



Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 17/00835/LBA

ADDRESS: 6-7 John Street, Bath

PROPOSAL: Internal and external alterations to erect 3-storey apartment block accommodating 6 No. flats and retain use of ground floor retail unit following removal of internal structures and flat roof

CASE OFFICER: Adrian Neilson

DATE: 29 March 2017

COMMENT: OBJECTION

Bath Heritage Watchdog objects to this application in its current format.

It is appreciated that the current building requires some TLC and would benefit from some work. However, this does not mean that any scheme put forward should be accepted *carte blanche*.

Our first issue relates to the height of the proposed build. We do not consider that the street can take 3 storeys above the existing (the description in the application is considered misleading). There are a variety of heights in the street and it is this which contributes to the streetscene. The extra height combined with the narrowness of the thoroughfare, gives a hemmed in feeling which is not conducive to the so called 'vitality' of the area. We therefore consider that the proposals need to come down by a storey, and those storeys should be no higher than the norm for the street. Indeed the Heritage Statement refers to the missing floors as a '*two storey gap*' which supports our opinion that the proposals are a storey too tall. The rhythm of the street also suggests that the gap should be filled with no more than two storeys. There is no appraisal of the impact of the build on either Jollys or the buildings opposite in John Street. Jollys appears to have a doorway leading to the roof of the current structure, and there must therefore be some impact. The buildings opposite make use of the natural light available through the gap and their display and trading models may be affected by any structure tall enough to badly restrict the light.

The historical appraisal states that there are Roman and medieval remains (including substructures of the Barton Farm Buildings) likely at depths of about 1m BCL. Given that the construction method is for pile-driven steelwork we are extremely concerned at the damage that would be caused to these remains. By retaining the current structures the scope for archaeological investigation is severely limited, and Retained Policy BH13 recommends refusal because there can be no assurance that such a construction method would not be harmful. We do not consider the benefits outweigh the damage and would suggest that if work is to be permitted that an alternative method of construction is required. We also have concerns at the loss of historical chimney stacks and fireplaces.

The front façade is bland and austere and would benefit from some traditional detailing as on the adjacent buildings. It is essential the new building is appropriate for the location when infilling a site; and that currently proposed does jar badly.

The windows are not symmetrical like the adjacent buildings are, and this will give a disjointed appearance. We would suggest that this is addressed, together with the size of the windows (which are considerably smaller compared to the neighbours) and the configuration. The Victorian configuration is completely at odds with the adjacent buildings and we would suggest this is amended to a Georgian configuration (using traditional detailing and not stuck on bars).

It should be noted that John Street is already very narrow, and it (and the businesses along it) could not tolerate construction impinging on such a narrow space. Whilst we recommend that the application as presented should be refused, in the unlikely event that it is approved, it must be accompanied by a Condition that a construction method is agreed before any work starts, and the construction method must preserve John Street as a through route during all stages of the development.