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18/10/2023

Complex Needs Drop-In Service
59 Bell Street, Ground Floor Unit

Design and Access Statement

1.1 Context

The property is situated on the corner of Bell Street and Walls Street in the Merchant City neighbourhood of Glasgow's city centre. It is a 5-storey building of which the upper 4 floors are residential apartments and the ground floor is a commercial unit that this application relates to. It shares an internal courtyard with the neighbouring buildings on the block. The building is located within Glasgow's central conservation area and is Category B listed.

1.2 Ownership

HSCP are leasing the property from G&M Estates Ltd.

1.3 Existing Unit Interior

The unit was previously used as a retail store but is currently lying vacant. The space is open plan, with a grid of structural columns, a small toilet/tea prep area in the corner, and a raised floor towards the back of the unit.

The ceiling is comprised of suspended ceiling tiles and the walls are plastered, with a stucco finish and a painted black timber box header. The floors are timber with a carpet covering, apart from the WC area which is vinyl. Heating is a warm air system supplied via ducting from a modern boiler situated in a boiler room at the rear of the property. Please refer to the existing floor plan and images of the space.

1.4 Existing Unit Exterior

The unit has cast iron framed shopfront glazing which is believed to be from alternations carried out in 1908. Above this is a deep timber fascia, painted black, that protrudes out from the glazing at an angle with no lettering or signage. The glazing and fascia are in good condition, besides some expected wear and tear from weathering. Please refer to the existing elevations and images.

2.1 Use

Complex Needs is a new service delivery model that provides specialised services for individuals presenting with multiple, complex health and social care needs who are not able to engage with mainstream services in Glasgow. It represents the interface between Homelessness, Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services, Mental Health, Justice Services and third-sector organisations.

The intention for the unit is to enable HSCP to relocate part of the existing Complex Needs Service from the east end of Glasgow and establish a drop-in service that is more centrally located. This includes the provision of a number of medical treatment rooms and interview rooms for service users alongside a staff office area and auxiliary spaces to support the function. The project aims to create a welcoming, trauma informed space that provides vital services to those who need it while being discreet to the surrounding neighbourhood.

2.2 Design Principles

Following the principles of trauma informed design and biophilic design, the project aims to create a space that:

1. Is welcoming and treats all with dignity
2. Evokes a sense of calm
3. Makes all staff and service users feel safe
4. Fosters a sense of community

These principles can be achieved through integrating the following into the design:

1. Relaxed informal design, lack of barriers, unfixed furniture, use of colour, non-clinical design
2. Connection to nature, natural colour schemes, use of organic shapes, maximising natural light, well ventilated spaces, clear layout
3. Considered movement routes, sight lines, secure doors, protected entrance areas, staff only spaces, clear layouts and avoiding blind corners
4. Opportunity for information sharing, seating areas, staff chill-out areas

3.1 Proposed Layout & Appearance

The proposals involve the renovation of the interior space to include a reception, waiting area, 2 x interview rooms, 2 x medical treatment rooms, open plan office (150m²), toilets, clinical waste store, cleaners store, IT store and plant area.

The open plan office area and the reception are proposed along the window edge, to take best advantage of the natural light, provide active frontage to the street and avoid partitions abutting the shopfronts. The cellular spaces such as toilets, storage and treatment rooms are proposed within the depth of the floor plan as they have less requirement for natural light and will benefit from privacy.

A suspended ceiling is proposed in the same position as the existing ceiling which cannot be seen from the street and will conceal the required servicing above. The ventilation and heating system will be upgraded as required to meet the needs of this facility. The interiors will be finished to a high standard in line with the established design principles.

3.2 Proposed External Alternations

No alternations are proposed to the cast iron shopfronts or black timber fascia as part of these works.

The existing window manifestations will be removed and replaced with subtle, internally applied manifestations that allow a degree of privacy in the facility. The design of these is simple and in keeping with the character of the building, with not more than 20% coverage.

The existing glazed door units are proposed to be replaced to meet the security and functional needs of the service. The new doors will be of a similar style, with the frame width and colour matched to the historic shop fronts.

A new intake vent is proposed on the Walls Street façade above the existing bin store door. There is a louvred panel within the existing door as well as directly above it, providing natural ventilation to the bin store. The proposed vent will be matched in colour and style as well as recessed to tie in with the existing door. The option of locating this vent in the interior courtyard was explored as the preferred option, but due to the limited amount of external wall there would not be enough separation between the proposed intake and extract.

Internally mounted open bond shutters are proposed to secure the unit out of hours.

3.3 Entrance & Approach

There are two existing entrances to the unit that are to be retained. The main entrance is located on the corner of Bell Street and Walls Street and will be used by staff only. The secondary entrance is located further down Bell Street and will be used as a discreet entrance for service users.

3.4 Accessibility

Given the nature of the service users, all the internal spaces will be accessible for people with mobility difficulties. At least one of the medical treatment rooms will be wheelchair accessible, as well as the reception area and service user WC.

3.5 Bins & Refuge

Localised bins will be emptied to 2 x 140L bins located within the rear utility room which is naturally ventilated to the rear court. The property will have 2-3 allocated pick up slots during the week from the front street entrance which will be managed by staff.

Heritage Statement

Introduction and Listing Overview

The following statement has been prepared in reference to SG9 Historic Environment. Careful consideration has been given to ensure the historic fabric and character of the building and the street are not compromised by HSCP's proposals.

Below is the description of listing provided by Historic Scotland:

John Carrick and A B Macdonald circa 1890, altered and attic storey by Burnet, Boston and Carruthers, 1908. 4-storey and attic commercial building, painted ashlar, channelled to 1st, cast-iron framed building. 12-bay elevation to Bell Street, 9-bay elevation to Walls Street, both similarly detailed.

Good cast-iron framed shopfronts to ground dating from 1908 alterations. End bays shallow advanced and flanked by pilasters in each floor, tripartite windows. Otherwise all single light windows, architraved to 1st and 2nd. All with replaced sash and case windows with plate glass upper sashes and 2-pane lower. Cill band to 1st, deep mutule cornice over 2nd eaves cornice. Slated mansard roofs, projecting aedicular pedimented dormers, round arched windows. Some tall square stacks. Over end bays French style slated roofs pavilioned at angle.

External Alterations

Historic Frontage

In line with the guidance in 2.90-2.92, no alternations are proposed to the cast-iron framed shopfronts or timber fascia, leaving the original architectural proportions and style of the historic façade intact.

External Doors

The existing glazed door units (double leaf, not original) are proposed to be replaced with a single-leaf glazed door to meet the security and functional needs of the service. This will be within the existing structural opening. The new doors will be of a similar style, with the frame width, material and colour matched to the historic shop fronts.

Window Manifestations

The proposed window manifestations will be applied internally and have been designed to be simple and in keeping with the character of the building. Coverage not more than 20% total.

Security Measures

Internally mounted open bond shutters are proposed as it is felt these would have the least visual impact on the street façade while providing the level of security required for the service out of operational hours. In line with section 2.93 it is understood open bond shutters would be considered acceptable.

Ventilation

Section 2.85-2.86 of SG09 states that proposals for external fittings should not be located in such a manner or position that they would harm the character of a listed building. We feel the proposed location of the vent (in line with the existing bin store door, directly above the natural ventilation louvres) will be very subtle, tying in with the existing features of the façade such as the windows above. In line with 2.86d, the vent will be matched in colour and style to the existing door further minimising visual impact. Further to this, the portion of facade in question (ground floor of Walls Street) is not of the same architectural quality as the shop frontage wrapping the corner and along the length of the Bell Street façade or the residential part of the building above.

Signage – Due to the nature of the service, no signage is proposed.

Internal Alternations

General – No structural changes are proposed to the interior of the unit. The interior space has been heavily modified during previous works therefore it is felt our interior proposals will have no negative impact on the historic value of the unit. Careful consideration has been given to the proposed layout to ensure open plan spaces are located along the historic shop front edge and the cellular spaces are located at the back of the unit, avoiding partitions abutting the windows and retaining an active frontage along the street edge.

Suspended Ceiling – A new suspended ceiling is proposed in the same position as the existing. In line with section 2.91e, this ceiling cannot be seen from the street due to the configuration of the existing windows with the tinted upper glazed panel. We understand there is a desire to restore the historic ceiling heights and any potential cornicing that may be hidden, however, due to the level of servicing required it would be unfeasible not to have a suspended ceiling in this instance. The exposed servicing would be very unsightly but also a major hazard to the service users accessing the facility.

Impact of the Proposed Changes on the Listed Building

HSCP have carefully considered the amount and location of the proposed work in relation to the historic value of both the building and its street context and believes there to be no negative impact. The proposed work largely relates to an interior renovation, with the original proportion and architectural style of the historic shop fronts being unaltered. We believe the renovation of the space will have a positive impact on its environment, with active frontage contributing to the character of the street and injecting life back into a unit that has been vacant for many years and left to deteriorate.