

REINSTATEMENT OF SIDE ENTRANCE DOOR, OVERHAULING AND ALTERING THE USE OF ONE WINDOW IN CASTLE BOW TO PROVIDE ADVERTISING SPACE AND INSTALLATION OF HANGING SIGN OVER THE SIDE ENTRANCE DOOR AT CASTLE HOTEL, CASTLE GREEN AS AMENDED BY PLANS RECEIVED ON 23 JULY 2012.

Grid Reference: 322668.124572

Listed Building Consent: Works

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval

It is considered that the proposal is in line with Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of proposals relating to listed buildings. The listed building and its setting and any features of historic or architectural interest are, therefore, preserved in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. The works for which consent is hereby granted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended by S51(4) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A2) DrNo 12.1649/05 Rev A - proposed entrance to bar from Castle Bow as proposed

(A2) DrNo 12.1649/07 Rev B - proposed entrance to bar Castle Bow elevation as proposed

(A2) DrNo 12.1649/09 - location and block plan

(A1) DrNo 8 Rev A - Basement and GND Plans

(A2) DrNo 12.1649/09CB - Location Plan and Block Plan

DrNo 12.1649/12 - Projecting sign

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The windows and doors shall be painted in accordance with the agent's email received on 21 May 2012 unless any variation thereto is first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure details appropriate to the character of the Listed Building, in accordance with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and guidance contained in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of proposals relating to listed buildings.

4. No existing feature or structure, other than those for which consent is hereby granted, shall be removed, interfered with or adapted without the prior approval of a further listed building consent.

Reason: To ensure any alterations are in the interests of the character of the Listed Building in accordance Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and guidance in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of proposals relating to listed buildings.

Notes for compliance

PROPOSAL

Reinstatement of side entrance door, overhauling and altering the use of one window in Castle Bow to provide advertising space and installation of hanging sign over the side entrance door, as amended by plans received on 23 July 2012.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The Castle Hotel is an integral part of the group of listed buildings around Castle Green, which form the historic core of Taunton. It is attached on its south side to the Grade I listed medieval gatehouse, known as Castle Bow. Castle Hotel itself appears to date predominantly to the early C19, with later additions and was listed at Grade II on 4 June 1952. Castle Green, which incorporates the hotel is also a Scheduled Monument. Recent approved applications affecting the hotel include those concerned with the redevelopment of Castle Green (38/09/0388 and 38/09/389/LB), internal alterations to bar area and formation of disabled WC (38/04/0059/LB) and other alterations including a fire escape (38/00/0500/LB). The most recent application (38/12/0138/LB), which included the reopening of the side entrance, was approved on 19 June 2012.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - No observations.

ENGLISH HERITAGE (HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND) - No objection to reuse of doorway but considers domed fabric canopy an obtrusive addition. Suggests substitution with traditional hanging sign. Also has reservations with internally illuminated signs in window openings and loss of sash window in left hand window. Suggests left hand sign omitted and window opening retained as is.

SCC - DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ARCHAEOLOGIST - No reply received.

TAUNTON AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY - Two responses received to original application:

'In essence we do not oppose the proposal to utilise an existing doorway in Castle Bow, but feel that the ambience of Castle Bow as the entry to an Ancient Monument should be preserved. Even though Castle Green is being updated, and the North Street side of Castle Bow is heavily commercialized (to its detriment), the massive and forbidding aspect of the gateway arch should be retained.

We think the proposals will harm the setting of this listed building. In particular we think the proposed dome awning highly inappropriate, dislike the idea of converting the windows into what may be effectively be back lit garish signboards, and would plead that nothing that resulted in a much higher level of illumination than at present (for example, a flood of light from the doorway) should be permitted.'

and by letter received on 13 July the following was added:

'1. The choice of materials is highly inappropriate and out of keeping with the solid weathered, hard used and forbidding nature of the arched passage. In this comment we are not only considering the tacky and ridiculous awning, but also the materials used for the advertising display in the windows and the visual impact of the very modern glass doors (and the attendant illumination) that will be evident when the doors are pinned back.

2. Loss of sashes in window frames should not be allowed in a listed structure. Further, windows should retain the character of windows, and not be converted to advertising hoardings.

3. The very overt commercialization of this side of Castle Bow is itself inappropriate, and could surely be toned down without significantly affecting the custom that the Bar and Grill will receive.

We do not oppose - indeed, welcome - the changes to the external doors to ensure they open inwards.'

Representations

Cllr Meikle expressed concerns about modern intrusions under Castle Bow.

PLANNING POLICIES

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework,
S&ENPP9 - S&ENP - The Built Historic Environment,

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Castle Bow is one of the most historically important medieval buildings in Taunton and proposals affecting its fabric and setting must be very carefully considered.

The proposed reopening of the side entrance door is, in principle, accepted by the consultees, although the Civic Society do not support the glass doors in behind. This aspect of the application, together with other internal alterations, was assessed as part of the approved Listed Building Consent (38/12/0138/LB) and the impact on the historic significance of the hotel and Castle Bow deemed to be negligible.

Following the consultation response from English Heritage (a statutory consultee on applications affecting Grade I and II* buildings), the originally submitted signage scheme has been substantially amended, with the left hand window now retained as existing and, at English Heritage's suggestion, the awning replaced by a hanging sign. Further changes were also made in discussion with the planning case officer and no internally illuminated signs are now proposed. While the initial concerns of the planning case officer and English Heritage have been allayed, the more fundamental objections from Cllr Meikle and Taunton Civic Society regarding the impact of modern commercial intrusions must be considered. In essence, it comes down to whether the revised scheme preserves or enhances the character and appearance of Castle Bow and if it does not, whether the public benefit outweighs the negative impact.

Castle Bow, while medieval in origin has been subject to later external alterations, most noticeably early C19 'gothickisation'. The underneath of the former gateway has a substantially modern treatment, creating flat areas of rendering, and is already lit by modern lighting. I consider that its character has, to an extent already been compromised, and that in this context the proposed alterations would not cause harm to the significance of this heritage asset. I am also guided by English Heritage, who do not object to the scheme in principle and suggested the revisions to this application that the applicant has submitted.

Given that the applicant has now addressed the majority of the concerns that were inherent in the original scheme, including some of those of the Civic Society, and that the proposed works are not considered to harm the significance of this heritage asset, I recommend that in line with national and local policy and guidance Listed Building Consent is granted.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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