

Heritage Statement

Use of Upper Floors of Premises as Serviced Accommodation and New Bay Windows

Nos. 3 - 5, Clifton Street, Blackpool FY1 1JD

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared by Stephen Bradwell MA MRTPI IHBC of Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd. in respect of revised proposals for the change of use of the first and second floors and the roof space of the premises at nos. 3 - 5, Clifton Street as six apartments to be used for serviced accommodation.
- 1.2 Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applicants to provide an assessment of the impact of new development on the significance of heritage assets that is 'proportionate to the assets' importance...sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'.
- 1.3 This statement should also be read in conjunction with the design and access statement (DAS) and accompanying plans prepared by JCA Architects which illustrate the nature and scope of the proposed development.

2.0 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 As the DAS describes this proposal is for the internal refurbishment of the two upper floors of nos. 3 - 5, Clifton Street and their conversion to four self contained apartments together with use of the roof space for an additional two flats.
- 2.2 The principal external changes to the property include the replacement of the existing box bay window that runs across the width of the two upper floors of the Clifton Street elevation with a pair of narrower box bays that project forward of the front elevation in a style similar to the surrounding properties, and run through the first and second floors, with four rooflights inserted within the front roof slope.
- 2.3 Other than the insertion of rooflights to serve the upper floor, no material changes are proposed to the rear elevation to Cheapside.

3.0 SITE APPRAISAL

- 3.1 Clifton Street is located within the Town Centre Conservation Area and nos. 3 - 5 Clifton Street is situated within a predominantly commercial area on the southern side of Clifton Street, with its frontage onto Clifton Street and a rear elevation to Cheapside.
- 3.2 The property is a three storey mid terraced property with commercial premises on the ground floor, currently long term vacant, but last used as a building society, with a separate front entrance giving access to the first and second floors, that are laid out as open plan offices, but which are also long term vacant. Cheapside to the rear is essentially a back lane/service road that gives access to the ground floor only.
- 3.3 The upper floors of the Clifton Street elevation are dominated by a large square style, box bay window with a flat roof that projects forward to the fascia line, the style of which is appropriate to the period and commercial use of the building, but is of little architectural merit.

3.4 The neighbouring properties are occupied by typical town centre uses at the ground floor with a range of upper floor uses, including residential flats and office units.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Planning permission has previously been given for the use of the two upper floors of this property as holiday accommodation including the replacement of the existing bay window with two flat roofed, box bays on the front elevation (application ref. 19/0335).

4.2 In determining this previous application the Built Heritage Manager considered that the external alterations would improve the appearance of the building and enhance the Conservation Area.

4.3 More recently a similar application with the box bays extending through into the roof was refused by the Council (application ref. 20/0642). The Head of Built Heritage considered that the triple height bays were not a traditional feature of the area and would not preserve or enhance its historic character. It was however noted that there was support for conservation style (flush) rooflights on the front slope.

4.4 The revised plans therefore seek to address the Council's objections to the triple height bay windows by reverting to double height bay windows similar to those previously approved in 2019, and supported by the Built Heritage Manager, with rooflights in the front roof slope.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 The most relevant planning policies relating to the historic environment are considered to be:

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990

5.2 This Act requires Councils to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area (section 72).

The Development Plan

5.3 Blackpool Council's Development Plan comprises of the Core Strategy part 1 (adopted 2016) and saved policies of the Blackpool Local Plan (adopted in 2006). The key heritage policies are:

Core Strategy Policy CS8 - *Heritage*, amongst other things this policy seeks to support proposals that retain, reuse or convert, whilst conserving and enhancing the significance of designated heritage assets and their setting.

Local Plan Policy LQ10 - *Conservation Areas*, amongst other things this policy requires that new development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, respecting the scale, massing, proportions, materials and detailing of similar building forms within the Conservation Area.

National Planning Policy Framework

5.4 The NPPF is an important material consideration and it seeks to conserve and enhance the

historic environment and it recognises that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance [para. 184].

- 5.5 Whilst the NPPF advises that the loss of a building or other element which makes a positive contribution to the significance of a conservation area should be treated either as substantial harm or less than substantial harm, it also accepts that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance [para. 201].

6.0 SUMMARY OF LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS

Listed Buildings

- 6.1 There are no listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of the site that would be affected by these changes.

Historic Parks and Gardens & Scheduled Monuments

- 6.2 There are no Registered Historic Parks and Gardens or scheduled monuments within the vicinity of the site.

Town Centre Conservation Area

- 6.3 The Town Centre Conservation Area was first designated in 1984, and subsequently extended in 2005 and 2014. The 2004 Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) notes that Clifton Street was first laid out in the 19th century for grand villas, and that Clifton Street was a prestigious area in which to live. However by the 1920s, all these properties had been converted into shops and the CAA also acknowledges that there has also been a considerable amount of demolition and rebuilding. Consequently, the buildings of Clifton Street today display an eclectic mix of architectural styles and historical features with many of the surviving buildings retaining period features.
- 6.4 However it is the case that the present nos. 3 - 5, Clifton Street appears to date to the mid-20th century, replacing earlier terraced properties that stood on this site, and it is therefore of no particular architectural merit or interest.

7.0 IMPACT ON THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 7.1 Having regard to the site's context the main heritage issues raised by this proposal would appear to be the potential impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 7.2 This property is a relatively modern mid-20th century building that makes little contribution to the historic character or appearance of this Conservation Area, and it is located within the built frontage along the southern side of Clifton Street where there is a range of buildings of different periods and architectural styles.
- 7.3 The removal of the existing box bay windows within the upper floor level will not result in the loss of any important historic fabric or architectural features, and has previously been approved by the local planning authority.

- 7.4 The pair of projecting bay windows now proposed extend through the first and second floors are similar to those previously approved, and which the Built Heritage Manager considered would improve the appearance of the building and enhance the Conservation Area. These new bay windows will add a more contemporary look and visual interest to this elevation, introducing a more vertical emphasis to the front elevation that reflects the design of similar bay windows on the neighbouring buildings.
- 7.5 The scheme also seeks to convert the roof space to new holiday accommodation and to light this space it is proposed to add four rooflights within the front roof slope. The details of these rooflights can be secured by condition to ensure that they meet the standards required by the Head of Built Heritage, however they will not appear as particularly prominent elements in the streetscene as the roof of this building is screened from public view at street level due to the height of the building and the neighbouring buildings, which are taller than nos.3 - 5, Clifton Street.
- 7.6 In determining the previous application the Council did not raise any objections in respect of the proposed changes to the rear elevation of the property to Cheapside, which included the provision of rooflights to serve the upper floor. Proposals for this elevation remain unchanged.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 In determining the previous 2019 application the local planning authority was of the opinion that the proposed improvements to the appearance of the building, would sustain the quality and heritage value of the Conservation Area. Similarly, given the similarities of the two schemes, it is our considered opinion that, for the reasons set out above, the (revised) proposed development will not harm the character or appearance of the Town Centre Conservation Area, or its overall significance.
- 8.2 Consequently this proposal complies with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and the local and national policy objectives that seek to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its significance.

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