

Planning Committee: 20 February 2007

Item Number: 5

Application No: W 06 / 1718 LB

Registration Date: 27/10/06

Town/Parish Council: Leamington Spa

Expiry Date: 22/12/06

Case Officer: John Beaumont

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Reformed Church, Spencer Street, Leamington Spa, CV31 3NE

Part demolition, conversion, refurbishment and extension of existing building for use as theatre and associated facilities FOR Leamington & Warwick Dramatic Study Club

This Listed Building application is being presented to Committee to accompany the related planning application W06/1719. The representations in this report and the issues raised related solely to the 'listed' status of this building.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Town Council : No objection.

CAAF : "The idea of turning the building into a theatre was welcomed as this was thought to be a very appropriate use. It was suggested the legal position concerning the burials in the basement and burials to the rear of the building needed to be checked out.

In terms of the basement, it was felt that a full structural appraisal was needed to ensure that the amount of structure proposed could be properly removed and the barrel vaulted ceiling retained. It was felt that possibly more brickwork should be retained if possible. The ventilation from the basement was also considered as there did not appear to be any form of ventilation equipment shown. It was felt that there should be some access from the basement in the bar to Spencers Yard for audiences to use on a summer evening.

It was felt that there would need to be a lot of items of detail such as internal lighting, air conditioning, windows curtaining that which further details needed to be requested.

There was significant concern about the style of the new extension to the building. Although the roof is described as a mansard, it is not a true mansard but just vertical cladding to the building. It was felt that this had far too horizontal emphasis whilst the main building has a strong vertical emphasis. It was felt that a brick extension with stronger vertical emphasis reflecting the existing style would be more appropriate. It was also suggested that possibly some of the cast iron window frames could be reused in the new building. There was a strong

feeling that the external element of the new building needed to be reconsidered in architectural terms as it would have a strong influence on the character of Spencers Yard which is essentially a brick area with strong detailing, maintaining traditional Victorian windows. Details such as external lighting still needed to be resolved."

English Heritage : This application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of your specialist conservation advisor.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- (DW) ENV12 - Protection of the Setting of Listed Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- (DW) ENV11 - Retention of Listed Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- DAP6 - Protection of Listed Buildings (Warwick District 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- Government Advice is contained in PPG15, Planning and the historic environment.

PLANNING HISTORY

Listed Building Consent was granted in 1996 for the conversion of the basement to a restaurant (reference W06/0533LB). Subsequently, consent was granted for the removal of an existing access ramp to the front of the building, construction of new steps, ramp and railings (reference W2003/1062LB)

KEY ISSUES

The Site and its Location

The United Reform Church building is a Grade Listed Building located within the Conservation Area. It fronts onto Spencer Street and is adjoined on that frontage by residential buildings. To the rear is Spencer Yard where buildings have recently been restored and reoccupied for arts related activities; access to the Yard is obtained from a service road which links onto Spencer Street close to its junction with Victoria Terrace/Bath Street. Adjacent to the north-east boundary of the site is the Rainbow Nursery which has its access onto Spencer Street. The existing Loft Theatre with its rear vehicular access is served off Spencer Yard and is located in the north-east corner of Spencer Yard; the main pedestrian access to the existing Loft Theatre is obtained via the Victoria Colonnade which fronts onto the River Leam adjacent to Victoria Bridge.

Details of the Development

This is an amended application which now contains the following principal elements:-

- The conversion of the existing building to a theatre with a basement bar and toilets.
- The demolition of existing single storey elements to the rear of the building and their replacement by a larger structure which will extend into Spencer Yard beyond the footprint of the existing building. This structure would contain basement changing and storage facilities, ground floor workshop, storage, meeting rooms and first floor rehearsal rooms; a rear access staircase is proposed. The design of the rear new extensions has been amended to be a predominantly brick building with the upper storey being expressed as a vertical mansard style roof with dormer windows. The rear staircase would be largely glazed with a full height 'feature' render panel alongside.
- To the front of the building it is proposed to construct a new replacement access ramp with a front wall and railings incorporating sign boards. A position for the name 'Loft Theatre' and sign boards are shown on the frontage of the building.
- On the rear of the building is shown a roller shutter door to serve the theatre workshop and storage areas.

Assessment

I consider the key issues to be considered in the determination of this application are the effects of this proposed works on the historic character and appearance of this Grade II Listed Building.

I consider the internal changes to the listed building would secure the protection of the sense of space within this former church whilst introducing sensitive changes to enable the new use to be undertaken. The alterations to the front of the building would achieve a new means of disabled access whilst reintroducing a sense of enclosure to the front of the building which originally has a wall and railings to Spencer Street. The proposal for advertising the new use are modest and I consider they would be acceptable.

At the rear of the building, I am of the opinion that the elements of the building to be demolished would not threaten the historic integrity of the building and are essential to enable the new use within the building to function. The design of the new extensions has been amended to be predominantly brick to reflect the character of both this listed building and that of others fronting Spencer Yard and whilst they will be larger and more extensive than the existing outbuildings, I do not consider this would unacceptably detract either from the setting of the

existing Listed Building or Spencer Yard. The design does incorporate a glazed staircase and render panel which will be a prominent feature on this rear elevation but, in my opinion, this new elevation will not detract from the Listed Building itself and will add to the contribution this development will make to the 'life' of Spencer Yard. I note the concerns of CAAF with regard to the roof design of the new rear extension but subject to the choice of materials, I consider this will help to 'break' up the massing of this building; furthermore I consider the reuse of the basement to be acceptable subject to appropriate conditions to ensure the existing features of the building are properly maintained.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT, subject to the conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS

- 1 The works hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent. **REASON** : To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the approved drawing(s) 2266-13 and 2266-12 deposited with the District Council on 27th October 2006 and Drawing nos. 2266-05D, 2266-06C, 2266-07D, 2266-08C, 2266-09B and 2266-10D deposited with the District Planning Authority on 23rd January 2007 unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Local Plan Policy ENV3.
- 3 Samples of all external facing materials to be used for the construction of the development hereby permitted, shall be submitted to and approved by the District Planning Authority before any constructional works are commenced. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 4 All rainwater goods for the development hereby permitted shall be metal and no development on site shall take place until a sample of the rainwater goods has been submitted to and approved by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.

- 5 No works for the installation of measures for sound attenuation and fire protection within the building shall be undertaken until a detailed specification of such works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. Such measures shall be installed strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 6 No mechanical extraction or air conditioning equipment or flues shall be installed within or attached to the building unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The installation shall be undertaken strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 7 No works for the repair or alteration of the existing staircases shall be undertaken unless a detailed specification of proposed works has been first submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 8 No new opening hereby approved shall be formed within the existing building unless details of those openings have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The openings shall be constructed strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 9 All new and/or relocated soil and vent pipes with their connecting waste pipes shall be located in accordance with a scheme first submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.

- 10 All areas of the retained building exposed by demolition and not to be enclosed by new building works and existing windows shown to be infilled shall be made good in accordance with details first submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 11 The redecoration of any room or circulation area (including staircases) within the interior of the building shall not be undertaken until such time as a detailed specification of such works which takes account of all fixed features within those rooms and includes details of all lighting and power fittings has been approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The redecoration shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 12 No works shall be undertaken to the basement unless and until a method statement to demonstrate how the proposed works to the vaulted roof will maintain the structural integrity of the building and detailed drawings to show how this vaulted roof will continue to be expressed within the finished scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 13 No works for the construction of any new feature identified in (a) to (m) below shall be commenced unless and until large scale details of its design and appearance have been submitted at a scale of 1:5 or such other scale as may be agreed in writing by the District Planning Authority:-
 - (a) all new internal doors and door furniture;
 - (b) hydraulic platform/lifts;
 - (c) basement bar;
 - (d) glazed screen;
 - (e) box office;
 - (f) new seating;
 - (g) spiral staircases;
 - (h) staging;
 - (i) secondary glazing to windows and blackout curtains;

- (j) sound and light control cubicle
- (k) modification to existing first floor lobbies;
- (l) treatment of upper gallery including glazed screen;
- (m) all new internal light fittings, including stage lighting, with details of installation fixtures;

The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and 12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.

- 14 No works shall be carried out on the site which is the subject of this consent until large scale details at a scale of 1:5 of the following items have all been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority:-

- a. All brickwork details on the rear extension hereby approved (including eaves, recessed brick panels, string courses and plinth);
- b. New dormers and louvered panels;
- c. Glazed screen and all new windows and doors;
- d. Roof construction in the new extension hereby approved;
- e. New rainwater goods;
- f. Rendered panel and lettering thereon;
- g. Rear roller shutter door;
- h. External staircases, ramps and hand rails thereto;
- i. New gates, boundary walls, piers and railings, including details of how railings would be set into a plinth;
- j. New sign boxes set into railings, sign boards on front of building and lettering to read 'Loft Theatre' on front of building.

The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : To protect the character and appearance of this Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Policies ENV11 and ENV12 of the Warwick District Local Plan.

INFORMATIVES

For the purposes of Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2003, the following reason(s) for the Council's decision are summarised below:

In the opinion of the District Planning Authority, the proposed development does not adversely affect the historic integrity, character or setting of the listed building, is of an acceptable standard of design and detailing and preserves the

character and appearance of the Conservation Area within which the property is situated. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the policies listed.