SINCLAIRS OYSTER BAR
MANCHESTER

Proposed Enclosure to rooftop Plant

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

June 2009



DAVID LEWIS ASSOCIATES

Chartered Architects
Conservation and Historic Building Specialists

Delf View House
Church Street
Eyam
Derbyshire
S32 5QH

Tel: 01433 630030

1.00 DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

1.01 Sinclairs Oyster Bar is a city centre pub comprising a three storey pitched slate roof building with an attached flat roofed ancillary block which also serves the adjoining Old Wellington Inn. Sinclairs originally dates from the 17th century and the Old Wellington is 15th century. Both were moved from their original site in 1997. The ancillary link building was constructed at this stage. Both buildings were Grade II listed prior to their re-location, and we have been informed, by the Planning Officer, that the listing has lapsed.

1.02 This application is limited to the area of the building covering the existing roof top plant room and the adjacent roof to the lift enclosure. The plant room is the lower of the two roofs and was the subject of a previous planning approval, ref. 074356/FO/2004, which reduced the roofed over area and increase the space open to the air, in an attempt to improve air flow over the comfort cooling and cellar cooling condensers. The plant was still kept hidden behind the stone parapet wall and was covered over by a grating. The lift shaft enclosure was not affected by this application.

2.00 PROBLEMS BEING EXPERIENCED

2.01 The original site of Sinclairs Oyster Bar was within the old Arndale Centre. Sinclairs and the Old Wellington both abutted the Arndale Centre and enjoyed a large area of available service space which was located in the Arndale Centre Building. This available space was lost when the buildings were re-located. The ancillary block was constructed in order to replace this service area and new additional cellar areas were provided. It was necessary to provide environmental control of these cellar areas by means of ventilation and cooling, and space was required, adjacent to the plant room, to accommodate the necessary condensers, as shown on the attached drawings. Other condensers were also accommodated to serve comfort cooling to bar areas. In addition, large ducting was required to provide input and extract air to cellar areas and these ducts also terminate in the plant room, and the adjacent external space.

2.02 During the reconstruction work great pains were taken to carefully integrate the above services into the building, and the result justifies this attention to detail. All equipment is hidden from view, either under a lead covered flat roof or under a grey coloured metal grating which is set behind the parapet. This roof area can be viewed from the nearby Exchange Square, which is at an elevated level, and from

the higher floor levels of the surrounding Listed Buildings. However the appearance of the lead flat roof and grating behind the parapet is perfectly in keeping with the traditional form of the building group.

2.03 The ideal arrangement for cooling condensers is that they should be sited with maximum free air circulation around them. This was known when the buildings were reconstructed and a pragmatic decision had to be taken to compromise on the efficiency of the units in order to maintain the integrity of the building form. However it has transpired that this inefficiency is greater than expected and this has resulted in unacceptable environmental conditions in the building especially within the basement kitchen where conditions have been very difficult, especially in summer, and the management have received a number of staff complaints.

2.04 The equipment is regularly serviced, cleaned and tested. The maintenance company have been consulted regarding possible solutions to the problem including a possible re-design of the systems, replacement of equipment etc. in order to create more space and improve system capacity. However there is little scope to do this with available technology and within the spaces available. The continuing problem is that equipment is enclosed by building structure, and units are too close to each other, and this is restricting the air flow around the units and causing some short circuiting of air to ventilation systems. This seriously reduces the efficiency of ventilation and cooling systems in the building, especially those serving the basement areas.

2.05 The original installation was also so tightly designed that no space was left to accommodate new installations. This has caused problems to subsequent equipment installers when attempting to address problems with the system.

2.06 The alteration works carried out in accordance with approval ref. 074356/FO/2004 have had a disappointingly small effect on the efficiency of the cooling system. Problems have continued to be experienced especially with the cellar cooling systems and there is no bigger problem for a pub than warm beer. All systems have been re-assessed recently and all possible methods of improving matters, within the present restrictions imposed by the building, have been considered in detail.

3.00 PROPOSALS

3.01 It is quite clear that the main single issue is that there is not enough external area to accommodate the number of condenser units required and which will provide the required airflow to enable the equipment to operate at its working efficiency. The planning officers have expressed concerns about adding any visible condensers, possibly sited on top of the lead covered roof. Other engineered solutions, to the condenser problem, were investigated by our consultants but no significant proposals were forthcoming.

3.02 Our specialist consultants have consistently maintained that the most effective way to resolve the problem is to move the cellar cooling condensers from present low level plant area and relocate them on the lift shaft roof. Condensers are no more than a glorified pump and they are usually enclosed by utilitarian, metal boxes. It is usually possible to hide them out of site therefore their ugly appearance is not an issue.

3.03 We are now proposing to move the cellar cooling condenser on to the lift shaft roof, as urged by our specialist consultants. We are assured that this should resolve the cellar cooling problem and, because it will free up space in the low level plant area, it will improve air flow there and should allow a more efficient operation of the equipment there.

3.04 The critical issue is one of appearance. We were responsible for the original design of the service link joining Sinclairs and the Old Wellington and we are anxious that the design integrity is not compromised. The lift shaft has a flat roof set behind a moulded stone parapet approx. 300 mm. high. Cathedral Street is quite narrow and the combination of the parapet and high tower means that, from near the building, anything located on the roof would be virtually out of sight. However, it would be seen from distance, especially from the top of the steps to Exchange Square. We therefore feel that any enclosure to the condenser should be simple and unfussy, but should relate to the existing building in regard to materials, and a traditionally detailed lead sheathed box is the answer, all as shown on the drawings.

3.05 The unit proposed by our specialist consultants is a Searle ref. MDA 23, as shown on the attached submitted leaflet. It can be fixed, as shown, with the fan extract on top, but we are proposing to fix it on its side. This makes the enclosure thinner and

allows us to put a solid roof to the boxing. The slenderness of the unit means that we can locate the housing to the rear of the rooftop area and it will therefore be further out of sight. Some thought has previously been given to making the enclosure big enough to accommodate future equipment needs, but our specialist consultant has advised that, for optimum efficiency, the unit should not have any other plant around it.

3.06 The lead detailing will be similar to that used on a lead-clad, flat-roofed dormer, using traditional lead rolls. There is a fair deal of leadwork already in the roof area, which can be seen from Exchange Square, and the new enclosure will relate to this.

3.07 A secondary issue is noise. The attached report illustrates that the relocation of the condenser will have no effect on the ambient noise levels of the area.

3.08 The appearance of the low level plant room will remain unchanged.

3.09 With regard to access this area is strictly restricted and the only issue in this area is the safety of maintenance personnel. There are existing harness anchors to the full length of the roof. Access to the flat roof can be achieved by stepping over the parapet wall, from the existing grille over the plant room.