

DECISION DELEGATED TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Application No: H16-0154-19 **Applicant:** Mr Oliver Sneath

Proposal: Removal of disused painted stone fireplace, removal and bricking up of kitchen serving hatch and dismantling of wood and glass entrance way

Works to the exterior front of the building including installation of an external light and replacement of a doorbell.

Location: The Sessions House Sheep Market Spalding

Terminal Date: 12th April 2019

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019

02 Development Management
03 Design of New Development
29 The Historic Environment

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

NPPF 2019;
Section 16.

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	0
IAN MARSHMAN - HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OFFICER	0	0	0	1

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Background

The Sessions House dates from 1843. It was built by a Leeds Architectural practice that also built the Courts at Boston. The designer was a Lincolnshire Architect based in Sleaford. That it is relatively intact is a key component of its Significance as a listed building. The applicants have, as a

condition of their purchase, retained a number of key fixtures and fittings including paintings and law books which has contributed to maintaining its historic interest.

A previous application was approved which comprised change of use and the installation of a bathroom.

The originally application included a Heritage and Design Statement (APS) which did however allude to these later plans. A further approval was given for alterations including; Install log burner, remove various modern stud walls, replace water service to building, remove and replace all office strip lighting.

Proposals

This application relates to:

Removal of disused painted stone fireplace, removal and bricking up of kitchen serving hatch and dismantling of wood and glass entrance way

Works to the exterior front of the building including installation of an external light and replacement of a doorbell.

Consultations:

LCCHistoric Environment Officer
Comments:

"No archaeological input required."

Assessment:

The applicant was asked to clarify several points on the following issues:

- comfortable with the submission, however we do need a plan showing where the existing and new doorbell are/will go.
- There is no information on the age or significance of the fireplace or justification for removing it. It looks original, and unless there is a strong justification, we would be concerned to see it removed.
- Removing the later glass screen and blocking up the hatch would obviously be improvements!

And the applicant provided this detailed response:

"Please see attached plan showing the doorbell positioning we have planned.

Regarding the fireplace, we are unable to verify its age as original plans for the building are seemingly impossible to find. Despite trips to the Spalding Gentleman's Society, Lincoln Archives, RIBA library (London) and endless communications with the MOJ, LCC and SHDC we have been unable to uncover any significant information to help with this type of enquiry. The fireplace in question is one of a number that we are lucky enough to have in The Sessions House. Many of which are unused, however none of which we are looking to remove beyond the one in question. Our belief is that all of the fireplaces in The Sessions House, with the exception of the one which we need to remove, are a feature to the room they are in and enhance the look and feel of the rooms and the building overall. I have attached the photos of all our fireplaces in order to show this point and also to show the identical style the one we are looking to remove has to one other within the building. Many of the fireplaces including this one have been so heavily and repeatedly painted that their material can not be certified without damage.

The fireplace that we need to remove is in a room which contains 5 doorways (2 of which are double), a window and 2 Radiators. These all drastically limit the amount of usable wall space we have available to enable the effective use of this room. As the fireplace is not standing on a chimney breast it will not look out of place for it to be removed.

Our plan for the area of the building which remains C3 (our house) is its continued conversion and sympathetic renovation into our family home. I specifically say the word sympathetic as I hope it is clear from the work carried out so far that our intentions for the building are to avoid work that will impact or change the nature of the building significantly and when it is necessary, keep it to a minimum. Most noticeably with the main courtroom and adjoining Buffalo room: Our work here has been minimised and our plans have evolved to ensure these rooms are best used whilst maintaining their important features and sense of history. We have also readily compromised after our previous discussions on earlier plans which were to remove the wall on the ground floor that currently has the 'hatch' in it, which separates the kitchen from this central reception room."

The works are very minor in nature and while the removal of the fireplace is technically a loss of historical fabric this is of negligible significance, overall these types of changes are acceptable and are inevitable as a consequence of the change of use to a dwelling and was foreseen in the earlier applications and does not represent substantial harm to the listed asset.

The applicant has submitted a thorough photographic record and all necessary supporting documents and information.

Recommendation: that the application is APPROVED