

COMMITTEE REPORT

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

Reference: 10/02795/CAC
Application at: York City Art Gallery Exhibition Square York YO1 2EW
For: Demolition of existing hutments to rear in association with temporary siting of Observation Wheel and permanent landscaping works
By: Mr Michael Woodward
Application Type: Conservation Area Consent
Target Date: 10 February 2011
Recommendation: Approve

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The application relates to the land behind the City Art Gallery, to the north-east of the Museum Gardens. Conservation area consent is sought to demolish a group of hutment buildings added in 1942, after the Exhibition Hall that formerly occupied the site was destroyed during a bombing raid. The buildings are predominantly single storey and of concrete construction. This site is in the Central Historic Core conservation area. It is part of the St Mary's Abbey Precinct, although the Scheduled Ancient Monument boundary is marked by the wall at the north end of the precinct which identifies the extent of the Museum Gardens in their present form.

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
- Grade 1; St Mary's Abbey Remains Precinct Walls
- Grade 2; Railings And Gates Fronting Kings Manor 0618
- Grade 1; City Walls St Mary's Tower To Bootham Tower 0611
- Grade 1; St Mary's Tower St Mary's Abbey Remains 0485

Scheduled Ancient Monuments GMS Constraints: SMR 12A St Mary's Abbey Precinct Walls SE 597520

2.2 Policies:

CYHE5 Demolition of Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas

CYHE12 Historic parks and gardens

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

DESIGN, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Support the proposals

3.1 This application is concerned only with the demolition of the hutments to the rear of York Art Gallery. The hutments should be considered as undesignated heritage assets within the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area.

3.2 The Museum Gardens Management Plan (2005) suggests that whilst the hutments are of interest in the context of the overall history of the site and the WWII story in York they do not have any wider significance. I support this analysis the demolition is therefore acceptable, subject to the appropriate recording being undertaken as recommended by the City Archaeologist and this should be conditioned.

3.3 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.

3.4 The buildings are of no particular merit architecturally in their own right 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 Walls, although because the site is enclosed by these walls they do not have a wider detrimental impact on the conservation area. The demolition of these relatively recent additions to the site offers the potential for opening up to public access and enabling a greater appreciation of the site as a part of the wider St Mary's Abbey precinct.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

3.5 No comments regarding this application.

GUILDHALL PLANNING PANEL

3.6 Object. Comments relate to the proposed wheel. See full planning application.

PUBLICITY

3.7 Six letters in objection have been received. Apart from the objections to the proposed wheel that would occupy the site on a temporary basis following demolition of the hutments, objections are as follows:

- That the proposed works to improve the garden (new planting and re-alignment of stones) would be piecemeal, and would not follow the proposals in the conservation management plan for the site. The plan advises that there should be a landscape masterplan for the site, which respects the gardens original design. This has not occurred.
- Ask how the proposed works would affect the city walls on the north east corner.

4.0 APPRAISAL

KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that the local planning authority pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas.

POLICIES

4.2 PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment advises that when considering proposals, local planning authorities should take into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of a Conservation Area as a whole. Where an element does not positively contribute to the area, local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of enhancing or better revealing the significance of a Conservation Area, including, where appropriate, through development of that element. This should be seen as part of the process of place-shaping.

4.3 Policy HE5 of the Local Plan regards demolition of buildings in conservation areas. It advises that permission will not be granted for the demolition of buildings which positively contribute to the character and appearance of conservation areas. Buildings which do not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of an area can be permitted, provided the removal, or replacement development would have a positive impact.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUILDINGS IT IS PROPOSED TO DEMOLOISH

4.4 The buildings it is proposed to demolish are pre-fabricated structures added during the war. They are predominantly single storey and of concrete construction with sheet metal roofing. The buildings are in a dilapidated state and contain asbestos. The buildings are not listed, and are not of particular historic or architectural interest. As such demolition of the structures can be entertained. It is proposed to re-locate one of the hutments to Eden Camp. In accordance with part HE12 of PPS5 it can be a condition of the consent that the buildings are suitably recorded prior to demolition and relocation, to further understand the historic development of the site.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS TO RE-DEVELOP THE SITE AFTER DEMOLITION

4.5 Whilst the area would accommodate a proposed observation wheel for a two year period, the Museum's Trust strategy for the site is to improve access to this part of the precinct and restore it to the extent it again becomes part of the gardens. The area where the hutments are would be used as a landscaped area and display space for the gallery, with an outside stone paved terrace immediately at the back of the gallery. These works would enhance the setting, allow public access to the area and assist with the economic viability of the gallery, all of which are recognised by PPS5 and the companion English Heritage guidance note as being heritage benefits.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 There is no objection to the proposed demolition as the buildings concerned do not make a positive contribution to the setting and they are not of particular architectural or historic merit. In accordance with PPS5 and HE5 of the Local Plan, the buildings can be required to be recorded before they are removed. The demolition can be on the condition that suitable restoration of the site occurs; the Museums Trust whom are responsible for the site have indicated in their proposals that this would be the case.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

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

2 Within one year of the date of this consent a detailed scheme for landscaping of the site, or redevelopment of the site, shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the scheme shall be fully implemented within two years of this consent.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

3 Prior to demolition an annotated photographic record of the buildings to be demolished (interior and exterior) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To record and advance understanding of the historic development of the site before the buildings are demolished in accordance with PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

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 PPS5: Planning for the historic Environment and Policy HE5 of the City of York Development Control Local Plan.

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