PLANNING
13 MAY 2008

Design, Access & PPG15 Statement to accompany a full planning and listed building application for proposed works to be carried out to Didsbury Village Restaurant, 846 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury

1 The Context



Image 1 (left to right) The Didsbury, Ye Old Cock Inn and Didsbury Village Restaurant

1.0 The proposal site is located on the A5145 Wilmslow Road within the upmarket and fashionable Manchester suburb of East Didsbury, situated approximately 5 miles south of Manchester City Centre.

1.1 Didsbury village restaurant and its neighbours are some of the oldest buildings in Didsbury and are situated in an area of particular historical importance known as the ancient heart of Didsbury. The original part of the building constructed in the late 18th century, faces onto what used to be the village green and is Grade II Listed. Other buildings in the vicinity are varied but mainly are also of considerable age and historic importance. They include two pubs - the adjoining Old Cock Inn and the Didsbury, St. James' Church with Fletcher Moss Gardens behind and the Old Parsonage, which dates back to the mid 17th century.



Image 2 Gate to the Old Parsonage



Image 3 The Cock Inn and Didsbury Village Restaurant – Late 19th / early 20th Century (estimated)



Image 3 Didsbury Village Restaurant in its current form

2 The Building

2.0 No particular architectural features are shared with the surrounding listed buildings, each having its own unique look and distinctive details. The prominent historical feature of Didsbury Village Restaurant being the doorway and windows at either side, with low sills and distinctive ached top lights. The large chimneys and feature chimney pots, whilst not unique add a to the character of the building.

2.1 The existing double depth two-storey cottage was we suspect originally symmetrical about the main entrance door. The right hand third of the main building (as viewed from the front) from the white door to the gable wall, looks like an early addition to the original cottage. Further and more recent additions have been added to the rear and the building now occupies almost the entire 235m² application site.

2.2 As can be seen from the photographs, the frontage of the building has been largely unaltered in recent years although the brickwork has been painted white and mock shutters have been added to the first floor windows. The blank window over the entrance is either original or an early alteration. Air extract grilles and the flush fire exit door are recent alterations.

2.3 The series of extensions to the rear are unsympathetic to the nature and age of the building and are now in a poor state of repair. The principal extension is a single story structure with a corrugated metal roof currently being used as the kitchen. Due to the high perimeter wall around the site the visibility of the rear of the building is extremely limited and from ground level only the kitchen extract chimney can be seen. However the metal roof can be seen from the first floors of neighbouring properties.

2.4 Internally there have been many cosmetic changes over the years. Chimneybreasts have been covered over and some exploratory work will need to be undertaken to find out if any original fireplaces remain. The existing winding stone cellar steps are still present but covered over by flooring. New steel cellar steps have been installed through a new opening in the floor. The ceilings at ground floor are characteristically low with exposed beams. The staircase behind the bar and the opening in the first floor through which it passes are not original. There are no significant or historical features in the more modern rear part of the building except perhaps for the boundary wall.



Image 4 View over extension from first floor window



Image 5 View of the site from the rear

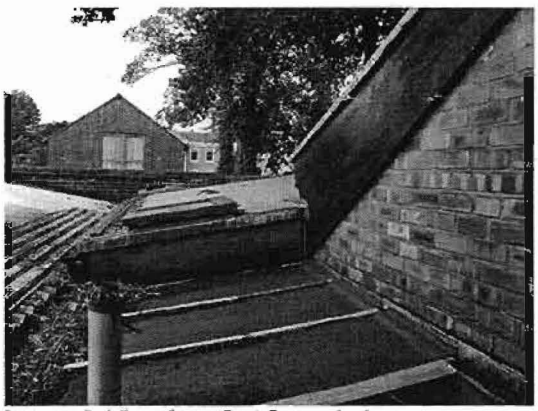


Image 6 View from first floor window

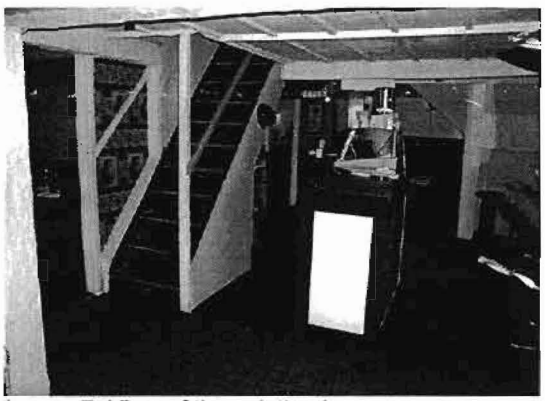


Image 7 View of the existing bar



Image 8 The existing Kitchen

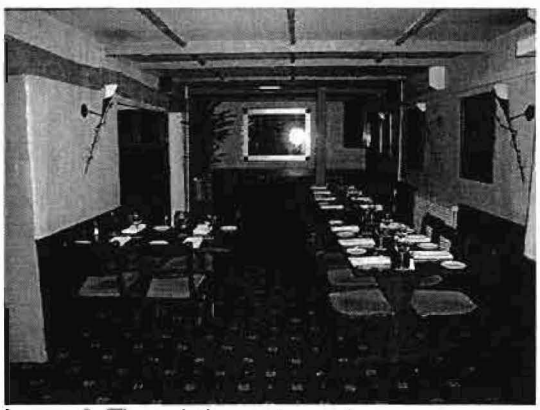


Image 9 The existing restaurant area

3 The Proposal

3.0 Our proposal is to restore the frontage as far as possible to its original appearance. Mock shutters will be removed along with the white masonry paint if it is possible to do so without damaging the brickwork. The external fire exit panel door will be replaced with something more befitting to the age and character of the building. Timberwork will be repainted in colours suitable to the restoration and input from the conservation officer will be welcomed and followed.

3.1 To the less historical rear of the building is where the majority of the alterations are proposed to take place. The existing extract chimney will be removed and the corrugated metal roofs to the single storey extensions will be replaced with timber with a covering to be agreed with the conservation officer. They will incorporate new skylights to provide daylight to the new restaurant and bar below. The rear of the building will also incorporate a new disabled toilet in what is currently a disused area beneath the stairs.

3.2 The kitchen will be moved to the first floor in the area of the early extension to the original cottage. Following a discussion with the planning and conservation officers, it is intended that the chimney on the gable wall be extended in matching reclaimed brick to contain and hide from view the main kitchen extract fans.

3.3 Internally we intend to make alterations to make the most of the space and where possible expose and make features of any historical features. The old winding stone cellar steps will be exposed along with any existing fire places. It is hoped that these features will be emphasised by the inclusion of modern features such as the structural glass table offering views of the cellar below.
Existing internal features that are deemed to be recent amendments to the building and are either unsympathetic to the buildings character or are simply no longer required will be removed. Such items include the bar, staircase behind the bar and the new cellar steps.

3.4 It is our intention to liase fully with the conservation officer to ensure that the proposed works are designed and carried out to his satisfaction. We fully recognise our responsibility in restoring the building in a sympathetic manner, in order to return it to its original appearance and to prevent further dilapidation.

3.5 No trees in the vicinity will be affected.

3.6 The building has now been stood empty for eight months and it is clearly in all interests to carry out restoration work to prevent dilapidation and deterioration of what is a very picturesque street scene. As statted in PPG15 par. 3.8 "The best way of maintaining the upkeep of a historical building is to keep it in active use."
It is our intention that the proposed refurbishment will benefit the local community and status of the area by providing a high quality scheme that is in keeping with the historic yet stylish, classy and cosmopolitan nature of the area.
The proposal will provide employment and an increase in the choice of social activities, therefore contributing to economic regeneration and general enhancement of the area.

ACCESS

4 Travel to and from the site

4.0 Didsbury is easily accessed by car from the Manchester ring road (M60) a mile to the south. Manchester City centre is approximately 5 miles to the North along the Kingsway (A34) and Wilmslow road (A5145)

4.1 There are regular bus services to Manchester and frequent trains between East Didsbury Station and Manchester Piccadilly. In the near future Manchester's Metrolink tram system will be extended to Didsbury and Manchester airport approximately 3 miles to the south.

5 The Building

5.0 There is currently a step of approximately 100mm from pavement to internal finished floor level. This will be amended without causing any significant alteration to the street scene to provide level approach with a threshold not greater than 15mm.

5.1 A disabled WC will be provided on the ground floor in accordance with approved document M.