

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee: West/Centre Area **Ward:** Guildhall
Date: 19 June 2008 **Parish:** Guildhall Planning Panel

Reference: 08/00359/LBC
Application at: Guy Fawkes Hotel 25 High Petergate York YO1 7HP
For: Internal and external alterations including new signs and gas lanterns to front elevations, new windows at front first and second floor level
By: Debretton Contracting Ltd
Application Type: Listed Building Consent
Target Date: 9 April 2008

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 This application seeks listed building consent for works that have now taken place to this Grade II* Listed Building within the Central Historic Core Conservation Area. The Guy Fawkes Hotel dates from 1700-1707 and forms part of a group of Grade II* Listed Buildings at Nos. 25, 27 and 29 High Petergate. The Cottage attached to the rear of No. 25 High Petergate is a Grade II Listed Building that dates from the eighteenth century with earlier origins. The Cottage is linked to the hotel by a nineteenth century wing to the rear. The adjacent property at No. 23 High Petergate is a Grade 1 Listed Building dating from 1779. Opposite lies the Church of St. Michael le Belfrey, a Grade I Listed Building and beyond in Minster Yard, the Cathedral Church of St. Peter, York Minster, a Grade I Listed Building.

1.2 The range of alterations are proposed to the listed building at No. 25 High Petergate and the Cottage to the rear that would enable the continued use of the buildings as a hotel. These include-

- a) External alterations to the front elevation-
 - new signage
 - new lighting
 - new windows at first and second floor

- b) External Alterations to the Rear Courtyard-
 - replacement and extended paving
 - replacement fire door to kitchen
 - emergency lighting to yard
 - new fire exit door to neighbouring property

- c) Internal alterations
 - new fire surround and hearth in Dining Room 2
 - new timber studwork partitions between Dining Room 1 and 2, and bar area
 - new timber flooring to hallway

- installation of gas lanterns to ground floor public rooms
- modifications to a fire resistant glazed screen to the second floor with timber panelling

The original proposals included the removal of a fire escape stair in the rear courtyard. This has now been deleted in order to comply with Fire Regulations. The proposals have been the subject of pre-application discussions and recent negotiations on site with additional plans and information being received.

1.3 The application is presented to the West/City Centre Planning Sub-Committee for a determination following a site visit at the request of Councillor Brian Watson because of the implications of the proposed alterations on the listed building.

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

Listed Buildings Multiple (Spatial)

2.2 Policies:

CYHE4
Listed Buildings

CYGP1
Design

CYHE8
Advertisements in historic locations

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 INTERNAL

Environment, Conservation and Sustainable Development- No objections to internal works subject to conditions and revised plans. Proposed lanterns and glass proposed in upper windows would not be acceptable.

3.2 EXTERNAL

Guildhall Planning Panel- Object as this is the latest in a series of retrospective applications made by the owner, for various sites and works that do not conform to normal planning procedure, and demonstrate a breach of planning guidelines. Consider that he should be answerable.

English Heritage- Recommend that the application be determined in accordance with national and local planning policy guidance provided-

- a) the 18th century balustrade on the second floor is unaffected by the works to the glass screen
- b) the new glass in the upper windows on the front elevation is not completely 'dead flat' to give appearance

Conservation Area Advisory Panel- Considered that the alterations to the window were acceptable and raised no objections to the removal of the fire escape. Objected to the introduction of gas lamps and felt that the signage on the string course is inappropriate.

The application was advertised in the local press and by site notice, neighbours were notified, and the expiry date for consultation was 26 March 2008.

4.0 APPRAISAL

4.1 Key Issue

- Impact on the special interest of the Grade II* Listed Building

POLICY CONTEXT

4.2 Policy HE8 of the City of York Deposit Development Control Local Plan states that within conservation areas, or on listed buildings, advertisements will be expected to comply with Policy GP21 and consist of: a) a design and scale that respects the character and appearance of the area; and b) good quality materials that are sympathetic to the surface to which they are attached. Policy HE4 seeks to protect the special interest of Listed Buildings by ensuring that there would be no adverse impact on the character, appearance or setting of a listed building from any works. These policies reflect the guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 15 " Planning and the Historic Environment " and Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 19 " Outdoor Advertisement Control." Policy GP1 of the Local Plan is a general design policy that inter alia seeks to ensure that proposals respect or enhance the local environment and are compatible with neighbouring buildings, spaces and character of the area.

ASSESSMENT

4.3 The Guy Fawkes Hotel is situated in a highly sensitive location, close to the Minster and opposite the Church of St. Michael le Belfrey, at the heart of the Central Historic Core Conservation Area. The proposed works are almost at the stage of completion by the applicant.

External Alterations to the Front Elevation

4.4 The previous one-over-one upper windows have been replaced with multi-pane sash windows that complement the fenestration pattern of the adjacent listed buildings. In general, they are consistent with the age, style and character of the listed building and the details of the mouldings are acceptable. Concern relates to the new glass which is a "flat" glass with a modern appearance that does not have an authentic appearance for the age of the listed building. Replacement glass is available to buy that would be more sympathetic in appearance to the age of the building and English Heritage recommends that this more appropriate replacement glass is used in this instance. Members are advised that there are very visible advantages from the one-over-one upper windows being replaced with windows that suit the age and style of the listed building and the neighbouring listed buildings. Ideally the new windows should have the most suitable glass, but this has to be weighed against the upper location of the windows and the visual improvement that results from the more compatible multi-pane style of windows. On balance it is this officer's view that the current situation represents a significant, overall improvement to the upper windows that would outweigh the need for their glass to be replaced. This would not have been the situation if the ground floor windows had been replaced.

4.5 The existing hanging sign was illuminated by two large lighting units attached to the front elevation of the building that did appear to have Listed Building or advertisement consent. The units have now been removed from the front elevation, and it is intended that they would be replaced with discreet trough lighting attached to the hanging sign and three gas lamps at ground level. Previously there was one carriage lamp at the entrance to the hotel. As this is a night time use, it is appreciated that a degree of illumination is required and the proposed method of high level illumination would have the advantage of removing heavy, inappropriate fixtures from the front elevation of the building. Appropriately designed discreet trough lighting to the existing hanging sign would be subtler and improve on the type of illumination to the sign.

4.6 The applicant was asked to consider a reduction in the number of gas lamps from three fittings to one fitting to reduce the impact of low level lighting, visual clutter, and insensitive additions on this Grade II* Listed Building in this historically important street with little illumination. The applicant is unwilling to comply with this request as he considered that they are an essential part of the image of the use of the building. The three gas lanterns make a strong visual statement about the use of the building when viewed along High Petergate. Their fittings are large in proportion to the building, do not relate to the entrance but extend along the frontage of the listed building, quasi-decorative fittings that are not true to the Georgian period of the Listed Building, excessive in number, and ultimately fail to preserve the important front facade of the Grade II* Listed Building. They impose a "coaching inn" appearance to the frontage of the building that is at odds with the character and appearance of this early Georgian town house/ hotel that is part of a group of three properties with a strong unified identity. Carriage lamps are generally used to light an entrance to a building and are normally associated with doorways. They are not

normally used to advertise the length of the front elevation. The Conservation Area Advisory Panel do not support the introduction of gas lamps to the front elevation.

4.7 New signage has been applied to the string course above the ground floor windows on the front elevation of the listed building. This hand painted signage has been hand drawn by a craftsman from Sweden. Its design would be a departure within the context of this grouping of listed buildings in High Petergate where string courses are not painted. One of the most important architectural expressions of this age of building (early 1700s) is the strong string courses that unite the buildings. They form a very important architectural element on the facade of the building and form part of its special architectural interest. The Council has previously resisted painted signs on string courses in the area and in other parts of the conservation area as they harmful to this essential architectural feature. The Conservation Area Advisory Panel has also endorsed this view. The overpainting of the string course diminishes the role of the string course on the front of the building and would create an unwelcome precedent that would significantly harm the special interest of the Grade II* Listed buildings and this part of the conservation area contrary to Policies HE4, HE8, and GP1 of the Local Plan, and related national planning guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, " Planning and the Historic Environment" and Planning Policy Guidance Note No.19 " Outdoor Advertisement Control. "

4.8 To the rear of the building, revised plans retain the existing fire escape and the associated alterations to the rear of the building have been deleted from the scheme. A new door has been inserted in the party wall with the property at 23 High Petergate. Although acceptable in principle, the applicant will have to provide drawn details for approval. The paving works are acceptable and improve the appearance of the rear yard. Similarly the repainting of the external walls to the rear courtyard would improve the appearance of the rear courtyard and the setting of the listed building. Further details of the door to the kitchen from the yard would be required to ensure that the design of a suitable fire door would match the character of the Listed Building.

Internal Alterations

4.9 The new fireplace is in situ and is acceptable. The timber studwork partitions recreate the original divisions between the compartments on the ground floor and are acceptable. The oak floor boards in the hallway and the gas lanterns have been successfully installed without harming the listed building.

4.10 An existing fire resistant glazed screen to the second floor would be modified by applying timber panelling to both faces of the screen. The original handrail and balustrades run up the staircase to the second floor and meet with a modern handrail and balustrades at second floor landing level. The removal of the modern handrail and balustrades appears reasonable, subject to the introduction of a carefully detailed half newel to terminate the original period balustrades and handrail running up the staircase to the second floor landing. The design of the half newel and the detail of the applied timber panelling should be submitted for the approval of the planning authority if Members are minded to recommend approval of the application.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 In general, the internal works have been implemented to avoid harm to the listed building or could be appropriately conditioned to ensure that the special interest of the Listed Building is not harmed. On balance it is considered that the visual improvement of the replacement of the large upper panes of glass on the front elevation with multi-frames would outweigh the degree of harm caused by the type of glass that has been used in their replacement.

5.2 The main concerns relate to the introduction of the three decorative lamps and the overpainting of the string coursing that have been applied to the front elevation of the Grade II* Listed Building. It is considered that the loss of the string coursing harms the strong horizontal emphasis in High Petergate created by "the banding" along the front elevation of the terrace, interrupts the rhythm of the terrace and the unity of the group of three buildings that form a distinctive group of early Georgian buildings, and would create a precedent that would detract from the character of the many similar historic buildings in the city centre that are re-used for commercial purposes.

5.2 It is considered that the Local Planning Authority has a duty to preserve important front facades. In this case, the building forms part of a significant terrace within the historic core of York that is visible from the Minster precinct and is architecturally and historically important in its own right. The subdued commercial appearance of the ground floor uses in this part of High Petergate would be harmfully altered by the addition of carriage lamps along the frontage of the building in this lowly lit, historic street. These quasi-decorative fittings are not characteristic of the building and fail to reflect the historic period of the property. They increase the level of illumination of the facade which together with the over-painting of the string course superimposes an identity on the facade of the building that is contrived and harmful to the special interest of the Grade II* Listed Building, contrary to adopted planning policy and national planning guidance. Although the applicant has cited commercial reasons and an improvement to the building by the removal of existing bulky light fittings on the front elevation that support the proposals to the front elevation, it is considered that these reasons do not outweigh the harm to the front elevation from the painted string course and the carriage lamps. It is recommended that Listed Building consent is not granted.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

1 The over-painting of the string course results in the loss of distinctive string coursing harmful to the strong horizontal emphasis in High Petergate created by "the visual banding" along the front elevation of the terrace, interrupts the rhythm of the terrace and the unity of the group of three buildings that form a distinctive group of

early Georgian buildings, and creates a precedent that would detract from the character of the many similar historic buildings in the city centre that are re-used for commercial purposes. The number and position of the carriage lamps are excessive and unacceptably increase illumination in High Petergate close to the Minster, and the quasi-decorative lamps fail to reflect the historic period of the Grade II* Listed Building. Together the changes to the front facade of the Listed Building create an appearance that would be detrimental to the historic and architectural character and visual amenity of the Listed Building, contrary to Policies HE4, HE8, and GP1 and related national planning guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, "Planning and the Historic Environment" and Planning Policy Guidance Note No.19 "Outdoor Advertisement Control. "

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

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