



Historic England

Sir/Madam Planning Officer
Bristol City Council
Brunel House
St George's Road
Bristol
BS1 5UY

Direct Dial: 0117 975 0742

Our ref: L01584505

18 November 2024

Dear Sir/Madam Officer

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021

CHRISTCHURCH STUDIOS, 38 PORTLAND STREET , CLIFTON BRISTOL , BS8 4JB

Application No. 24/04066/LA

Thank you for your letter of 31 October 2024 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

Significance of Designated Heritage Assets

The property forms part of a development of 14 houses and a former warehouse known as Carter's Buildings, with its principal elevation onto Gloucester Street, but extending back onto Portland Street. The building group was built circa 1793, according to the list description, although noted in the heritage assessment as being constructed much later in 1854, probably by Foster and Woods Architects. The central warehouse, flanked by seven houses on either side, has a polite composition to both its north and south elevations and is materially indicative of the local palette and quite distinct. The warehouse, currently used by the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, has had former uses as a school, social institute and recording studios. Its significance is derived from its aesthetic, historic and communal heritage values, also contributed by its building fabric and design, being a unique arrangement of a unified development of courtyard housing with a central warehouse.

The building is designated as Grade II, and great weight should be given to its conservation. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines 'conservation' as 'the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance'.



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Summary of proposals.

The proposals are for the conversion of the existing building into residential and office accommodation with the addition of an upward extension.

Impact of the Proposed Development

As the existing building is Grade II, our statutory remit is limited to element of substantial demolition of external elevations, roof or internal structures. Therefore, while your authority would be tasked with assessing impacts on the building's interior and setting within the Clifton Conservation Area, we would provide advice on the specific proposal to remove the existing roof, which is proposed to be replaced with a mansard. The visual impact of constructing a mansard on the character and appearance of the conservation area would also be for your conservation advisor to consider.

With regard to the proposals to replace the existing roof, we understand from the submitted information that the conventional pitched roof, supported on trusses was altered in the 1980's (addition of dormers) and later re-roofed with new slates in 2012. Further to providing pre-application advice to the applicant, we are pleased that the proposals now retain the substantial historic structural elements. The removal of the existing pitched roof form will impact on character and significance, although we understand that in terms of fabric this is almost entirely modern.

Planning Legislation & Policy Context

Central to our consultation advice is the requirement of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in Section 66(1) for the local authority to "have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses".

Section 72 of the act refers to the council's need to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in the exercise of their duties.

Paragraph 205 states that in considering the impact of proposed development on significance, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 206 goes on to say that clear and convincing justification is needed if there is loss or harm.

Historic England's advice is provided in line with the importance attached to significance and setting with respect to heritage assets as recognised by the Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and in guidance,



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including the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and good practice advice notes produced by Historic England on behalf of the Historic Environment Forum (Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (2015 & 2017)).

The significance of a heritage asset can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm (whether substantial or less than substantial) is to be given great weight, and any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (or site of equivalent significance) should require clear and convincing justification.

Position.

While the form of the roof is to change as part of the proposed works and development, the historic elements of the historic roof are to remain. Overall, there is likely to be some harm to significance, which should be assessed by your authority. However, as it stands, we do not object to the proposed conversion and alterations.

Recommendation

Historic England does not object to the application on heritage grounds. In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess and section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Guy

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: stephen.guy@historicengland.org.uk



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