

Ms Helen Pressley
Bury Council Planning
By email

4th October 2024

h.pressley@bury.gov.uk

Dear Ms Pressley,

RE: 70804| Listed building consent for change of use from former bank to 9 no. apartments (Class C3) including associated works to the rear of the building to provide bin/cycle storage; Replacement of existing timber framed windows; Internal alterations including mezzanine floors and roof lights. Former Barclays Bank, 26 Silver Street, Bury, BL9 0DH.

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. We would like to offer our comments on the application for listed building consent. Whilst we do not object to the principle of converting the building into apartments, more information is required to determine the impact the proposal will have on the significance of the listed building.

26 Silver Street is a grade II statutory listed building (National Heritage List for England (“the NHLE”) List Entry Number: 1356834). A former bank, it was built in 1836 by Blackwell and Son and Booth for the Bury Banking Co. It is of the enriched classical style and makes a significant contribution to the street. It was last used as a Barclays Bank, housing the town’s council chamber and offices on the upper floors until 2010.

The application seeks to convert the building into nine apartments. The Heritage Statement submitted with the application sets out in paragraph 4.16 several recommendations relating to the application including the retention of original decorative elements within internal spaces (“where practical”) particularly within the former main banking hall. It also notes that “details, including sections, of the method for the encapsulation of decorative elements and margins where new walling intersected with these elements should be provided and assessed.” Such details, however, have not been provided. It is our expectation that they would accompany the application to fully inform decision makers about the impact the proposal will have on the listed building and its significance.

Such information is particularly important as the proposal includes the insertion of a new staircase and lift within the hall. The List Entry Description highlights the interior as possessing “highly enriched plasterwork” and is seen as making a significant positive contribution to the significance of the listed building. The Heritage Statement notes that the new stair and lift will “require sections of the original ceiling and flooring to the rear of the

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The Victorian Society

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building to be removed although this will not result in the loss of significant decorative detailing.” It is vital, therefore, that the application is accompanied by information that ascertains the extent of the fabric removed and how the ceiling will be maintained and preserved. Greater justification is also sought in regards as to why the lift must be installed in this section of the building and why the present lift and staircase cannot be reused as part of the proposed scheme.

The Design and Access statement submitted with the application, and the application overall, fails to provide reassurance as to the retention of internal fixtures and fittings (including original timber flooring) nor does it include a method statement as to how any features will be preserved, reinstated or restored as part of the proposed scheme. A full method statement is expected to accompany this application, and such an omission may have a material impact on the decision-making process. A specification of works for each apartment is also expected as part of the application yet has not been provided.

The Heritage Statement notes that as part of the proposal, “existing timber framed windows will be refurbished or new units, to matching patterns.” It is expected that a conditions survey will be carried out to the windows to determine which of those need to be replaced and further information to be provided regarding the materials used for such replacement.

In conclusion, the Victorian Society does not object to the principle of conversion, however, greater clarification is needed to ascertain if the recommendations as set out within the Heritage Statement will be implemented. If not, we would recommend the authority makes the retention of original fabric a condition of approval. More information regarding the significance of the asset, specifically the affected fabric and its significance, an adequate impact assessment, as well as more photographs of the affected areas are needed to make an informed decision.

At the legislative level, the information provided does not allow for the local planning authority to carry out its statutory duty, specifically in having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses. We believe that special regard cannot be given where there is insufficient information provided on features that have been highlighted as potentially of architectural and historic interest. Given this, we advise that the required information is requested from the applicant before a decision is made. I would be grateful if you could inform me of your decision in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Darcie Kerr

