

Ref. 01202101/Bridgewater House
Date: 16 October 2022
Subject: Design/heritage response to MCC re Bridgewater House

Introduction

This response on design and heritage related issues follows a meeting on site between the applicant, their advisors and officers together with comments from the Urban Design and Conservation Officer, dated 5 October 2022. Regard has also been had to the comments received from The Georgian Society. Amended drawings/information including dwgs issue sheet is on this WeTransfer link here: <https://wetransfer.com/downloads/61ec1168c17af82b1e954984d6199eed20221013112412/488667857a3477773d7a7b51b75a51bb20221013112430/68e33f>

It is anticipated that the below will form the basis of the agenda for the meeting on 18 October.

As noted by officers, most recently in the Urban Design and Conservation Officers comments, dated 5 October, the building has been vacant since the mid 2000s and has suffered from progressive deterioration and it's special architectural and aesthetic qualities as a listed building is significantly compromised. The proposals to renovate and bring the building back to a positive residential use have to be considered in this context ie a significant public benefit will result despite certain detailed areas which will inevitably be compromised/conditioned due to the condition of the building and the need for a viable and long term future use for the building and the wider site.

Windows

Most of the windows are in extremely poor condition and the majority will need replacing as it isn't practical or viable to restore them, particularly if the correct level of acoustic protection and insulation is to be achieved and the retention of the shutters.

If, post consent (and this can be covered by a suitably worded condition) it becomes apparent that windows not surveyed due to access restrictions are capable of being restored and the shutters suitably retained then this can be done at the time.

We attach photos from architect Neil Snook of a very similar project where new Georgian windows have been installed using appropriate glazing and which has allowed the shutters to be properly restored and retained in situ - which would not have been possible if secondary glazing had been used.

Ceilings/cornicing

In the original front building, our client will save and repair existing cornicing where it is largely intact. If they cannot realistically be salvaged in the principal rooms at the front then they can be re-instated, again with the detail to be agreed by conditions.

Ceilings here will be fire protected and we will explain how this is proposed at the meeting.

In the late addition extension, the roof has largely collapsed a long time ago and the ceilings destroyed. On the ground floor at ceiling level it is proposed to retain the brick vaults overhead.

Front elevation

The fences previously proposed dividing the front garden area have been removed from the drawings and landscaping will be enhanced. It is noted that officers support the installation of the front boundary railings.

As suggested by officers, two solid traditional doors with fanlights to the front elevation have been included, replacing the previously proposed full height windows in these positions.

Rear elevation - Dormers

Our client has reduced the size of the dormers and amended the glazing bars. This results in a better relationship with the windows below and the building. These and the rooflights represent the minimum required openings to deliver the necessary habitable space in the attic. The materials/details can be conditioned.

Rear elevation – doors

The attached drawings show existing and proposed but we can clarify in the meeting.

Side elevations

Noted that officers welcome the retention and restoration of the original/historic door to the 19th Century addition to the Great Jackson Street elevation and the suggested retention or re-instatement of the fan-light is agreed.

New doors to the east (courtyard) elevation of the 19th Century addition are only shown where strictly necessary to the proper working of the building.

Noted that proposed new doorways to the west (Crown Street) elevation are supported as well as the proposed railings. Subject to traditional detailing – to be shown on drawing.

Rainwater goods

All existing plastic gutters and downpipes will be replaced with ironware goods representing a significant heritage benefit.

Works to roof

As noted, the original slate roof covering was removed some years ago. Some of these have been stored in the basement and their condition is mixed. Our client is willing to use original tiles from the site on the prominent elevations fronting onto Chester Road and Great Jackson Street and the remainder will be new or reclaimed to match. Our client though would prefer using all new traditional slate tiles throughout to ensure consistency of appearance and quality for the long term.

New build elements

Our client has made a number of changes to the detail of the elevations to the new building and we have attached CGIs to illustrate how these will appear. We believe that the relationship with the listed building and the wider surroundings is appropriate and does not harm the setting.

We look forward to discussing the above when we meet on 18 October.