

Le Page Architects

PLYMOUTH GIN DISTILLERY
STILL ROOM DOOR

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

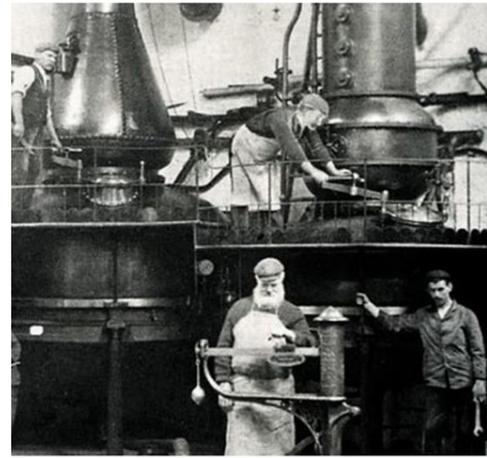
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Introduction

The site address is Plymouth Gin Distillery, 60 South Side Street, Plymouth.

This Design, Access and Heritage statement has been put together in support of the Listed Building Application to increase the height of the existing timber internal Still House door.

Photographs

1. The Still House
2. The Loading Area
3. The Still House



Site Context

The Building History and Character

Blackfriars Distillery is located on Southside Street, in the historic Barbican area of Plymouth. This lies within one of the cities conservation areas, and the building itself is Grade II* listed.

The Distillery, has been in operation since 1793 and used to be one of the most significant manufacturers of gin in the UK. The original building opening onto Southside Street is located in what was once a Dominican Order Monastery built in 1431. Local tradition suggests that some of the Pilgrim Fathers may have stayed here while the Mayflower was in the harbour for repairs before finally setting sail for North America.

As a whole, Blackfriars Distillery is a complex patchwork of buildings acquired piecemeal by Coates and Co, distillers of Plymouth Gin. The plan of the building in fig.1 indicates that the range facing Southside Street is formed of four or five long, narrow plots typical of urban property. Thick walls survive between nos 60, 61, 62 and 63, which would originally have been boundary walls. No. 63 is double the width of nos. 61 and 62 and was originally two plots, but by the time of the earliest Ordnance Survey map it was a single property with a central passage leading from the street to the rear yard, so any earlier separation can only be conjecture.



The building on the corner of Blackfriars Lane (no. 60) is perhaps the most interesting. It has a number of Tudor features, such as the 4-centred arched doorway beside the main entrance and a door on the first floor (see photos below). The layout and surviving details suggests that it was a mid-16th-century first-floor hall beside a courtyard.

Plymouth Gin is still made in the Distillery today, with much of the historical distillery equipment displayed throughout the site along with some of the original gin stills in remaining in situ.

The buildings have undergone many contemporary interventions in recent years yet still keep their sense of history. Being a working Distillery, many of the rooms and spaces have been configured to allow for the demands of the manufacturing process of the Gin yet many original features have been retained and conserved, maintaining the buildings unique character.

Le Page Architects have been involved with work at the distillery for many years, and have a good understanding of the site, its complexities and sensitive nature of the historic fabric. Following the severe fire that damaged the Barbican Kitchen Brasserie and Distillery roof in February 2008, conservation architects of Le Page were also involved with the re-construction of the Distillery buildings. Recent completed

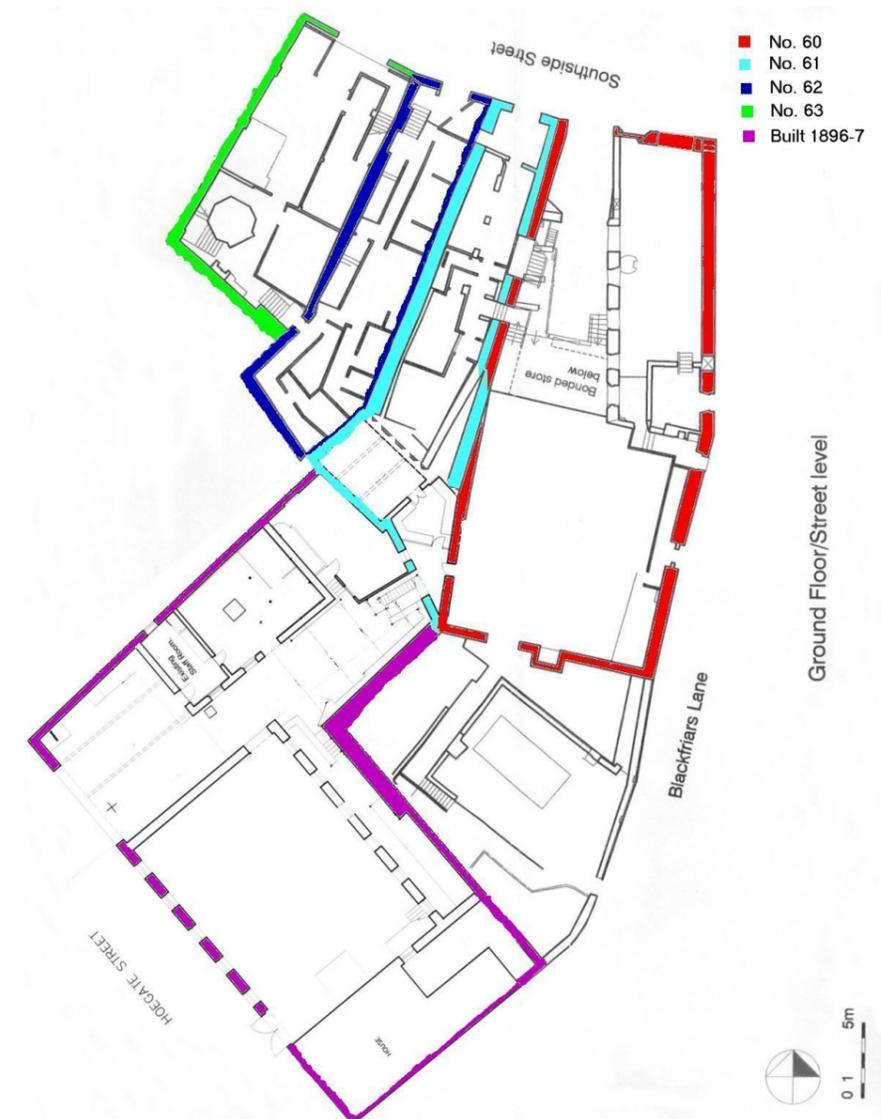


projects to the site include construction of a new courtyard building to house the distillery's new boiler and upgraded power and heating systems.

A separate report written by Jean Manco on the history of the Distillery accompanies this Heritage Statement. The report was originally written to support the application for Listed Building Consent for alterations following the fire.

Plymouth Gin Distillery is now a popular

Figure 1: Part Distillery Plan



The Site and its Features

The Distillery sits along Southside Street in the heart of the Barbican and overall is formed from 5 main building sections. The Southwest section holds the Shop and Refectory bar which sits within the suggested oldest fabric of the site. The Northwest, larger wing, currently encompasses the successful Barbican Kitchen restaurant as well as the redundant far northeast spaces around the Chimney to the far end. The central section hold the Gin stills and holding vats, with the entrance atrium connecting all these sections together.

To the western extremities of the site sit the Warehouse and Bond buildings for the distilled Gin once produced.

The Visitor centre brings people through from the entrance shop into the Still room and beyond to the Botanicals and Tasting experience spaces.

The first floor Refectory Bar also offers Cocktails to the public outside of opening hours.

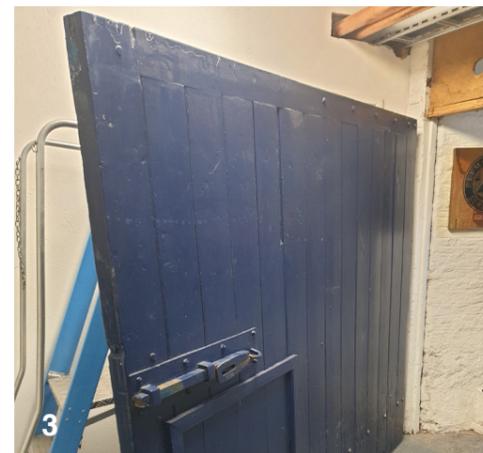
The Restaurant is independently leased by the Tanner Brothers and is a satellite of the Visitor Experience, again offering meals and drinks out of four times.

The eastern rooms of the complex currently house the Board Room for the company, but little else. This first floor space formed part of the redevelopment proposals approved by Plymouth City Council (19/01791/LBC), and provides for a new layout to the existing board room including an internal staircase providing direct access to the cast concrete flat roof above.

Jean Manco Report 2008

A full historical report was commissioned by the Distillery in 2008 and completed by Jean Manco a renowned building historian. This report has been fully referenced to assist in design process and building intervention required for these proposed works.

The footprint of the site is formed up from Nos 60-63 Southside Street as referenced in the Jean Manco report, with the flat roof where the proposed opening is to be sited in former house No.63. No. 62 was destroyed in the blitz and redevelopment of this occurred in the late 1950s/early 1960's. At this time it is considered that the flat roof and parapet frontage was constructed to Southside Street.



Photographs

- 1: Still House Door in Opening
- 2: Internal leaf of door
- 3-4: External Leaf of door

Design Development

The existing door has been the subject of historical joinery changes, but retains its character and original ironmongery hinges.

The door currently sits to the original opening between the main still room and the northern pedestrian access corridor, and is used on a daily basis by the distillery team.

Previous M&E pipework ran above the opening leaving an opening to the doorway above the actual door itself. This is currently infilled with crude hardboard and studwork framing.

Aesthetically and for fire protection this opening needs to be enclosed.

Design Proposals

It is clear from the upper transom that the door has been altered in the past, more than likely reduced in height to accommodate previous pipework that ran behind it (which would have stopped its open/close operation). This proposal aims to add 300mm to the door to allow it to proportionally look more comfortable and also to remove the hardboard and carcassing and replace with new fire proof plasterboard which will be plaster skimmed and painted white to match the surrounding masonry walls.

The additional 300mm will be made up of softwood panelling to match the existing sitting above the existing transom with a new upper transom incorporated as well as extension to each of the side frame members.

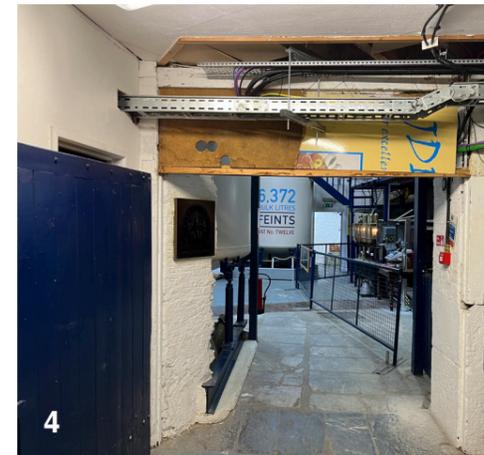
All existing ironmongery will be retained.

Access

The works to the door will not alter access through it, nor its operation.

Photographs

1. Internal Leaf of Still Room Door
2. Existing hardboard over door
3. Existing hardboard over door
4. Existing hardboard over door
5. Historic Hinges



Heritage Statement

The overall Distillery has a rich and varied history. Over the years, there have been alterations and modifications to the spaces, however it has always retained its unique original features that give the building its special character.

Le Page Architects have been involved with much work that has taken place at the distillery and have therefore developed an in depth understanding of the building and the sensitive nature of working within its historic fabric.

The new joinery proposed above the existing door timberwork will ensure a historical timeline is still retained (by the retention of the original transom in its current location) and so there will be no negative historical impact on the asset. The whole door will be painted to match so allowing the timberwork as a whole to blend into the Distillery.

The replacement plasterboard boxing above will allow the sites complex M&E pipework to remain and enhance the construction to the overall historical doorway structure opening.

Conclusion

The proposed works will allow the Distillery to ensure required fire protection is achieved between zones and replace unsuitable construction with new high quality reflecting the Still Room space as a whole.