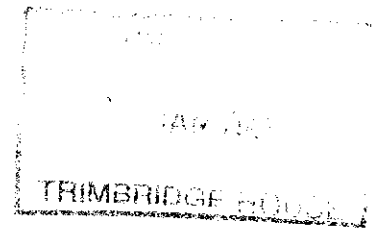


# THE GEORGIAN GROUP



SCANNED

Ian Lund  
Planning Services  
Bath and North East Somerset Council  
Trimbridge House  
Trim Street  
Bath  
BA1 2DP

Your Ref: 08/04447/LBA  
Our Ref: SW/09/1/1

20<sup>th</sup> January 2009

## Friends Meeting House, York Street, Bath

Dear Mr Lund

Thank you for notifying the Georgian Group of an application for listed building consent for the conversion of the Friends Meeting House, York Street to a restaurant. We understand that this application is to be considered by the next meeting of your Development Control Committee and we would like the following comments to be considered at this meeting:

We visited the site last year in connection with an earlier similar application (08/02283/LBA ) and the Casework Panel of the Group considered this application and recommended to you that this application be refused consent (our ref: SW/08/9/1). The Panel had a number of strong concerns over this application, principally the opening of the central door and the enlargement of the two windows to the main street elevation. A number of other bodies including English Heritage also objected to these and other aspects of the proposals and it is noted that the Officer Assessment of the Committee Report for this earlier application makes reference to:

*The special interest of the building clearly relates to such external features as the blind windows, location of the original windows, and the fact the entrances are at the side, not the centre of the building ..... All these features are proposed to be radically altered and will harm the character/integrity of the building and the setting of other listed building in the area.*

*Notwithstanding officers' 'in principle' objection to the opening of the blind door the design of the new door is inappropriate for such an impressive building.*

Accordingly the recommendation for this application was that it should be refused consent as the proposals would cause significant harm to the character of this building

In terms of the current application it is noted that there has been a number of alterations, notably the retention of the existing window openings and the form of the side roofs but it is still intended to remove the masonry to the central blind doorway to create a new central entrance. This would appear to be an alteration based solely on commercial reasons – currently the building is accessed by two side doors which relate directly to the historic layout and circulation within the building and which help to retain the central meeting room as a largely top lit room with no direct access from the street. There are no conservation reasons for this alteration.

Cont'd

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Chairman Lady Nanning OBE  
Secretary Robert Burgess

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Friends Meeting House, York Street, Bath

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We have previously reasoned that the insertion of a large doorway would do much to harm the 'the strong and symbolic appearance that this building was designed with' and the central blind door is one of the key features which makes this building of significant listable quality. Your authority agrees with this and the alteration of the central door formed part of the reason for refusal of the previous application.

Furthermore it is not clear why a new central door needs to be created – it has no justification on historic building terms or under the guidance given in PPG15 and this building would appear to be re-usable and sustainable without this alteration. There are two entrances to this building and we must repeat our advice that they should be retained and utilised for access into this building.

Therefore this application does not sufficiently address the serious concerns that the Group had over the earlier scheme and we wish to strongly object on the same grounds to this application and we recommend that you refuse consent.

Yours faithfully

Simon Wardle  
Caseworker