

Our Ref: 17361/MS/gc
Your Ref: PP-13115249
Email: mshearman@firstplan.co.uk

Broadwall House 020 3096 7000
21 Broadwall info@firstplan.co.uk
London SE1 9PL firstplan.co.uk

24 May 2024

Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
RG1 2LU

Dear Sir/Madam,

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATIONS FOR REFURBISHMENT WORKS TO BUILDINGS EXTERNAL FAÇADE – 11 CASTLE STREET, READING, RG1 7SB

We have been instructed by our client, Brewdog, to submit the enclosed listed building consent application (online via planning portal ref: XX) for permission to remove the painted finish of the external façade of the building, and to repair the stonework and replace it with a stucco finish to match the upper floors. The application has been submitted following an informal approach from the Councils enforcement team, and seek to remedy unauthorised works and ensure the frontage is repaired and made good, which will in turn enhance the appearance of the listed building.

In accordance with national and local validation requirements, the following documents are enclosed in support of the application:

- Completed planning and listed building application forms;
- Completed CIL Forms;
- Heritage Impact Assessment (included within this letter);
- Site Location Plan;
- Existing and Proposed Elevation;
- Heritage Report
- Stone survey and report – with details of proposed maintenance works

The requisite planning fee has been paid online via the planning portal. The remainder of this letter sets out our supporting statement regarding the application proposals.

Site Description

The application site is an existing Brewdog bar on the south side of Castle Street within Reading Town Centre. The area is commercial in character and incorporates a wide array of shops, bars and restaurants.

The site itself, No.11 Castle Street, is a former congregational chapel comprising two storeys. The building is Grade II Listed and falls within the St Mary's Butts/ Castle Street Conservation Area. The main entrance to the premises is via double doors at the centre of the building's front elevation, with a large fascia directly above the main entrance.

The frontage was painted several years ago by Brewdog and has since been stripped back, with some paint remaining and damage to the masonry. Accordingly, permission is now sought to make good of the external façade and restore the masonry.

Planning History

The premises have been in use as a bar for over 20 years, since permission was initially granted for this use in 1998 (ref: 980685). During this time, there have been a number of different occupiers with varying shopfronts and signage.

Brewdog took occupancy of the unit at the start of 2018, and on the 23rd March submitted a retrospective planning application for various external and internal alterations, including new fascia and projecting signs, an illuminated menu sign, painting of the front elevation, metal access ramp cover, CCTV cameras and up lights (refs: 180519 & 180518).

On the 4th June 2018, the application was refused for the following reasons:

- The fascia sign, fascia board and projection sign were considered oversized in relation to Listed Building. Their size, plastic construction, internal illumination and 'unsympathetic colouring' with weathered timber was also considered to harm the architectural character of the listed building and surrounding context;
- The repainting of the front elevation to grey is considered detrimental to the character of the listed building;
- The uplighters which have been attached to illuminate the first floor and above are considered harmful;
- The style of the disabled access ramp is considered to be '*utilitarian in nature*', therefore failing to respect the character of the listed building.

Accordingly, noting these reasons for refusal, BrewDog submitted revised applications in August 2018 seeking to remedy the unauthorised works (refs: 181547 & 181549). Permission was sought for the following:

- Removal of the weathered timber fascia board and replacement with by a plain fascia board;
- Removal of internally illuminated blue fascia board and replacement with a blue steel signage sheet, fixed back to the new fascia board;
- Removal of internally illuminated projecting sign and replacement with a hanging painted shield;
- Removal of grey painted finish at ground floor level and replacement with stucco finish to match existing;
- Retention of exterior wall uplighters and CCTV cameras.

The applications were approved on the 19th December 2018. The applicant then started to carry out some of the approved works, replacing the fascia board and beginning the process of removing the grey paint work, however shortly after this happened Covid 19 took place, and the bar was forced to shut for a sustained period with a lack of financing to complete the works. There were significant financial strains on the business following this, resulting in the works never being completed and the consent now lapsing. The building has remained unaltered for the past few years, and its external façade is in a deteriorating condition as seen below.

Photograph of existing frontage



The Council recently approached the applicant to highlight the fact the works had not been completed and that the external façade needed to be restored in order to prevent a breach of planning controls. The previous consent to remove the paint and make good the stucco façade has now lapsed, so a fresh application is now being submitted for the restoration works to the external façade.

Application Proposals and Assessment against Relevant Policies

This application seeks planning and listed building consent for restoration works to the façade of the listed building. Specifically, permission is sought to remove the remaining bits of grey paint at ground floor level, to restore the stonework beneath, and to apply a stucco finish to match the upper floors of the building.

A masonry cleaning and repairs assessment has been provided in support of the application which details the method of restoration, and how the façade will be treated.

A detailed stone survey was undertaken in a laboratory in order to identify the stone type and potential matching stone source of the submitted sample. The examination found the stone sample to be summarised as follows:

“Specimen G54932

“The stone was pale cream to off-white on broken surfaces, and grey on exposed and polluted surfaces, predominantly medium grained, oolitic bioclastic LIMESTONE. The stone was generally well to moderately compacted, moderately hard to moderately soft, moderately robust to moderately weak and appeared generally porous (subjective estimate). The sample’s apparently exposed surfaces were generally weathered”

On the basis of the microscopic examination the stone sample was found to be an oolitic limestone similar in colour and general composition to potential sources. Accordingly, an appropriate limestone colour and finish has been identified for the replacement works. The masonry repairs will allow the façade to be restored to a sound condition, allowing for the long-term preservation of the masonry, and the enhancement of the heritage asset. The exact proposals are as follows:

- Carefully remove the impervious paintwork using recognised building conservation techniques with high temperature steaming cleaning with DOFF, vortex cleaning with TORC, and also various poultice mixes, causing the least damage possible to the substrate.
- Repair damaged and decayed sections of stone/stucco with hydraulic lime: sand mixes that match the density and porosity of the substrate to ensure compatibility with it.
- Apply Keim highly vapour permeable potassium silicate mineral paint in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations.

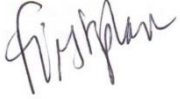
The proposal will ensure the external façade of the building is enhanced and that the historic significance of the listed building is retained in accordance with the Councils heritage policies. The application should therefore be deemed entirely acceptable.

Conclusion

The proposals will undoubtedly enhance the appearance of the listed building, and in turn, the wider area, whilst ensuring the historic significance of the façade is restored. The refurbishment works represent a significant investment from our client, and will ensure the historic status of the building is retained, whilst ensuring Brewdogs long term occupancy at the site. Accordingly, we trust the council will share our view that the proposals are in accordance with the identified planning policies and should be supported.

I trust you have sufficient information to enable a positive determination of the applications and we look forward to receiving confirmation that the applications have been validated. In the meantime, should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



MARK SHEARMAN

Director