



## Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 18/00209/FUL  
ADDRESS: 15 Argyle Street  
PROPOSAL: Change of use for tables and chairs outside the restaurant  
CASE OFFICER: Haydon Foster  
DATE: 29 January 2018  
COMMENT: OBJECTION

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Bath Heritage Watchdog objects to this application.

Nos 8-17 Argyle Street are shops with accommodation over, now in mixed use dating from c1789 by Thomas Baldwin with c1828, late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations. A balanced terrace stretching between Pulteney Bridge and Laura Place, forming a monumental extension northwards from Robert Adam's Pulteney Bridge and commanding an imposing position adjoining Great Pulteney Bridge and overlooking the weir. They are listed Grade II\* and are located in the Bath Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.

This application gives rise to concern over the detrimental impact that the proposals would have on the building, the terrace and the larger streetscene. This area, part of the never completed Bathwick Estate, remains one of the most impressive of all Neo-classical urban set pieces in Britain. It was specifically planned and laid out to draw attention down the street to its terminus of the Holburne Museum. The terrace is devoid of tables and chairs and their associated detritus despite the number of similar establishments and a public house on the street. The approval of this proposal could act as a catalyst that has the potential to put that accolade at risk.

We are aware of the considerable pressure that is currently being employed to impose and embrace the café culture but would insist that caution is exercised in highly sensitive historic areas such as this. These proposals, we believe, would have a detrimental impact on the character and special features of historic interest of the building and could lead to the erosion of the character and amenity of the area. From an aesthetic viewpoint the uncluttered vista towards Great Pulteney Street must be maintained.

Whilst appreciating that the pavement is unusually wide, this forms part of the character and history of this most historic and renowned location and is not there purely to be cluttered up by extending business premises. The footfall to this street is considerable, particularly so when the rugby season is in operation and bottlenecks are common in this area. In addition the adjacent dental surgery has a doorway which is set back between the shopfronts. The siting of tables and chairs in this location could therefore present a highways issue for both patients and pedestrians, especially given that such furniture rarely stays in the stated position.

No table management plan has been included nor a time for when the furniture is to be in place or removed, nor where it will be stored.

We draw attention to a previous, but very relevant, application (10/02405/FUL) relating to the adjacent building for tables and chairs. The application was refused, a decision which was also upheld at appeal. In addition to referring to the listed status of the buildings the Inspector also said *'The wide pavement adjoining the terrace is part of this special street scene, giving a sense of space and elegance, and enhancing the vista described above. While the seating would not take up the full width of it, the presence of furniture here would be intrusive, harming the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and adding to the clutter which already results from advertising boards set out along the pavement'*.

It should also be noted that since that application/appeal the entire terrace has been upgraded from Grade II to Grade II\*. This makes the importance of the decision even greater.

The works, by virtue of the detrimental impact that would be caused to the setting of the listed terrace and the historic vista is considered to be contrary to S16 and S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF and Policies DW1, D1, D2, D3, D9, D10, HE1 and NE2 Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan and should be refused.

We also note that the shopfront and signage has also been changed (formerly La Flamma and a deep red colour) without Listed Building Consent. We would request that this application is refused and that the shopfront and colour changes are passed to the Enforcement Team for the appropriate action to be taken.