



Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 18/04692/LBA

ADDRESS: Hidden Hearing, 18 St James' Parade

PROPOSAL: Internal and external alterations for internal refurbishment including provision of suspended acoustic ceiling to ground floor, suspended tiled ceiling to first floor consultation room, and shopfront refresh including provision of fascia sign and projecting sign

CASE OFFICER: Caroline Power

DATE: 19 November 2018

COMMENT: OBJECTION

Bath Heritage Watchdog objects to this application.

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.

We maintain our objection to the use of unnecessary illumination in the Conservation Area.

The proposed projecting sign already appears to have been installed (albeit without the illumination). We have been unable to find an application or consent for this and therefore have to consider it to be unauthorised.

Unauthorised works to a listed building are a criminal offence and cannot be condoned. Ignorance of listing is not a defence where work is undertaken without the necessary consent. The listing is revealed in conveyance searches and the Historic England Register is freely available online. Advice on the Local Authority website is also easily accessible as is the 'Shopfronts Guide' which we refer to.

Using retrospective applications shows disdain for the democratic planning processes.

There are two sections to this application – internal and external.

INTERNAL

It is noted that previous consent has been granted in respect of the suspended ceilings with a condition that they are to be removed within 3 months of the current use ceasing. We would suggest that if consent is to be granted again that the same condition is applied.

We would, however, encourage the applicants to explore the possibility of freestanding pods to achieve the same results but with less invasive work.

EXTERNAL

It is the external work which effectively results in our objection to the application.

The design and materials of the projecting sign are wholly unsympathetic and use inferior materials.

If a sign is to be installed it should be constructed from timber and be traditionally signwritten. An appropriately designed traditional mild steel bracket should also be used. We would suggest the style of that given consent for 19 St James' Parade as an example.

The illumination is both undesirable and unnecessary and should be removed from proposals.

We support the restoration of the shopfront and would request confirmation that the fascia is to be traditionally signwritten. Whilst the addition of the logo is acceptable we do not believe the other additional text is and should be removed from proposals.

With regard to window vinyls, those with the website address are considered appropriate but we do not believe that large strident pictures are and we strongly oppose the use of light posters/pockets/boxes.

SUMMARY

The works proposed are considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character and interest of the listed building, adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area 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, CP6, D1, D2, D3, D8, D9, D10, and HE1 of the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan and should be revised or refused in its current format.

