

Address: Former Barclays Bank, 26 Silver Street, Bury, BL9 0DH
Application Ref: 70804

Proposal: 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.

Statutory Remit: Historic Buildings & Places (formerly the AMS) is a consultee for Listed Building Consent applications, as per the *Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*. We are concerned with historic assets of all types and all ages, including conservation areas and undesignated heritage.

Comments: Thank you for notifying HB&P of the above application for listed building consent.

HB&P recognise the need to find a sustainable use of this listed former bank building and do not object to the principle of the change of use. However, we must **object** as the proposed alterations to the ground floor, particularly within the former banking chamber, are highly damaging and harm the special historic and architectural interest of this heritage asset.

While it is noted that much of the interior has been modernised, both the listing and the heritage statement note the highly ornate plasterwork ceiling that remains within the former banking chamber. The intense subdivision proposed within this space would have a profound and negative impact on that plasterwork, the proportions of the room, and the ability to understand the former, historic use of the space. It's unclear how the numerous proposed room partitions would interact with the ceiling, or if a false ceiling is proposed. Further, the mezzanine level would brutally cut across the windows, requiring an insert which would change their proportions and inappropriately impact the overall appearance of the bank within the streetscape. Being the only principal internal space that retains the original decorative plasterwork, efforts must be made to sensitively adapt this space for a new use, not to carve it up in the manner proposed.

Subject to further design work, an open plan, loft style apartment would likely work in this space, provided any mezzanine is set back from the windows so they are retained in their current, original form. This would also allow the full height of the room to be appreciated, and the ceiling seen from the ground floor. Bedrooms and bathrooms that require partitions would be contained under the mezzanine to avoid any servicing and ventilation issues and alterations to the ceiling.

A setback mezzanine would also be required in apartment no. 1 and 6 to omit the harmful subdivision of the windows and altered appearance in the streetscape. The first floor and rear spaces are more utilitarian and have more capacity for alteration without causing major harm.

Further details are required to specify how the plasterwork will be repaired, how the building will be serviced and whether water and electricity services would further impact the remaining plasterwork, how the floors and existing walls are to be treated to deal with fire and acoustic separation and how that may affect the remaining historic building fabric.

Policy: Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2023), particularly paragraph 205, that states: 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Recommendation: Design revisions and additional justification are needed to address the above design and conservation issues. We would be happy to review the case when the additional information is submitted.