

COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: 5 December 2012 **Ward:** Guildhall
Team: Major and **Parish:** Guildhall Planning Panel
Commercial Team

Reference: 12/02879/LBC
Application at: Borders, 3 Little Stonegate York
For: Internal alterations including reconfiguration of staircase at left end and stair up to mezzanine level, enlargement of existing openings into main space, installation of partition walls and bar (at gallery level) and removal of raised floors.
By: ARC Inspirations LLP
Application Type: Listed Building Consent
Target Date: 15 October 2012
Recommendation: Approve

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The application relates to 3 Little Stonegate which is grade 2 listed. The building was originally a Methodist Chapel, built in 1851. In 1901 it was altered and converted into a printing works, in 1998 it was converted into a retail premises, and linked to 1-5 Davygate. The Borders store closed in 2010 and the host premises have been vacant since. In 2011 1-5 Davygate became a separate retail unit, the connecting stairs between the premises were removed and most of the openings on the side of the host building were sealed or in-filled.

1.2 Listed building consent is sought for changes in association with introducing a bar/restaurant into the building. The main changes are as follows:

- Reconfiguration of the secondary stair to provide a means of escape that complies with Building Regulations.
- Installation of a riser between the ground floor kitchen and roof for kitchen extraction system.
- Widening of openings between main stair/entrance area and main space at ground and first floor level.
- Basement - installation of partitions to accommodate back of house facilities and toilets.
- Ground floor - partitions to accommodate kitchen area and disabled w/c.
- First floor - compartmentalisation of secondary stair (for fire safety), reconfigured stairs up to mezzanine level, insertion of suspended bar infilling part of 'void' between ground and first floor levels.

1.3 The application is brought to committee at the request of Councillor B Watson, to assess the impact on the listed building.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Areas of Archaeological Interest: City Centre Area

Conservation Area: Central Historic Core

Listed Buildings: Grade 2; 3 Little Stonegate York YO1 2AX

2.2 Policies:

CYHE4 Listed Buildings

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

Design, Conservation and Sustainable Development

3.1 No objections. Advise that infilling the semi-circular end of the gallery harms the special interest of the building. The harm is less than substantial, and the change is (notionally) reversible. The harm is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the building back into use, given the problems of otherwise finding a suitable use, and occupation of the building. Note that consent has already been granted in 2011 for alterations to the secondary stair.

English Heritage

3.2 Response pending on revised scheme.

Guildhall Planning Panel

3.3 Object due to the loss of retail space that would result.

Publicity

3.4 No representations have been made.

4.0 APPRAISAL

Key Issues

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework advises it is desirable development sustains or enhances heritage assets and keeps them in a use which is consistent with their conservation. Where development will lead to harm, it will only be

acceptable if the harm is out-weighed by any public benefits the proposals would bring.

Assessment

Reconfiguration of the secondary stair to provide a means of escape that complies with Building Regulations.

4.2 The secondary staircase does not comply with Building Regulations in terms of providing an adequate means of escape. In the 2011 application for the youth cafe, which was approved at committee, consent was granted for reconfiguration of the stair. This is again proposed. Since the sub-division of the former Borders store there is no other alternative means of escape and this proposal is therefore justified.

Installation of kitchen and associated equipment and ground floor w/c

4.3 A riser is proposed between the ground floor and the roof; this would not damage fabric of architectural or historic importance. Details of the external duct are required as a condition of the companion planning application although the duct would not be prominent due to its location and required scale. Partitions are proposed to enclose part of the kitchen and a w/c. The partitions would not unduly compromise the understanding of the historic plan form of the building and historic fabric will not be lost. As such the works are not objected to.

Widening of openings between main stair/entrance area and main space and ground and first floor level

4.4 The dimensions of the openings and lobby areas between the main stair and the main rooms are not original. It is proposed to remove the lobby areas and widen the openings. There would be no loss of historic fabric and no harm to the historic or architectural importance of the building.

Basement

4.5 The lift between basement and ground floor level, added in the late C20, would be replaced and partitions added in the basement area. The historic importance of the building that remains is predominantly the ground and first floor layout, where there is evidence of the original use. The historic importance of the basement area is low and there are no objections to the installation of partitions in this area. A condition can ensure the display of the 12 commandments in the basement is retained on site.

Ground floor

4.6 The suspended floor added in the late C20 would be removed, returning to the original level; this is a welcome change.

First floor and mezzanine level above

4.7 For fire safety it is a requirement that the stairwells are protected in case of fire. As such it is proposed to compartmentalise the secondary stair. The partition walls proposed would be concentrated to the side of the space and would therefore not unduly compromise the setting.

4.8 It is deemed necessary by the applicants to insert a semi-circular shaped bar which would overhang part of the open space between the ground floor area and what originally was the upper gallery to the chapel. This alteration somewhat undermines the understanding of the building, it would become more difficult to understand the original layout (considering that the original stepped floor of the gallery has already been covered over to allow this level to be useable floor space). The applicants are unwilling to remove this element of the scheme, they are of the opinion it is integral to the plans for the building.

4.9 On balance the bar insertion can be accepted. The premises have been empty since 2010 and the plan form does not viably lend itself to many uses without some degree of intervention. In such cases English Heritage advise that Local Planning Authorities show flexibility to allow listed buildings to be occupied. The proposed installation would not lead to unacceptable harm; it would be reversible and connected to fabric which is not of historic interest (where the gallery floor has been made level). It would also read as an extension/addition due to the change in detailing and materials used.

Mezzanine

4.10 It is proposed to bring back into use the mezzanine level and the original character of the space would be highlighted. This is a welcome aspect of the proposals. The access stair would be replaced and this has been agreed on site with Conservation Officers and English Heritage, as the existing stair and its balustrade is not original or of significant historic interest.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The building has been vacant since 2010 and it has been difficult to find a new occupant given the plan form. The proposals would secure a new use for the building and all the changes proposed, apart from the new bar, are supported by strong justification.

5.2 Officer's accept the bar 'feature' as it would be removable, it would not damage historic fabric and would read as a modern intervention. The works are therefore considered as having 'less than substantial harm'. In assessing such harm the National Planning Policy Framework advises this can be allowed if the public benefits out-weigh the harm and this is deemed to be the case in this instance.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve Committee to visit

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

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans:-

Floor plans and elevations 208B and 209D
Sections 210 - 1C, 2C, 3C

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

3 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.

New bar at first floor level shown in context, to include relationship between the bar and the glazed screen and balustrade at first floor level, connection points for the glazed wall display and soffit details.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the listed building and to ensure the addition reads as a contemporary extension from the original layout.

4 New partition walls and details shall be scribed around original walls and details where applicable.

Reason To protect the appearance of the listed building.

5 The framed Ten Commandments which are presently located within the basement of the building shall remain onsite.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the historic interest and understanding of the building.

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

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 impact on the listed building. As such the proposal complies with Policy HE4 of the City of York Development Control Local Plan.

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