

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**Committee:** West/Centre Area

**Ward:** Guildhall

**Date:** 18 March 2010

**Parish:** Guildhall Planning Panel

**Reference:** 10/00347/LBC

**Application at:** Crabtree And Evelyn Ltd 7 St Helens Square York YO1 8AN

**For:** Infilling of basement vaults to provide additional structural support

**By:** Mr Colin Hughes

**Application Type:** Listed Building Consent

**Target Date:** 28 April 2010

**Recommendation:** Delegated Authority to Approve

### 1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 Crabtree and Evelyn occupies No.7 St. Helens Square, which comprises two adjoining Grade II listed buildings, each originally a house and shop. No 7 St. Helens Square dates from the mid eighteenth century with nineteenth century alterations and the adjoining property at No.'s 1 and 1A Stonegate dates from the mid nineteenth century with twentieth century alterations. The property occupies a prominent location within the Central Historic Core Conservation Area within the setting of a number of listed buildings.

1.2 Listed building consent is sought for works to address the structural failure of the brick vaults at basement level through the infilling of 2 No. brick vaulted chambers with foamed concrete. The application has been brought to Committee at the request of Councillor B Watson on the basis of concerns that alternative options have not been fully explored.

1.3 Planning, listed building and advertisement consent have recently been granted for the repainting of the shopfront and signage and the siting of replacement air conditioning units on the main roof.

### 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; 1 Stonegate York YO1 2AN 0645

Listed Buildings GMS Constraints: Grade 2; 3 Stonegate York YO1 2AN 0646

Listed Buildings GMS Constraints: Grade 2 Star; St Helen's Church St Helen's Square York 0648

Listed Buildings GMS Constraints: Grade 2; 7 St Helens Square York YO1 8QN 0644

## 2.2 Policies:

CYHE4  
Listed Buildings

## 3.0 CONSULTATIONS

### 3.1 Internal

Urban Design and Conservation - The works to address the structural failure of the brick vaults at basement level situated below St. Helen's Square appear to be generally acceptable. Comments relating to the method statement will be reported at the meeting.

City Archaeologist - Comments to be reported at the meeting

### 3.2 External

Guildhall Planning Panel - Any comments to be reported at the meeting.

Consultation Period Expiry Date - 26th March 2010. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

## 4.0 APPRAISAL

### 4.1 Key Issues

- impact on the character and special interest of the Grade II listed building.

4.2 Local Plan policy HE4 states that consent will only be granted for internal or external alterations where there is no adverse effect on the character, appearance or setting of the listed building.

4.3 Crabtree and Evelyn occupies No.7 St. Helens Square, which comprises two adjoining Grade II listed buildings. Listed Building consent is sought to infill two of its basement vaults with foamed concrete with a layer of high density polystyrene around the foamed infill. 2 No. paving stones on St. Helens Square would be lifted to allow the concrete to be pumped directly into the vaults.

4.4 The structural engineers report, which accompanies the application, explains that the two brick vaulted chambers run approximately 2.5 metres beyond the building line beneath St. Helen's Square. The vaults are fully propped with slender timber sections and there is evidence of significant past damage to the vaults, partially hidden by the propping and structural cracking below the springing level.

The report considers it likely that the damage has been caused by vehicle parking above and states that the area is vulnerable to future wheel loading, which could lead to partial collapse of the vaults, if action is not taken.

4.5 With respects to alternative solutions to addressing the structural failings of the basement, the structural engineer confirms that repair or strengthening of the vaults is a possibility. However, in view of the shallow depth of construction available and the potential for high vehicle point loads, the introduction of a suitable spanning element over the basement cross walls is likely to require the destruction of the majority of the original vault masonry. It is the Engineers opinion that the timber props should be replaced in such a way that the existing masonry is evenly supported and should be sealed off to remove a potentially hazardous void from the main basement area.

4.6 The proposed method of infilling with a foamed concrete is considered to be an established way to achieve support of a basement void. A membrane would be placed against the masonry, which would allow for it be removed cleanly in the future, allowing full archaeological investigation if required.

4.7 In terms of the impact of the proposed works on the fabric of the listed building and in the context of Local Plan policy HE4, the Conservation Officer is satisfied that the proposal is in line with good conservation practice as it preserves the historic fabric in situ and is reversible. A photographic record of the vaults has been provided.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 The proposal to infill 2 of the brick vaulted chambers beneath 7 St. Helens Square with foamed concrete, is considered to be an acceptable means of addressing the structural failings of the basement. Whilst the vaults would be infilled, this option would preserve the historic fabric in situ and would be reversible. Officers are satisfied that alternative options have been explored and that the works have been justified. The application is therefore considered to accord with Local Plan policy HE4 and on this basis, Officers seek delegated authority to approve the application once the consultation period has expired.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATION:** Delegated Authority to Approve

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

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

Cluttons Basement plan received on 2nd March 2010

Method Statement received on 2nd March 2010

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried

out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

## **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 fabric of the Grade II listed building. As such the proposal complies with Planning Policy Guidance 15 : Planning and the Historic Environment and Policy HE4 of the City of York Development Control Local Plan.

#### **Contact details:**

**Author:** Rachel Tyas Development Control Officer (Wed - Fri)

**Tel No:** 01904 551493