



Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 17/01907/AR

ADDRESS: 26 Stall Street, Bath

PROPOSAL: Display of 1no. non-illuminated Fascia Panel & New Lettering

CASE OFFICER: Laura Batham

DATE: 28 April 2017

COMMENT: STRONG OBJECTION

Bath Heritage Watchdog strongly objects to this application.

No 26 Stall Street was originally one of Bath's largest coaching inns; the Lamb Hotel was an inn by 1718 but probably dates from at least a century earlier. Advertisements dating from 1773 indicated that The Lamb had stabling for over 100 horses. By the mid 18th century, it was the starting point for coaches to Devon & Cornwall.

When the Inn was split up in the 1840's, the Lamb & Lion Pub was built on the site of the stables on Lower Borough Walls, which opened in 1852. The Lamb strove on, but the final blow came in 1841 when the Great Western Railway between London and Bath opened. The traditional coaching trade upon which it relied vanished almost immediately. The brewery to the rear closed around 1895 but the Lamb remained until the 1970's when it became a building society.

It is listed Grade II and is located in the Bath Conservation Area and World Heritage Site. It should be noted that the listing entry makes particular reference to the frontage of the building.

When determining all applications for new shopfronts and signage we ask that the following guidelines are observed.

The context, or general setting, of Bath should be understood, respected and reflected in any proposed work to shopfronts.

Design, materials and workmanship should be of the highest quality.

Any proposed or altered shopfront should be historically credible.

House styles which do not meet the requirements of style, lettering, materials and signs are not acceptable. Multiples should be required to adapt their proposals to the special conditions of the city.

Standard designs of any sort are not acceptable. They should be specifically designed for their context.

NPPF Section 12 ‘Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment’ para 128 –

‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary’.

No historic appraisal has been provided with this application which is required to justify the frontage alterations. There is no mention of the listed status of the building, nor the location in the Bath Conservation Area and World Heritage Site. Whilst not expecting a major thesis the very least that is to be expected is consultation of the Historic England Register which is easily accessible online.

There have been some minor positive amendments over the previously refused application. However, we do not consider that they are sufficient to override our strong objection.

FASCIA

We welcome the reduction in the height of the proposed fascia and the addition of the beading to add interest and detailing. However, the full detail for the proposed fascia is somewhat confusing.

Drawing 17.10.1b (Shopfront) shows the existing fascia measuring 520, with the proposed at 800. The previous application proposed 1000. Are we to assume that the existing at 520 is a fascia that lies beneath the current metal tray or is it the original platband? Clarification is required. If it is a timber fascia then unless the condition is too poor we cannot see why it cannot be utilised. We still consider 800 to be excessive for the frontage.

We have no objection to the use of blue satin finish.

The use of vinyl lettering is not appropriate for a listed building. The signage should be traditionally signwritten to provide a high quality finish commensurate with a prime frontage.

PROJECTING SIGN

Drawing 2016-659/01 (Proposed Shopfront) is showing a bus stop sign (*750x750 internally illuminated projecting 'bus stop' sign to replicate Carphone Warehouse adjacency*), yet this is not included in Drawing 17.10.02 (Proposed Signage), nor Drawing 17.10.1b (Shopfront).

We strongly object to the addition of any sort of projecting sign and certainly that annotated on the plans is wholly unacceptable. If this is an error a revised drawing is required for the avoidance of doubt.

FRONTAGE

We maintain our strong objection to the proposed alterations to the frontage. No detailed historical appraisal has been provided regarding the frontage, its history, its age, nor the impact of the changes on the overall significance of the protected building.

We do not believe the perceived benefits (to the applicants) outweigh the harm that would be caused to the building, especially as so much original fabric and plan form have been lost internally. This simply emphasises the need to protect the features remaining.

The statement in the Heritage Statement – Addendum *'The premises have been vacant for some time, and are likely to remain so in the current economic market. If The Fragrance Shop opens at this location, following the grant of Listed Building Consent, it will inject additional vitality & verve to this part of one of Bath's prime retail thoroughfares'* is somewhat puzzling. The company already operates close by and the idea that anything will change due to a slight change in premises is not understood. The idea that no other company would lease the premises is also ridiculous.

Although the existing entrance door is at best neutral, those proposed to the central window are utilitarian in style, lack finesse and jar with the overall frontage – it is a case of inserting modern into old which in this case does not work. This combined with a lack of justification for public benefit means we oppose this alteration. In addition no large scale drawings of the doors, alterations and joinery have been provided which are essential.

We note that concertina security shutters are now proposed. They would be highly detrimental to what is currently an attractive (though neglected) frontage and are not justified. They also lead to an area looking 'urban' in character which is not acceptable in a prime frontage in a World Heritage City. Again no large scale drawings have been provided for assessment.

It would appear that the applicants wish is to alter this listed building to match that of their existing shop nearby which is not understood. It is not acceptable to try to retrofit a listed building to a style or corporate branding.

SUMMARY

The works, by virtue of the use of inferior materials, addition of a bus stop sign, loss of fabric and installation of security blinds are considered to be detrimental to the character and appearance of the listed building, adjacent listed buildings and the wider streetscene contrary to S16 and S72 of Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies B1, B2 and CP6 of the BANES Core Strategy and saved policies BH1, BH2, BH6 and BH17 of the BANES Local Plan and should be refused.