than the proposed scheme and the result would be less satisfactory in terms of the objectives.

4.6 There is strong justification for improving the lighting in the hall and alternative schemes would be considered less effective and more harmful to the historic fabric.

It is acknowledged that proposals would cause minor harm to two of the altered C19th pendants by the removal of the bud terminals and there is the possibility of harm through general disturbance during fixing. In addition the general appearance of the ceiling would be adversely affected if the chandelier itself was hung too close to the ceiling. These issues can be covered by condition if the application is approved. There are examples of similar schemes in houses with C17th interiors which have been successfully implemented and do not adversely affect aesthetic appreciation of the space e.g. Sudbury Derbyshire. Also it is felt that improved lighting would better reveal the qualities of the interior.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 The proposal may cause minor harm to the historic fabric of the building; however it is the least invasive method for improving the lighting and in turn, the use of the room. Approval is recommended.

## **COMMITTEE TO VISIT**

**6.0 RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

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

2      PLANS1      Approved plans - Drawings G3781-101 and 102 dated February 2013.

3      Prior to works commencing on site, a method statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority explaining how the work would be carried out step by step to minimize damage to the floor and the ceiling. This shall be developed in association with the contractor after preliminary investigations e.g. opening up from above using hand tools. The implications of any additional light switching arrangements shall also be described in the statement.

Reason: To protect the historic fabric of the listed building.

4      The existing bud detail shall be carefully removed by an experienced craftsman and stored on site in suitable conditions where it would not be damaged.

Reason: In the event of future re-instatement.

5      The fixing plate shall be masked by a specially designed cover plate which would replicate the form and detail of the original terminal so that the pendants appear complete. A large scale drawing of the fixing detail and cover plate (showing it in context) shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the historic fabric of the listed building.

6 The chandelier shall be hung well below the ceiling on slim hangers or chains concealing the wiring (in a similar manner to the chandelier in drawing room) so that visual separation is achieved.

Reason: To protect the appearance of the listed building.

## **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 historic fabric of the listed building. As such the proposal complies with Policies GP1 and HE4 of the City of York Development Control Local Plan.

### **2. STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE APPROACH**

In considering the application, the Local Planning Authority has implemented the requirements set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) in seeking solutions to problems identified during the processing of the application. The Local Planning Authority took the following steps in order to achieve a positive outcome:

Discussing alternative lighting schemes with the contractor  
Use of appropriate conditions

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