

34-36 Argyle Place

Design Statement

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The proposal includes the refurbishment of a vacant 5-bay office premises located at 34-36 Argyle Place, Edinburgh. The property has been disused for an extended period and the opportunity to provide a high-quality food local amenity for the local area presents itself. This application includes a change of use class from (Class 4) office, to mixed use (Class 4) office and (Class 3) hot-food takeaway with associated seating area. The proposal focuses on creating a mixed development that primarily centres on the sale of cold takeaway food products, warm tea drinks, and various small convenience items. Additionally, a unique dining space for customers will be established. The design aims to provide functionality alongside a welcoming environment to accommodate 8-10 customers comfortably.

The refurbished basement will house a kitchen production facility. This facility will serve as the operational core, where food preparation and production will take place. It will also serve as a storage area for fresh food products, which will be available for purchase in-store and distributed throughout the city daily.

The objective is to transform this space into a functional hub that respects the architectural context while serving the immediate neighbourhood and contributing positively to the local community's food options.

2.0 Design Statement

2.1 Ground Floor

The primary front of house spaces are designed as a 'room-within-a-room', respecting the original architectural features and character of the building. A stainless steel panelled frame is strategically positioned forming a clear and efficient customer flow. A height datum of 2.4 meters is established so the original cornicing and ceiling rose details will feature above, respecting the historical valued elements of the building.

The steel panelled frame is organised around three key functional components. The first component comprises integrated food display units: one dedicated to cold takeaway food and the other for warm takeaway options. The second component is a sales counter designed to accommodate POS systems and an integrated hot water dispenser, specifically included for serving fresh East Asian teas. The third element is a slimline shelving unit, intended for everyday convenience products such as merchandise, bags, packaged snacks, and other essentials. To maintain a cohesive and unified aesthetic, all three units will be constructed from the same steel-clad timber, providing a distinct characteristic from the historic ceiling areas. A new, legible addition to the historic fabric which can ultimately be removed without trace.

A muted brushed micro-cement finish is proposed for the floor, offering both ease of maintenance and durability, crucial for the high-traffic nature of the business. Lighting fixtures will be strategically positioned to provide warmth and illumination to the retail sales counter and food displays, creating a focal point in the space.

The room adjacent to the retail space serves as a versatile dining area for customers who prefer to sit-in. This space also adheres to the 'room-within-a-room' idea. The panelled framing within this area will be constructed from stained timber to create a distinct visual connection with the functional steel in the retail space, while providing a more intimate atmosphere.

Cupboard storage units will be integrated seamlessly with the timber framing to ensure a unified appearance and provide essential storage space. In the centre of the room, a single timber dining table with accompanying stools will be positioned. This arrangement encourages communal dining and offers flexibility for internal events or different seating arrangements.

2.2 Basement

The basement area consists largely of non-original linings. Any proposed intervention will not affect any historical significant building fabric.

The basement kitchen production space prioritises functionality and hygiene. The kitchen walls will have panel cladding to maintain a hygienic environment. Commercial steel countertops will encircle the perimeter and create an island prep unit, providing ample workspace.

The central focus of the kitchen area will be the commercial deep fryer unit and commercial electric range cooker, both positioned along the far wall between two windows. This wall will be clad in heat-proof stainless steel. An integrated stainless steel extraction canopy with an O-zone deodoriser will be installed. The right-hand window will house the extraction and deodorising equipment, eliminating the need for unsightly and disruptive ducting.

To ensure adequate illumination, surface-mounted LED baton light units will be strategically placed. The flooring throughout the basement area will consist of hard-wearing non-slip vinyl, laid atop a plywood substrate, ensuring durability and ease of maintenance.

For plumbing convenience, new outlets can be easily installed, utilising the existing elevated floor in the kitchen space and connecting to existing water and waste pipes, simplifying the plumbing infrastructure while maintaining operational efficiency.

2.3 External Elevations

Restoration of the existing facade will form majority of the external works. The facade will be painted in dark, neutral masonry paint Lamp Black, Little Greene.

Proposed signage is small in scale, featuring a wordmark positioned on the upper right corner of the elevation. A protruding sign is located central to 36 Argyle Place.

The facade restoration will include the removal of the existing fan unit and associated glazing located in the central panel, to be replaced with like-for-like glazing. Additionally, any cracked glass will be replaced with like-for-like replacement glazing.

The proposed elevations aim to preserve the overall appearance of the street elevation, ensuring it remains in harmony with the historical fabric of the site. Beyond the specific improvements mentioned, we intend to maintain the architectural heritage and character of the site.

The rear elevation sash and case windows will be restored like-for-like and a kitchen extract grille will replace a basement window. The internally located odour control system ensures that any ductwork and machinery remains internal to avoid any external changes.

3.0 Summary

3.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposals aim to retain the original character, both internally and externally, while providing a high-quality architectural layer suitable for the occupants operation.

The proposals for the internal alterations are minimal, ensuring historic plasterwork is retained and expressed. Any removals concern non-original fabric which do not impact the character of the space.

The design has been developed to ensure the fabric of the building will be safeguarded and there will be no adverse impact on the character of the listed building. The proposed shopfront alterations will be in keeping with the rest of the streetscape.



Image

Visualisation of external facade, highlighting original frontage features and internal cornice and ceiling roses

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