

COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: 19 August 2010 **Ward:** Guildhall
Team: West/Centre Area **Parish:** Guildhall Planning Panel

Reference: 10/01090/LBC
Application at: De Grey Rooms St Leonards Place York YO1 7HB
For: Internal alterations including disabled access, additional sanitary facilities, insertion of mezzanine floor in Oak Room, and removal of bar, stage and suspended laylight in Ballroom
By: Mr Ian Daniels
Application Type: Listed Building Consent
Target Date: 13 July 2010
Recommendation: Approve

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 This application and the related planning application were deferred from the previous West Planning Sub- Committee in order to allow Members to visit the site. The agent would like to express his apologies to the Members for the inability to access the premises for the programmed site visit in July. The previous report follows and has been updated to include the consultation responses from English Heritage, the agent's response to the English Heritage response, and comments received from the Council's Archaeologist.

1.2 This application seeks listed building consent for works associated with the proposed change of use of the De Grey Rooms for use as theatre workshops and ancillary theatre uses that include rehearsal space, costume making, costume hire and storage. The proposal would result in the Theatre Royal occupying the building as the sole tenant.

1.3 The proposed works would include:

INTERNAL PROPOSALS-

- improved accessibility to the ground and first floors for all users with installation of a platform lift from the side door (basement level) to the ground floor and a stair climber lift fitted to the main staircase to give access to the first floor
- the provision of a wheelchair accessible toilet and baby changing room on the ground floor
- construction of a mezzanine floor in the Oak Room
- removal of a modern 'plastic' suspended ceiling in the ballroom to reveal the glazed lantern
- removal of modern service hoist and restoration of service stair

- removal of internal mechanical ducts
- removal of goods hoist between the basement and former tourist information counter
- upgrade of certain doors to meet fire standards
- removal of bar fittings and modern stage fittings
- refurbishment of existing chandeliers
- two first floor rooms combined as a single office
- removal of modern partitioning in the basement to create a more flexible storage area
- new, larger access to balcony in the ballroom.

EXTERNAL PROPOSALS-

- the formation of a level access to an existing side door create a disabled access
- removal of redundant drainage

1.4 The agent has advised that an assessment of the effect of the works on the heating and ventilation of parts of the building will be carried out, and that the mechanical ventilation system will be redesigned (to include the removal of unsightly and prominent ventilation ducts). The related application for planning permission is pending a decision- LPA Ref. 10/01089/LBC.

CONTEXT

1.5 The building is an example of an early Victorian Assembly Room built by private subscription in 1841-2. It is associated with Col Rt Hon Earl De Grey KG and officers of the Yorkshire Hussars who had an annual assembly in York, though the scale of the principal room, reception areas and large kitchens made it suitable for various types of meeting and exhibitions. It was designed by the notable York architect GT Andrews and is a good example of late Regency architectural design. It is listed at Grade 11* and it is situated within the Central Historic Core conservation area adjacent to Bootham Bar.

1.6 Councillor Brian Watson has requested that the listed building and planning applications are referred to the West/ Central Sub- Planning Committee for determination because they relate to an important city centre building.

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

City Boundary GMS Constraints: York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams GMS Constraints: Central Area 0002

Listed Buildings GMS Constraints: Grade 2*; Tourist Information Centre De Grey Rooms St Leonar 0669

2.2 Policies:

CYHE4

Listed Buildings

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 INTERNAL

Design, Conservation and Sustainable Development (Design and Conservation)- No objections

Design, Conservation and Sustainable Development (Archaeology)- No objections but watching brief condition required if permission granted

3.2 EXTERNAL

Guildhall Planning Panel- No objections

English Heritage- No objections to the principle subject to clarification of lift types and conditions that ensure detailed drawings are submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Consider there is significant public benefit in increasing access to the first floor that should be weighed against the less than substantial harm that would result from the proposal.

National Amenity Societies- No response at time of writing

4.0 APPRAISAL

KEY ISSUE

- Impact on the special interests of the listed building

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

4.1 National Guidance- Planning Policy Statement 5 " Planning for the Historic Environment " seeks to ensure that the special characteristics of listed buildings and conservation areas are not adversely affected by inappropriate developments.

4.2 Local Plan - Policy HE4 of the Local Plan states that consent will only be granted when there is no adverse effect on the character, appearance or setting of listed buildings.

ASSESSMENT

4.3 The majority of interventions proposed are small scale in nature and would not affect the historic or architectural significance of the building. The upper rooms survive intact and several proposals would enhance the building such as taking down the C20th suspended ceiling below the central lantern of the assembly room, removing the cocktail bar fittings from the first floor reception room, detaching the late C20th stage from beneath the minstrel's gallery, and restoring the service staircase by removing the hoist.

INTERNAL ALTERATIONS

4.4 The interventions with the greatest impact would affect the "Oak Room" and the main staircase.

Oak Room

4.5 In the 1930s, a restaurant and tearoom were created out of the former two-storey kitchen to the rear of the building. The room was relined in plaster with oak strips and a new oak staircase was introduced to give direct access for the public from the ground floor to the basement restaurant. A serving hatch was formed at basement level. It is proposed to reuse this space in the Oak Room for costume making, storage and costume hire and additional floor-space would be formed by inserting a mezzanine floor across the room at ground floor level. This would be a timber floor supported on steel posts (encased) which could be removed without damaging the walls or staircase. Further clarification of the bearing capacity and condition of the original floor would be required to assess whether strengthening work would be required and/or original floor coverings needed protection. The new floor would alter the spatial condition of the original Oak Room but subject to conditions that the protection of any original floor coverings, the harm to this secondary area of the building would be less than substantial with the benefit of being reversible. The additional floor space is required to make the whole scheme more viable and the proposals therefore meet the justification tests of policy HE9.4 (i) & (ii) of Planning Policy Statement 5.

4.6 For safety reasons, additional space is required at the head of the later staircase to the Oak Room and a new partition would replace the existing late C20th partition on a different alignment. This alteration would not be detrimental to the special interests of the listed building.

Main Staircase/ Access Improvements

4.7 The main staircase is located off the main entrance to the ground floor and is not noticeable from the front of the building. It is cantilevered and has broad steps with a timber handrail supported by cast-iron vine scroll balusters. It is proposed to introduce a stair lift over the staircase as there is currently no lift provision. This measure is proposed as an interim solution whilst the building operates as a stand-alone facility.

4.8 The stair lift would be a domestic style chairlift consisting of a fold-down seat travelling around the outside of the staircase. Fortunately the installation would favour the side adjacent to the plastered wall away from the decorative balustrade. Whilst the staircase is not immediately apparent on entering the building, the stair lift would have a minor detrimental visual impact on the staircase and its enclosure. However this

intervention is considered to be a reasonable and reversible adjustment to the staircase in order to make the building accessible to the widest number of people and it meets the tests of policy HE 9.4 (ii) of Planning Policy Statement 5.

4.9 Following the queries raised by English Heritage in their consultation response, the agent has confirmed that the access from the side entrance could accommodate a wheelchair lift to the ground floor by adapting the existing service staircase and removing the kitchen hoist. The building would benefit from the reinstatement of the balustrade to the staircase.

EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS

4.10 The external changes would affect the elevation of the building to a passageway that provides vehicular access/ parking for properties on High Petergate. The surface of the passageway would be altered by a small graduated increase in its level that would enable wheelchair access to the existing side door. An existing grille in the side elevation of the building would be enlarged to accommodate improved ventilation to the existing male toilets and it is also intended to remove redundant pipework. Altogether the changes would have no detrimental impact on the listed building, eventually improving its appearance.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The long term future of this nationally important building has been uncertain for a number of years. The measures proposed would greatly enhance the flexibility and usefulness of the building. The magnificent interiors of the major spaces would be unaffected by proposals and they would be available for public use as originally intended. The proposals conform with recently introduced national policies governing the protection of the historic environment such as HE 9.4 of PPS 5. The proposals also accord with Policies HE4 of the Local Plan that reflects national policy guidance and seeks to ensure that the special interest of the listed building is maintained.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

1 TIMEL2

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

Drawing No. 0907.6 Received 17 May 2010

Drawing No. 0907.7 Received 17 May 2010

Drawing No. 0907.8 Received 17 May 2010

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

- 3 Prior to the commencement of the works hereby approved, the following details shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter the works shall be implemented and retained in accordance with the approved details:
- a) Method Statement and large scale details showing the new mezzanine floor in context. Details to include a typical edge condition, foundation details, information describing the effect on any historic floors, details of the partition at the top of the C20th staircase showing its integration with the existing higher soffit and any mouldings
 - b) Large scale details of the following items:
 - (i) blocking to basement hatch & ground floor glazed screen
 - (ii) restoration of the service staircase on removal of the loft hatch
 - (iii) stair-lift in context, including fixing details and manufacturer's literature
 - (iv) secondary glazing to assembly room lantern
 - (v) ventilation provision for the assembly room lantern
 - (vi) making good to the curved rear wall of the first floor reception room
 - (vii) new mechanisms for remote control of chandeliers (in context)
 - (viii) new doors (proportions and details should match existing doors in similar locations)
 - c) Measures for upgrading of doors for fire resistance
 - d) Details of any alterations required to services such as power, light, heating, cooling and ventilation
 - e) A method statement and details for the first floor reception room explaining the full impact of any measures necessary to make the room suitable for use as an office eg IT outlets, improved lighting, blinds
 - f) Details of changes to the interior paint scheme
 - g) Details of the extent of alteration to form the ramped access outside the service door within the rear yard, including typical finishes, further lighting provision, handrails etc.

Reason: To ensure that the details would be acceptable in the interests of the visual amenity and historical and architectural interest of the Listed Building.

- 4 Making good shall be carried out to a high standard with materials and details shall match adjacent work

Reason: To ensure that any new works harmonise with the architecture and visual amenity of the listed building.

- 5 Any new partitions shall be scribed around existing details, such as cornices, skirtings etc.

Reason: To ensure that existing features are retained undamaged in the interests of the historic, architectural and visual interests of the Listed Building.

- 6 Any redundant signage, external wiring and external ductwork shall be removed with fixing holes and finishes made good in materials and details that match existing finishes and details.

Reason: The removal of any redundant external attachments to the listed building would remove visual clutter and improve the appearance of the listed building and the wider conservation area in accordance with national and local plan policy.

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 special interests of the listed building. As such, the proposal complies with Policy HE4 of the City of York Development Control Local Plan (2005) and national planning guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5 " Planning for the Historic Environment.

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