



Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 21/05175/FUL

ADDRESS: King William, 32 Thomas Street, Walcot

PROPOSAL: Change of use from public house to Use Class E cafe and restaurant; display of advertisements and redecoration of external joinery

CASE OFFICER: Sam Grant

DATE: 28 November 2021

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 first have to address the issue of the retrospective application. 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' to which we refer.

We are concerned and disappointed by the increasing trend not to enforce unauthorised and inappropriate works, especially in listed buildings where heritage assets once lost are lost for ever. Such inaction appears to serve as an encouragement to others to similarly break the law. Using retrospective applications shows disdain for the democratic planning processes.

We have no objection to the anthracite grey colour used for the main frontage. However the use of a strident colour such as yellow for the doors is wholly inappropriate and should be changed to either the same anthracite grey or a similar colour.

With regard to the fascia and hanging sign it is not clear as to whether the signage is traditionally signwritten or not. This is certainly the approach that should be taken. The hanging sign has so much text on it when really it should be restricted to the name.

It is disappointing that the name of the premises has been changed. Indeed from an identification point of view the majority of people in the city will know the location of the King William, a considerable advantage.

Likewise it is disappointing that the premises are no longer a public house as this is one of the historic pubs of the city.

The works are considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character of 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 refused in its current format.