

70804 – Former Barclays Bank, 26 Silver Street, Bury

Listed building consent for change of use from former bank to 8 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

The application building is Grade II listed and is sited within Bury town centre conservation area.

The submitted Built Heritage Statement fully describes the heritage significance of the listed building and assesses the amount and level of harm the proposal represents to its heritage significance. It assesses the harm to be less than substantial harm.

There is no objection in principle to the conversion of the listed building into apartments.

It is agreed that the level of harm that would be caused by the proposal would represent less than substantial harm to its significance within the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated asset, should require clear and convincing justification and a balancing of identified public benefit against the harm identified.

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State 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.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Paragraph 210 of the NPPF states in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF 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.

Paragraph 213 of the NPPF states any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The listed building possesses architectural and historic interest. Externally the building is intact and relatively unaltered preserving its architectural significance in the enriched classical style. Internally the building has been adapted and there has been some loss of historic fabric causing a loss of significance.

The main banking hall area on the ground floor southern end of the building possesses the most significance with its enriched classical decorative plasterwork to the ceiling. Elsewhere in the building there has been a significant loss of the original decorative plasterwork taking it beyond restoration. The applicant has agreed to repair and preserve the remaining elements of the decorative historic plasterwork, and to fully restore the plasterwork in the banking hall which is relatively intact.

The proposal would create two, two level apartments at ground floor level in the banking hall. This would require the installation of a mezzanine floor which would obscure a majority of the historic decorative plasterwork resulting in a loss of significance and cut across the window openings internally causing harm to the aesthetic of the building constituting less than substantial harm but at the higher end of that spectrum.

The proposal in its current form would not bring the listed building back into a use that would be compatible with its conservation unless there are identified public benefits that would outweigh the harm identified to its significance.

A different design concept for the banking hall of modular units that would preserve the significance of the decorative plasterwork was put forward but has been dismissed by the applicant on the grounds of viability.

The applicant has failed to fully explore the viability of proposed revised scheme putting forward only broad costings and opinion on market demand viability. Lack of viability or otherwise is not a clear or convincing justification in the public interest for allowing the harm identified to the listed building.

Furthermore, the applicant has failed to provide details relating to the condition of the decorative plasterwork throughout the building, condition survey, scope of repairs and restoration and methodology.

In conclusion, the applicant has not put forward a cogent statement of public benefit to enable any balancing against identified harm to be made or provided a full and accurate viability appraisal. As such there is insufficient information to either support or object to the application as it stands.

Conservation Officer

10/10/25