

Heritage Impact Assessment

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Removal of floors for insertion of Temporary Haki Stair at the George Hotel, Huddersfield.

1.0 Introduction

The assessment relates to the proposed alterations to remove floors, insert a temporary Haki Stair within Block A and to make good and reinstate the floors following its removal. It is a standalone document that does not relate to other Heritage Impacts regarding the works as a whole.

The works are required for general access and emergency egress during the works.

The Heritage Impact Assessment has been produced for the client to meet the requirements of paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and inform them, their agents and the planning authority of the historical significance of the site, together with the impact of proposals on its heritage value and significance.

2.0 History & Significance

The History & Significance of the George Hotel is defined in the main project documents

2.1 Significance of the temporary stair zone

The area currently comprises service zones and bedrooms of general but not unique interest within the building. Its heritage significance is as a part of the hotel as a whole, rather than having specific heritage significance in its own right.

3.0 Proposals

It is proposed to remove the floors, including floorboards, joists, noggings, pugging and lath and plaster or later ceilings. The floor includes trimmers providing bracing to half vaulted arches supporting hearths within upper rooms. The hearths and supporting part arches will also require removal as they will no longer be restrained by the floor structure. Any wide floorboards recovered during the strip out will be retained for repair of floors elsewhere in the building. Other resulting materials will be disposed of.

A temporary stair will be inserted within the space created during the construction phase and removed prior to completion.

Following removal of the stair, the floors will be replaced. The new floors will comprise new softwood timber floorboards (narrower board widths than the original are acceptable as this is a complete replacement), on new softwood joists with noggings. The joists will be sized to meet modern requirements, rather than previous sizes. They will be fixed to wall plates, fixed with stainless steel anchors to walls to avoid further damage to the original masonry. Previous pockets will be infilled in masonry. Hearths will not be replaced. Below the floors the ceilings will be reinstated as agreed elsewhere.

3.1 The Need for the Works

The works are required for access and fire egress during the works.

4.0 The Impacts of the works

The works will result in a loss of some original fabric and a reduction in evidential value, however the floors are not unique and repeat detailing elsewhere throughout the building.

Reinstatement of the floors in a matching, though modern construction will retain the appearance and informative value of the spaces. The resizing of boards and joists will avoid confusion regarding the age of the works. The date of the reconstruction should be recorded on tags within the floors for the avoidance of doubt.

Fixing the joist on poleplates to the walls avoids further damage to historic masonry which may occur whilst pocketing in timbers.

5.0 Conclusion

Providing the stair allows the works to reinstate block A to proceed in a safe, timely and economic manner, this is of public benefit in contributing to the viability of the project as a whole, ensuring the safety and long term security of the listed hotel building.

There is a loss of some historic fabric beyond that initially proposed, including lifting of floor boards, the loss of joists and the loss of some hearth stones. This is considered of minor harm due to loss of original material. This material is not unique to the stair zone however as the detailing is repeated throughout the building.

There is a conservation benefit in that the recovered floorboards may be used to sympathetically repair other floors within block A in without the need to source new timbers, particularly as the sourcing of wide, matching floorboards is difficult.

On completion, the floors will be reinstated in matching materials ensuring that the appearance and understanding of the spaces is retained.

The proposals should be considered in the context of national guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 215 states that 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'

The impact on the heritage asset (the loss of the floor joists and hearths) is minimal. There are benefits in the proposal in terms of the regeneration of the hotel as a heritage asset and it being put to it's original and long term viable use.

It is considered the proposals meet the requirements of the NPPF.

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