

<b>Agenda Item</b> A14	<b>Committee Date</b> 11 May 2009	<b>Application Number</b> 09/00125/LB
<b>Application Site</b> Old Blacksmiths Shop Aldcliffe Road Lancaster Lancashire		<b>Proposal</b> Listed Building Consent for the conversion of the Old Blacksmiths Shop to 4 no dwellings
<b>Name of Applicant</b> H2O Urban LLP And British Waterways		<b>Name of Agent</b>
<b>Decision Target Date</b> 9 April 2009		<b>Reason For Delay</b> To be considered alongside the full planning application 09/00123/FUL
<b>Case Officer</b>		Mrs Jennifer Rehman
<b>Departure</b>		No
<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>		Approve with conditions

## **1.0 The Site and its Surroundings**

- 1.1 The property known as the 'Old Blacksmith's Shop' is a building within the former British Waterways Depot, which is located on the south side of Lancaster Canal within the Aldcliffe Conservation Area. A more detailed description of the surroundings is provided in the report to application 09/00123/FUL, which is included on this committee agenda.
- 1.2 The structures are a collection of buildings sited at the north-eastern end of the yard, and comprise buildings that were originally defined (on historic maps) as part of a timber yard. The former smithy itself is the westernmost and tallest structure within this particular group and is a two-storey stone and slate building, with the original first floor external access steps visible from the canal.
- 1.3 Behind the Smithy (facing away from the canal) are a brick extension and a wooden canopy, which are both later 19<sup>th</sup> Century additions to the site.
- 1.4 The building in the centre of the group is known as the 'Wagon House' and is a single-storey stone building under a slate roof.
- 1.5 The buildings at the easternmost end of the site are also of stone construction and slated. They are also single-storey in height, although However part of this building has a double-floor height, suggesting that the first floor was removed at some point with the exception of its principal beams. Therefore, it is capable of accommodating an additional storey within its existing interior.
- 1.6 These buildings all form part of the Grade II listing of the Smithy, and were restored (after falling into serious disrepair) in 1991.
- 1.7 Other existing buildings in the yard, which are incidentally not attached to the group of buildings in question, are to be demolished. These are no more than open-fronted timber storage sheds and they are not included within the curtilage of this Listed Building Consent submission.

## **2.0**      **The Proposal**

- 2.1      The proposal seeks to retain all of the existing Listed Buildings within the red edge, with the exception of the removal of the timber canopy structure which is to be permanently removed. The buildings will then be converted to provide four dwellings, (two 3-bedroom and two 4-bedroom) known as Plots 10-13. For clarity the proposed, detached Plot 14 is outside the red edge of this Listed Building submission.
- 2.2      In order to facilitate the conversion a number of new internal openings are made in existing walls, most predominantly in the Smithy. The existing internal staircases are to be removed (although the historic external staircase is retained), whilst there is a small area of wall demolition on the rear elevation of the Smithy in favour of reconstruction in stone to allow wall thickness to match the other areas of the existing building.
- 2.3      However it is recognised in the Listing that these structures were altered in 1991 as a consequence of their repair, and many of the historic internal features were lost.
- 2.4      The exterior of the group of buildings is still impressive and warrants protection and reuse. The scheme proposed therefore attempts to incorporate as many of the existing window and door openings as possible, and attempts to limit the amount of new openings and alterations. The stone and slate materials predominant throughout are also retained, whilst the existing brick extension to The Smithy is retained in brick.
- 2.5      Taking the first part of The Smithy (Plot 10) first, all existing windows and doors are retained. A new door is inserted in the gable elevation, whilst the railings to the external staircase are extended in materials to match the existing. A separate door is inserted in the stone wall adjacent to the building, to allow separate (lockable) access to the garden area of Plot 10. Two small conservation-type rooflights are added to the roof, on the rear elevation.
- 2.6      Plot 11 is the remainder of The Smithy, and the existing openings on the canalside elevation are opened up and reused. An existing rooflight is removed in favour of a lightly smaller conservation-type rooflight. The rear elevation currently has four rooflights, and these are removed in favour of smaller conservation rooflights. The removal of the timber canopy allows the stonework to be visible, and a new window and door is included on this recessed elevation.
- 2.7      Plot 12 involves the Wagon House in the centre of the group, and this is predominantly developed at single storey with only attic storage in the roofspace. Two windows are retained on the canalside elevation and a further window is altered to create a door. The timber doors here are however replaced in favour of two smaller windows, although the existing head to the doors is retained. All windows and doors on the rear elevation are retained and reused, whilst existing (rectangular) rooflights are removed in favour of more discreet conservation-type rooflights.
- 2.8      Finally, Plot 13 combines the buildings at the eastern end of the site, with part of the double-height space given over to two bedrooms, with the remainder of the living accommodation provided at the ground floor. All existing window and door openings are again retained, with the exception of two blocked-up doors on the canalside elevation, which are altered to form windows (but again retaining the historic door head). This building witnesses two new rooflights in the canalside elevation, and five smaller rooflights in the rear elevation.

## **3.0**      **Site History**

- 3.1      The relevant site history is discussed in the report to application 09/00123/FUL.

## **4.0 Consultation Responses**

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory consultees:

<b>Statutory Consultee</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>English Heritage</b>	Offer <b>no comments</b> on the scheme and advise the Council to determine the application in accordance with national and local policy guidance.
<b>County Archaeology</b>	<b>No objections</b> subject to conditions relating to removal of permitted development rights, details of all surfaces to be agreed (including road surfaces), and a restriction in size of vehicles during construction. These conditions would be imposed on the full application, should permission be forthcoming. No formal archaeological excavation is necessary, and no building recording is required because the existing buildings have few internal features.
<b>Lancaster Civic Society</b>	<b>No objections to the principle of the use</b> , however objections are raised in reference to other parts of the scheme (The Packet Boat House and the new buildings).
<b>Lancaster Canal Trust</b>	<b>Concerns</b> regarding the fencing treatments to Plots 10-13, and the potential to non-residential reuse of the buildings. Other concerns not relating to this individual listed building consent application are reported in the 09/00123/FUL report.

## **5.0 Neighbour Representation**

5.1 All representations are discussed in the report to application 09/00123/FUL.

## **6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies**

6.1 In terms of this Listed Building Consent application, the relevant Development Plan policies are:

### **Lancaster District Core Strategy (July 2008)**

Policy SC5 - Achieving Quality in Design – This policy seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the positive characteristics of its surroundings and the quality of life of the District by improving the quality of development and promoting good urban design.

Policy E1 - Environmental Capital – This policy seeks to safeguard and enhance the District's Environmental Capital by, for example, enhancing and protecting urban greenspace, listed buildings and conservation areas.

### **Lancaster District Local Plan (April 2004)**

Policy E33 - Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings – Seeks to ensure that proposals for alterations to a listed building do not have an adverse impact on the special architectural or historic character of the buildings or their surroundings.

National Planning Policy Statement 15 (Planning & the Historic Environment) is also relevant.

## **7.0 Comment and Analysis**

7.1 In respect of this Listed Building Consent application, the main issues relate to the quality of the conversion and whether the alterations proposed are sympathetic to the fabric of the building and its surroundings.

7.2 The residential proposals here do involve considerable internal alteration but, as the applicant's Heritage Statement correctly identifies, much of the historic internal fabric of this important and prominent building was lost due to earlier remedial works. In some circumstances residential reuse of historic buildings can conflict with the retention of historic features, but this is not the case here.

- 7.3 However the shape, siting and external appearance of this assemblage of structures does benefit its listed status and the group of buildings serve as an important reminder of the site's former use. Their setting, running adjacent to the Lancaster Canal, and the varied scale of the structures add further interest to the group. It is therefore imperative that the exterior retains its architectural significance.
- 7.3 Reusing these buildings is more problematical than that of the Packet Boat House at the opposite end of this site, due to the aforementioned variations in scale and the need to ensure that the units created benefit from appropriate privacy. That said, the scheme before Members has sought to retain much of the group's character and uses traditional materials.
- 7.4 The window and door arrangements proposed are acceptable and will be attractive when viewed from the Canal and the wider Conservation Area. The new rooflights will be conservation-type (i.e. not protrusive) and are smaller in scale than the existing rooflights, which are to be removed.
- 7.5 The setting of this group is not adversely affected by the provision of the garden areas, subject to the satisfactory agreement of boundary treatments (Post and wire fencing, shrouded by landscaping, is proposed).
- 7.6 It is therefore our view that the alterations have been handled sensitively, with respect for the main form of the building and its setting within the group and the Conservation Area.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

- 8.1 This proposal forms part of a wider reuse of the site. The residential use does not conflict with the protection of historic assets, and much of the existing form of the building is retained, although there are some new door, window and roof openings.
- 8.2 In general terms reuse of the building is to be encouraged, and in concluding that there are no adverse impacts upon the listed building or its surroundings, this is a proposal that will be beneficial to the appearance and character of the locality. Members are advised that this proposal can be supported.

## **Recommendation**

That Listed Building Consent **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard Listed Building Consent
2. Amended plans condition
3. Development to accord with approved plans
4. All internal and external materials, treatments and finishes to be agreed
5. Schedule of details and finishes, including windows, doors, heads, cills, jambs, rainwater goods, eaves, verge, rooflights, and metal railings to be agreed
6. Garden boundary details to be agreed
7. Precise material schedule for external refuse stores and bicycle storage areas to be agreed
8. Samples of stonework and lime mortar pointing to be agreed

## **Human Rights Act**

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

## **Background Papers**

1. None.