

COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: 17 November 2011 **Ward:** Guildhall
Team: Major and Commercial Team **Parish:** Guildhall Planning Panel

Reference: 11/02172/CAC
Application at: York City Art Gallery Exhibition Square York YO1 2EW
For: Demolition of hutment buildings to rear of art gallery.
By: Mr Michael Woodward
Application Type: Conservation Area Consent
Target Date: 7 October 2011
Recommendation: Approve

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The application affects the land to the rear (NW) of the York Art Gallery building. The site presently accommodates hutment buildings that were constructed during the second world war (1942), and a bowling green which is no longer in use.

1.2 The site is not allocated in the Local Plan for a particular land use. However it is within the Central Historic Core Conservation Area, the City Centre Area of Archaeological Importance and within the St Mary's Abbey Precinct - which includes the Museum Gardens area, King's Manor and the City Art Gallery. Part of the precinct (which is presently the museum gardens) is designated as a scheduled monument, as are the precinct walls to the St Mary's Abbey which form the north and western boundaries to the site.

1.3 Conservation Area Consent is sought for demolition of the hutments behind the art gallery and subsequent restoration of the site. The restoration proposed involves extending the existing lawn, installing footpaths around the site including a connection into the Museum Gardens (footpaths to be in a matching material to those in the gardens), and an area of bound gravel immediately behind the gallery. It is intended the area where the hutments are will be used as an outdoor display area for sculptures.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Areas of Archaeological Interest GMS Constraints: City Centre Area 0006
Conservation Area GMS Constraints: Central Historic Core CONF
Listed Buildings GMS Constraints: Grade 2;
City Art Gallery Exhibition Square York 0615

2.2 Policies:

CYHE5 Demolition of Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

DESIGN AND CONSERVATION

3.1 Officers advise that the St Mary's Abbey Precinct Conservation Management Plan (2005) prepared for the Museums Trust suggests that whilst the hutments are of local interest in the context of the overall history of the site and the WWII story in York they do not have any wider significance. The structures are of prefab concrete frame construction with clay brick infill panels and asbestos sheet roofing which was common for buildings of this type at the time. There are many surviving examples nationally and locally at Elvington and other airfields.

3.2 The buildings are of no particular merit architecturally and their historic interest is of local interest only. The buildings are in poor condition and beginning to deteriorate more significantly. They detract from the immediate setting of the St Mary's Abbey precinct. Officers support the analysis within the management plan and consider their demolition is acceptable, subject to the appropriate recording being undertaken.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

3.3 Officers support the principle of bringing the land to the NW of the art gallery into a positive use, as part of the art gallery, the public realm and as an extension to the existing Museum Gardens. The hutments are deemed to be of some historic and communal value, but their continued use is compromised by their high asbestos content and poor condition. The removal is compensated for by the public benefits and enhancements to other heritage assets and as the hutments will be subject to a recording and report of their history. EH recommend that the landscaping works at the rear of the gallery are temporary in nature at this stage, so the alterations do not compromise long term change and enhancement of the gardens.

PUBLICITY

3.4 Three objection comments have been received. Grounds as follows:

- The hutments have historical significance; they have a connection to the airmen of WWII. The Canadian link is also important (as it is in the Minster memorial). They are part of York's wartime history. A new development should incorporate at

least one of the buildings, properly conserved, as part of preserving the past of York - and also the history of this country.

- No consideration given to the preservation and reuse of the buildings. These are a rare survival in an urban setting, which should be re-used. There is deemed inadequate justification for demolition and the replacement landscaping would be 'uninspiring'.
- The hutments are not unduly compromised by asbestos, with asbestos only in the roof sheeting and added cladding. It is asked if any of the hutment structures could be relocated to Eden Camp.
- Security of King's Manor when site open to public (due to height of the boundary wall between the sites).
- Potential adverse impact on health due to removal of asbestos hutments.

4.0 APPRAISAL

KEY ISSUES

4.1 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Act) Act 1990 conservation area consent is required for the demolition of unlisted buildings which are over 115 m cubed. In making a decision the material consideration is the requirement (of the aforementioned act) to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. Policy HE5 of the Local Plan relates to demolition in conservation areas. HE5 advises that in cases where demolition is justified, considering the merits of alternative proposals, it will be required that no demolition takes place until redevelopment has been agreed and will take place. Issues of security and asbestos removal are covered in the companion planning application.

ASSESSMENT

4.2 The existing buildings are dilapidated and vacant, and detract from the appearance of the conservation area. Their removal, and replacement with soft landscaping will improve the setting. Following English Heritage comment and through discussion with officers the landscaping scheme has been amended to provide more grassed areas, and the hardstanding immediately behind the gallery area can easily be altered, if desired, in future. The footpath into Museum Gardens will be of matching materials to the footpaths in the gardens. Officers are satisfied with the landscaping proposals, it is therefore recommended consent be granted for demolition of the hutments.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Demolition of the hutments is supported as the scheme to redevelop the site will enhance the appearance of the conservation area. Conditions concerning the subsequent redevelopment are detailed in the companion application for planning permission.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

1 Following demolition the site shall be restored as shown on the proposed landscaping scheme; drawing GHA 1101 10 06B.

This scheme shall be implemented within a period of six months of the completion of the demolition. 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: In the interests of the appearance of the conservation area.

2 TIME2 LBC/CAC Commence within 3 years

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 character and appearance of the conservation area. As such the proposal complies with Policy HE5 of the City of York Development Control Local Plan.

Contact details:

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