Design and Access Statement

Internal works to the ground floor at The Ancient Unicorn, Bowes.

In 2020 following a successful Listed Building Consent the large ground floor bar area of the Ancient Unicorn was subdivided to create three en-suite bedrooms and to reduce the bar/lounge/dining area to serve solely as a small lounge. The Hotel has since changed hands and the new owner sees the provision of a larger function space/dining room and enhanced bar as important to the offer of the pub and the ongoing sustainability and development of the business. Accordingly minor works were agreed last July (letter to Jill Conroy 17th July 2023) to replace a bedroom on the ground floor with an extended bar area. A review of the use of the building involving the local residents has been held and this was considered a success and there was significant support for returning the remaining two bedrooms to public bar/dining room use.

The success of the new lounge/pool room and the overwhelming support for a larger dining and lounge area has led to the present submission to remove the ground floor bedrooms and reinstate the large open space. This will involve the removal of the recently inserted modern stud partition walls and the associated fittings along with some minor alterations to the area around the bathrooms to create both ladies and gents toilets. The work will only involve modern inserted materials and will return the building to its pre 2020 condition with minor changes in the modern toilet block area.

The approved works of 2020 included the creation of two new fire escapes, one to the front courtyard from the former window between the two bay window structures and one through the gents toilet to the rear garden. These will be retained in the new proposals as they are approved and provide important additional escape routes from the public bar area. In addition two windows on the modern kitchen block have been blocked up and replaced respectively as part of the previously approved scheme and the current proposals do not propose any alteration to those items.

In order to avoid an impact on the main tourist holiday season which will be starting at Easter in April, and to have the revised layout in place to capitalise on the potential for the property and the business it is proposed to undertake the works at the end of March. Whilst this does not provide much time to progress the application it is considered that as the works do not involve any changes to historic fabric or the original form of the building the historic asset would not be compromised or in danger of irretrievable damage. The timing is critical to ensure the continued viability and operation of the building and the business. An on the site record of the works will be compiled and provided to support the application in due course

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