

Design, Heritage and Access Statement

79 Fulford Road, York, YO10 4BQ



**Higgs Young Architects
June 2017**

Introduction

This planning application proposes the development of a redundant brownfield site to provide 9 residential units with landscaped parking courtyards and a small neighbourhood café.

The application site is on the north side of Fulford Road and extends back to St George's School grounds. It is not in a Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings on or adjacent to the site. There are however historic structures of local interest on the site – two coach houses to the rear of the site and stone arches fronting Fulford Road.

This proposal takes retention of the existing historic stone arches as the starting point for the design of a café below a small block of 5 flats. The coach houses will also be retained and converted to create 4 houses.

The proposed design and layout works within the existing context to repair the urban grain, to visually improve the streetscape on this prominent 'gateway' site into York and to regenerate the site and Fishergate local area.

The design proposals have been influenced by the following aims:

- The retention of the stone arches and their incorporation into the proposed residential building fronting Fulford Road
- To create a sustainable, viable use for the arches that the local community and general public can enjoy
- The retention and conversion of the coach houses at the rear of the site to residential
- To respond to the existing site context, improve the streetscape and repair the urban grain
- To create a high quality, sustainable residential development with a mix of flats and houses that maximize internal and external amenity for their occupants

1.0 Existing Site

The application site is rectangular and approximately 741 sqm or 0.0741 hectares. It has a southerly boundary of approximate 13m fronting Fulford road, with the other three boundaries adjacent to surrounding properties. The site extends approx. 60m back to meet St George's School playing fields. The topography is level with a slight fall of only 300mm from the rear of the site to Fulford Road.

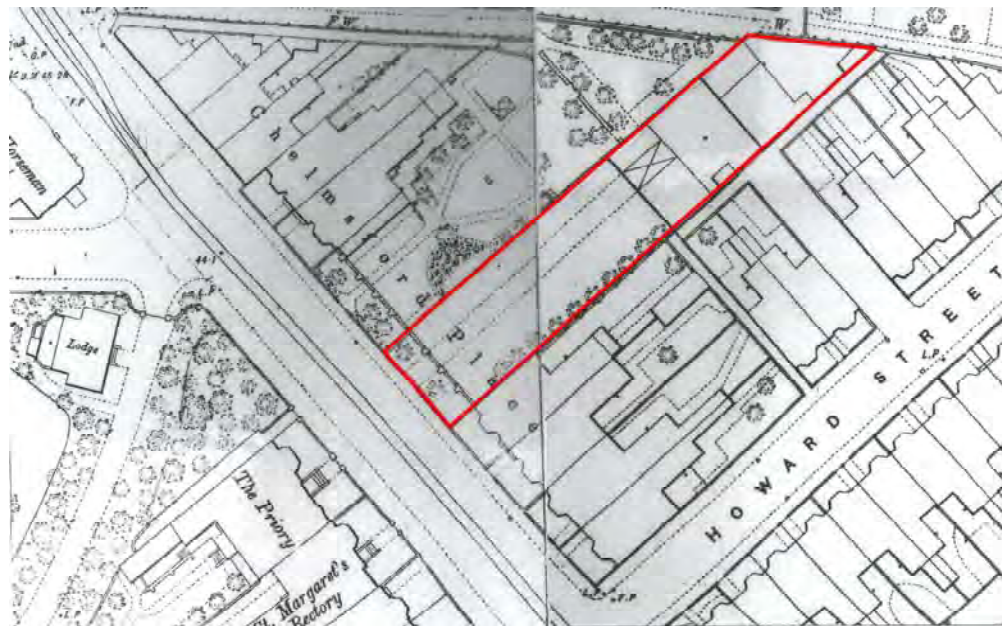
Open areas are overgrown with scrub and weeds and there are no existing trees on the site. The area of permeable land is approximately 278 sqm hence, the existing built footprint is 463 sqm.

There are a number of existing buildings on the site which are derelict and have been vacant for many years.

1.1 Site History - The 'Theatre Royal' stone arches

The site was originally part of gardens adjacent to 'Manor House' on Chelmsford Place and opposite 'The Priory' (now a Hotel). The garden extended north to James Terrace (since demolished) and east to the rear of houses on Howard Street. At the rear of the grounds were two blocks of coach houses which exist today albeit in an altered and derelict state.

When the Theatre Royal York was remodeled in 1879 part of the original stone façade (by architect John Harper 1834) was relocated to create a decorative screen along the Fulford Road frontage.



Map 1891 showing the stone arches relocated to Fulford Road/Chelmsford Place (York Explore Map Ref: 4/98 & 111) Application site in red.

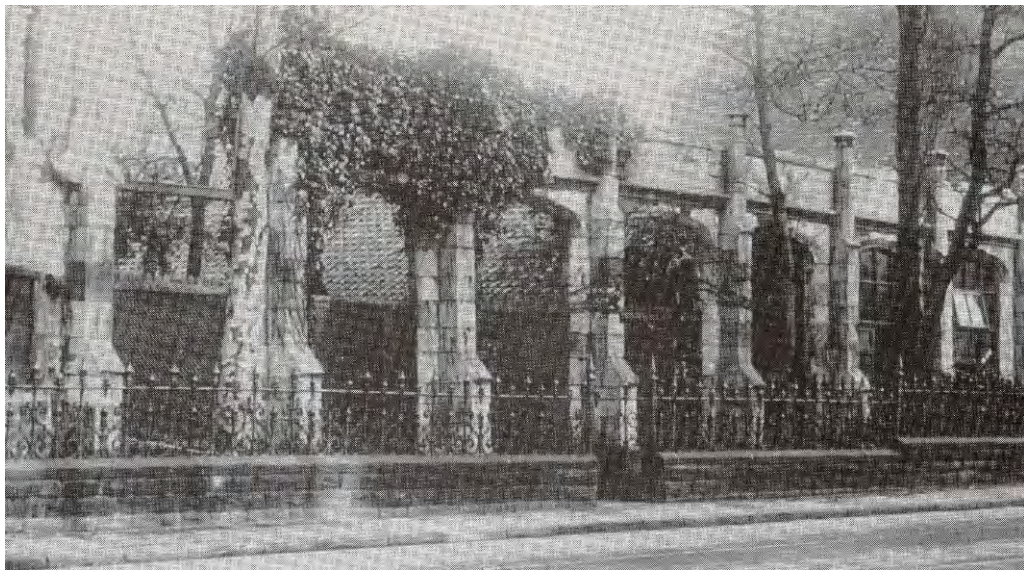


Image of York Theatre Royal pre 1879 (source unknown)



Watercolour painting by George Fall (1848-1925) (YORAG 1515)
Showing the stone arches in their original context

The above images indicate that here were seven arches originally to the frontage of the Theatre Royal York which were left open as a colonnade, possibly with a further arch in the corner return. They had buttressed piers which extended approximately a meter above the archways with decorative stone finials and caps. When the Theatre Royal was remodeled they were removed and rebuilt in Fulford Road with one left open and braced with a steel beam, as seen in the photograph below. A section of stone infill was constructed adjacent to Manor House with two small windows.



Photograph of stone arches forming a screen to the garden of Manor House
(Evelyn Collection York Art Gallery)

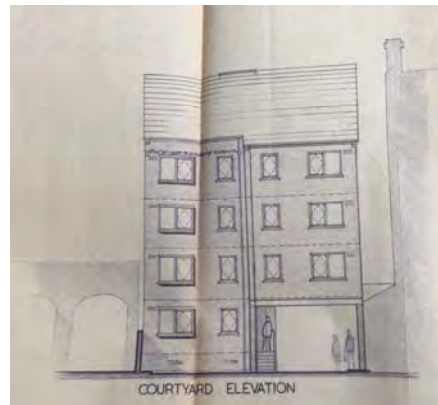


Fulford Road 1965 Infill stone section adjacent to Manor House
(Photo Imagine York Ref: 453 180 4894)

1.2 Planning History Affecting the Arches

In 1979 Ellwood Court Flats were constructed adjacent to the current application site. This development for a modern 4 storey block of self-contained flats was first made in 1975 and made no reference to any existing buildings nor the stone arches being extant at the time. Following a lengthy planning process the proposal finally was approved at Appeal in 1979 and to the question of whether the development affected any ancient monument the answer was 'no'. (7/00/313 A, B & C planning files CoYC). The stone arches were not indicated on any plans or drawings for the Ellwood Court site and one could assume that they were not extant at the time or were demolished without protest.

The remaining arches as existing on the current application site were however indicated in contextual drawings for Ellwood Court but there is a lack of consistency in their portrayal and in the planning proposals of Ellwood Court Vis-Williams Architects took no account of them in formulating their design for the site.



Vis-Williams Architects approved design for Ellwood Court (CoYC Planning files)

At this time, vehicular access to Ellwood Court's rear parking area was considered from Howard Street but officers recommended an access from Fulford Road would be preferable. This new vehicular access allowed the Saxon Guesthouse planning permission for 5 parking spaces at its rear with access via the Ellwood Court archway (7/00/313/AA 1982). Today the archway accesses approximately 22 parking spaces. The Saxon Guesthouse retained a small fragment of the wall and this remains in situ today as part of their internal accommodation.



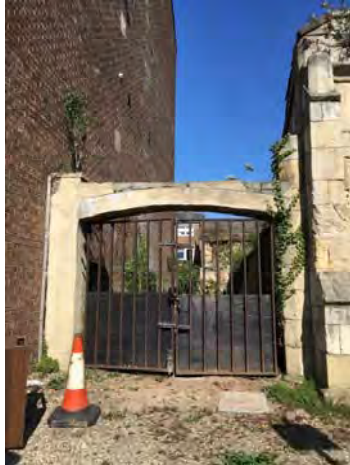
The Ellwood Court development removed a large section of the stone screen and made no attempt to relate to the remaining stone arches. Saxon House retained the ground floor portion of its stone side extension.



Further relics of similar stone can be seen at the Priory Hotel garden opposite the site and also scattered about the car park. These arches appear to be relics from the Theatre Royal arches, possibly salvaged during construction of Ellwood Court. Recycling, re-use and relocation of old stonework is evident in follies and structures across York and it is in this tradition that the current application proposes carefully taking down the arches and rebuilding them in a new position on the site.

1.3 Planning History – The Application Site

There is little planning history on the site which has been vacant and derelict since Pipkins Nursery closed some years ago. The building was previously used as a car store, repair and cycle workshop. One of the stone arches was opened up after the development of Ellwood Court in 1979, with a low concrete arch and gates added to allow vehicular access alongside the building.



In 1992 change of use was granted for the site to become a children's day nursery, known as 'Pipkins' (7836/PA)

The coach-houses and the courtyard between them remained separate to the nursery building and continued to be used for the repair and storage of cars by the previous site owner, continuing to use his private access from Howard Street to run his business.

The site was sold with vacant freehold to the current owner/applicant in March 2017.

1.4 Current Planning Applications

At time of writing applications to demolish and redevelop the site are undetermined. The previous owner submitted a demolition notice ahead of the sale of the site and buildings (17/00256/DMNOT).

Following this City of York Council issued an Article 4 Notice on the historic stone arches on 3rd March 2017. An amendment to the original notice was made on 21st March 2017 by the purchaser of the site but no decision has been received to date.

A new demolition notice (17/00998/DMNOT) has been submitted by the current site owner/applicant (17th May 2017) and this is also in abeyance whilst a proposal and methodology for the retention of the historic arches is agreed.

On an adjacent site within the applicant's ownership a stand-alone application for a single family house (17/00994/ful) was validated 12/05/2017 and a decision is pending.

2.0 Site Context

2.1 Southwest Boundary – fronting Fulford Road

The context and the existing setting for the 'Theatre Royal' stone arches facing the Fulford Road is one of diverse architectural character, materials, scale and detailing.

The southwest site boundary fronts the Fulford Road and faces the Fulford Road Conservation Area, characterized within the locality of the application site by mixed uses and 19th century Victorian housing. The boundary of this Conservation Area specifically omits the northern side of Fulford Road, the application site and adjacent buildings. Unfortunately, every property on this side of the road has replaced its original timber windows with upvc casements.

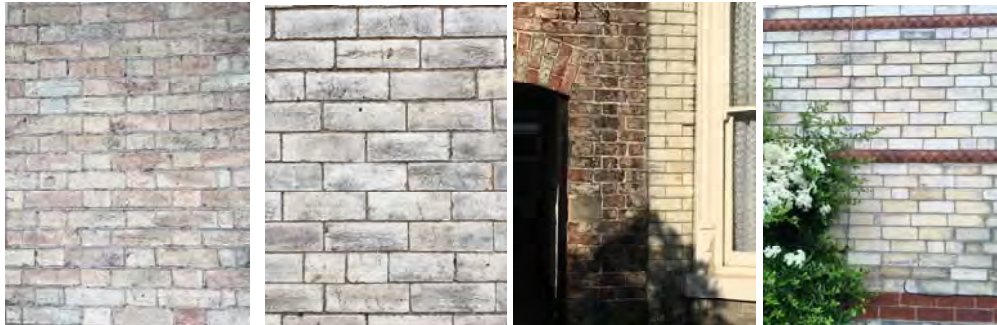
There are two Grade 2 Listed Buildings within view of the site (both within the nearby New Walk Conservation Area) - The Lighthorseman Public House and The Lodge on Grange Garth. The Lighthorseman PH was built in 1870 of white gault brick to the front and orange/brown brick to the rear. It has a slate roof and decorative stone detailing, however, most of the frontage has been overpainted in cream and grey paint. The Lodge built in 1835 is one of the oldest remaining buildings in the locality and is of pale cream gault brick.



Directly facing the application site is The Priory Hotel. This architecturally eclectic large 3 storey Victorian house was built in 1877 and converted to a hotel use in the 20th century. It is of polychromatic, mainly dark pink/red brick with stone copings and window surrounds, displaying a diverse range of fenestration including 3 types of bay window, arched, pointed, circular timber sashes and more recently upvc casements. It has a high slate roof with distinctive Dutch gables and mansards but is not listed.



The prevailing building material to both sides of the Fulford Road in the proximity of the site is brick and there is a wide variety of colours used - from brown, deep reds, through pinks to whites.



To the East of the site are four terraced houses at nos. 81 -87 Fulford Road. These are traditional 2-storey Victorian brick buildings, with sash windows and ground floor bay windows set back within private front gardens. All have been historically converted to be guesthouses and HMOs with many alterations, including replacement pvc windows, large dormer roof extensions and significant infill to their rear gardens. The built character is ad hoc and in a diverse range of styles and materials.



To the west of the application site Ellwood Court presents a tall 4 storey block of flats with a high pitched roof, built in 1979 in a modernist style of brutalist brown textured brick and with concrete roof tiles. Whilst of its time, the materials do not accord with the local brickwork or stone and the horizontal casement windows do not relate to the prevailing Victorian grain and proportion.

Ellwood Court is a storey higher than the adjacent historic 19th century rustic stone 3 storey houses which comprise the 'Saxon Court Guest House' and its height is exaggerated by having a raised ground floor level which was done to allow a new vehicular access under the building to access its car park and a further block of flats to the rear of its site.



Elwood Court's building line is set in front of the neighbouring properties and its flank wall dominates the streetscape. To add insult to injury a variety of flues and extracts have recently been positioned randomly on the wall without consent. Ellwood Court's design made no attempt to include or relate to the historic Theatre Royal stone arches and standing forward of them relegated their prominence in views from both east and west.

Ellwood Court's blank gable wall is unattractive and detrimental to the streetscape especially when seen approaching York from the east. The proposals will aim to improve this outlook, break down the bulk and mass of the gable end and give streetscape prominence to the Theatre Royal stone arches.



Street views heading towards York from the east – arches dominated



Street views heading out of York from the west - arches obscured

2.2 Northwest site boundary – facing the rear of Ellwood Court Flats

This site boundary adjoins the cars parking area behind Ellwood court and a further 3 storey block of flats at the back of the site. It is bounded by a brick garden wall approximately 1.5m high. This boundary is proposed to remain intact as existing so that parking and planting remains undisturbed.

The further block of flats is placed at an angle to the boundary with undercroft parking and overlooking St Georges School playing fields. This arrangement has resulted in an unattractive blank gable end in modern textured brick facing and dominating the courtyard in-between the historic coach houses.



2.3 Northeast site boundary – facing St George’s RC school grounds

At the rear the site boundary a private garden backs onto the school playing fields. The brick boundary wall is proposed to be increased in height to afford the school and proposed residential units greater privacy and security.



2.4 Southeast boundary – adjoining rear of Friars Rest Guesthouse at 81 Fulford Road and the alleyway to properties on Howard Street

The rear of 81 Fulford Road has extended its accommodation to the full length of its rear garden with 2-storey accommodation beyond the boundary wall. The other guesthouses have added a range of outbuildings, single and 2 storey extensions with no prevailing materiality or architectural character.

When the existing nursery/workshop building is demolished further investigation and survey can take place. The proposals intend that the garden/party wall with no. 81 Fulford Road will be retained to maintain the boundary line as existing and form the wall to the proposed parking courtyard.



Incremental rear infill to rear gardens to southeastern boundary of site



Alleyway between the application site and rear of properties on Howard Street

Further north, the coach houses, courtyard and private rear garden adjoin an alleyway which runs behind the terraced houses on Howard Street. This has a brick wall, approx. 2m high, which will be retained and repaired, maintaining clear access and security for the site and the surrounding properties.

3.0 Existing Buildings & Structures on the Site

3.1 The Theatre Royal Stone Arches (Refer to HYA Drawing 17017-04)



Theatre Royal Arches - existing setting



At the time of the Article 4 Notice being served the arches were not listed nationally or locally as heritage assets and they are not mentioned in either neighbouring conservation area descriptions. The current setting of the arches is severely compromised by the neighbouring properties. The arches are incomplete, have been unsympathetically repaired, lack structural integrity and are in a neglected poor condition.

However, since the applicant purchased the site for development local interest has evidently increased and the applicant agrees it is appropriate that the arches be retained and incorporated into the proposals.

A structural condition report of the stone arches and methodology for their temporary support by Schofields Engineers is attached to this application. Trial pits have established that the arches have no foundations and are not long-term structurally stable. The following summarizes the visual condition of the arches and proposes an outline methodology for their restoration and incorporation into the design proposals.

Three of the original eight arches remain up to their original cornice line with an arched gateway to the left abutting Ellwood Court. Above the three arches and cornice there are 3 courses of stonework with a coping piece on top.

Gateway Arch

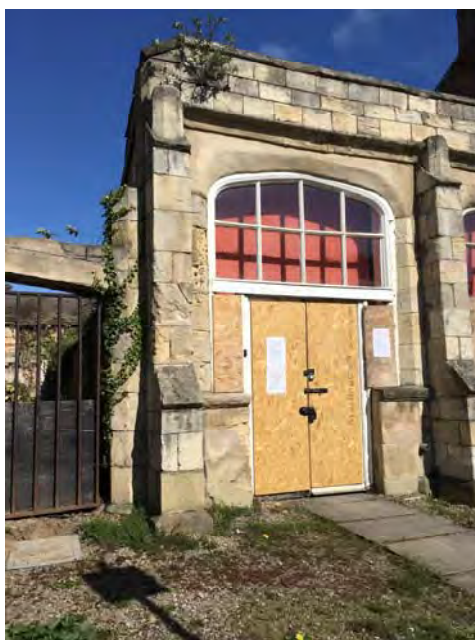


The existing gateway into the site is not part of the original Theatre Royal stone screen and this structure is not evident on any historical drawings or photographs.

The left pier is rendered brickwork with a concrete coping. The low arch is rendered concrete with stone pieces over. The right hand pier is part of the original screen but formed of just 9 stones it stops short of the cornice and some of the stones are damaged.

The gates are metal of heavy square section and not original but of recent construction when this gateway gave access alongside a workshop. It is proposed that this structure is removed and any original stone salvaged for re-use.

Arch 1 – Entrance to Pipkins Nursery



Entrance between piers 1 and 2



Pier 1 side view

This arch has been converted into a doorway which was the main entrance to Pipkins Nursery.

The left pier (Pier 1) is complete up to cornice height, however the middle section has a cracked stone and shows sign of significant weathering. To the left of the doorway the stone has been cement rendered below cill height, as has the arch over the opening hence the condition cannot be ascertained without further investigation. The stone to the left side of the opening is pock-marked and some of the stone has chips in it which have been mortar filled.

The right hand side of the doorway appears to be in good condition but the vertical joint has been cemented along its length. The right hand pier (Pier 2) is complete and whilst its pier top is extant it is badly weathered. The cornice between the piers is intact but there is damage to its central section and it has been rendered in places. As with the whole edifice, the upper parts of the piers and finials seen on archive photographs are missing.

The timber window frame is intact above door height, but below this new door and windows have been added.

Arch 2 – Middle Arch

The middle arch has almost complete stone work below cill height and to the sides of the window opening.

The right hand pier (Pier 3) is complete although with some weathering to higher stonework.

The cill and cornice pieces are intact however the arch itself has been rendered and its condition is unknown. The mid-section of the cornice is damaged.

The upper part of the timber window is intact but the lower section is rotten and damaged in places and requires further investigation.



Arch 3 – Arch abutting 81 Fulford Road



This arch has only one pier and its right hand side is built up to the brickwork of the house at 81 Fulford Road.

The stonework on both sides of the window opening has been damaged and repaired with cement render, as has the arch over the opening. The stone below the cill is damaged, with signs of cracking and has also been repaired with cement render. The left hand side of the stone window cill is weathered

and damaged. The cornice is in poor condition with two cracks and evidence of cement repair.

The top of the timber window is intact but rotten and damaged in places and requires further investigation.

The lean-to roof attached to the stone arches will be retained until a temporary supporting structure can be constructed to the rear. A detailed survey and methodology for retaining and restoring the arches will be undertaken when the demolition notice has been permitted, the original stone exposed and an appropriate structure in place to permit their safe investigation.

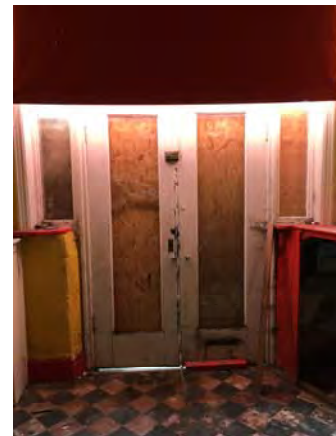
3.2 The Nursery/Shed Building

The largest building on the site is the single storey (plus mezzanine) previous nursery building with a footprint of 276 sqm.

The building has a front room behind the stone arches which was previously the nurse's entrance and reception. This has a mono-pitch lean-to roof sloping back from the top of the stone façade to the main long building behind.

The timber framed windows and doors within the stone arches have been water damaged and vandalized. They are currently boarded for security. The internal space is damp, neglected and uninhabitable.

Gas, electricity and water mains services enter the site through this part of the building. There is a small forecourt in front of the stone arches open to Fulford Road which presents an unused, unsightly and indefensible space



The main body of the building extends back from the frontage and has solid brick walls and a steeply pitched pantile roof with extensive rooflights to both sides. It is subdivided internally into areas for specific use by the nursery and has two toilet block with 8 WCs and wash basins provided as well as staff facilities and kitchen.

The building is difficult to see at present due to its abutment with no. 81 Fulford Road and the rear coach houses but its roof can be seen from the car park at the rear of Ellwood Court. It is badly damaged, has fallen through in

places and covered with vegetation. It is proposed that this building is demolished with its wall bounding 81 Fulford Road retained and repaired.



3.3 Existing Buildings – The Coach Houses

Connected to the main nursery/shed building is one of two blocks of coach houses separated by a courtyard to the rear of the site. The coach houses are polychromatic brick built, 2 storey with pitched tiled roofs and dormer windows.

The buildings have been left vacant and are badly damaged by poor maintenance, ingress of water, overgrown with vegetation and more recently squatters. There is evidence of fire damage and vandalism to the building fabric, rooms are strewn with rubbish and their current state is very poor. However, they do retain interesting many original features such as pointed arch windows, decorative brick detailing and overhanging timber eaves.



The southern block of coach houses has a wide accessway through it with a brick arch detail above a timber bressumer with decorative timber brackets. Historic maps indicate this as a way through the original garden to Fulford Road.

The lower section of the building has been cement rendered and the windows have been crudely altered to casements and have lost their sashes.



The northern block is also similar polychromatic brick with cement render to ground floor level. The condition of the brickwork is poor in places and the render might well have been applied to reinforce it. Facing brick is to the frontages only with clamp bricks to the gable ends and rear elevation.

The overhanging timber eaves and verge boards are attractive with interesting detail, as are the distinctive pitched dormer windows. Two original windows remain intact but all other fenestration is modern 20th century.



Internally the buildings have lost their original joinery and modern doors and ceilings have been introduced. Two fireplaces remain and these will be incorporated into the proposals however, the chimneys have been removed at roof level and the original slate roofs to both buildings have been replaced with tiles.



A soft strip removal of fixture, fittings and modern elements is proposed under the current demolition notice and temporary support will be given to the remaining original fabric. Following this a detailed survey and analysis will be undertaken and the elements scheduled for retention and restoration in the proposals.

4.0 Proposals

There are three distinct elements to the proposed development:

- Restored arches, café and flat block fronting Fulford Road
- Restored group of coach houses at the rear of the site
- Landscaped parking courtyards in-between

4.1 Proposed Access

The site shape is long and narrow. It has only one boundary to a public highway that fronts Fulford Road and is approximately 13m wide. There is no access from the north as the boundary adjoins St Georges' school playing fields nor to the west as a continuous wall separates the site from Ellwood Court.

To the east the site adjoins the property at no. 81 Fulford Road and a rear alleyway which provides pedestrian, cycle and service access to the terraced houses on Howard Street and Fulford Road.

The site access is further restricted access due to the extant stone arched screen leaving only a narrow 3m wide archway alongside Ellwood Court and the change in levels between the highway, footpath and internal finished floor levels.

Relocating the arches as proposed allows space for a new vehicular access from Fulford Road, wide enough to allow service vehicles into the site via an access under the proposed building. A Transport Statement by Fore Consulting Ltd is attached to this application which supports the location as suitable in terms of sightlines and safety.

Accessing the site from Howard Street remains an option (as the land is within the ownership of the applicant) but it is considered that a new access off Fulford Road would be preferable and would allow safer, easier access to the proposed development, especially for service vehicles, such as refuse trucks and deliveries.

Parking is provided on site within two landscaped courtyards between the new flat building and the coach houses with a space for each new residential unit. Accommodation is proposed over the parking bays in a similar way as the undercroft parking arrangement at Elwood Court to provide cover for vehicles and reduce their visual impact on the site.

Cycle parking is also provided in line with current requirements.

Pedestrian access to the residential properties will be from Fulford Road, maintaining an active street frontage and security for residents. The flats, houses and café will have compliant Part M access.

4.2 Proposal for the Arches

The proposal will incorporate the historic stone arches into the design of the ground floor of the new residential building fronting site. In any conservation project long-term success and sustainability is ensured when a long-term

viable use is provided. In this case the stone arches will be used as the façade for a café, a community use that will allow public access to enjoy the stone arches.

The arches will be repositioned to abut Elwood Court and moved forward on the site to allow them to form a prominent local landmark, rather than as currently set back and overshadowed by the large block of flats. There will also be a stronger visual connection between the arches and the Priory Hotel opposite.

To do this a detailed methodology will be in place to ensure that the arches are carefully surveyed, numbered and dismantled. Temporary and proposed support will be detailed by Schofields Structural engineers. Construction and rebuilding will be informed by specialist input from traditional stone masons.

The investigation to date has identified that there are only 3 complete stone piers and therefore the proposal is to reconstruct 2 arches which re-use these. Using the stone that is in good condition two full complete openings and surrounds can be formed. New stone will be required to complete the finials and pier tops and to extend the wall above the arches to recreate the proportion of the original stone screen.

Having established the two complete arches in position the new residential building above will take its structural grid and spacing from the arches. In this way the old and new will be layered with a simple brick screen behind the arches mirroring their scale and proportion, but allowing them to be the focus of the composition.

The windows in the arches will be salvaged and repaired to form a sash window in one of the arches, whilst the entrance to the café will be new joinery to match original detailing.

Restoring the pavement boundary line with a stone kerb and metal railings will form an outdoor area for the café and a traditional setting for the arches. In townscape terms an active street frontage is created bringing life, economic benefits and interest to the local neighbourhood. The applicant has recently completed the successful restoration of a similar café at 112 Micklegate, 'Partisan'.

4.2 Proposed Flats – Form and Materials

Behind the stone arches a block of flats comprising 4 no. 2 bed flats and 1 no. 3 bed duplex is proposed, with its communal entrance direct from Fulford Road. In plan and elevation the building steps back to fit in with the scale, height and position of the neighbouring properties and street context.

In plan the building aligns with the front wall of Ellwood Court to the west, then steps back to meet the building line of 81 Fulford Road to the east. Architecturally this is achieved by two planes, layered to create a simple brick screen behind the stone arches and loggia balconies for the 1st and 2nd floor flats.

The material proposed for the front elevation brick screen is light buff or white gault brick, typical for York and specifically in this location relating the new

building to the 2 nearby local listed buildings, the Lodge and the Lighthorseman PH.



Proposed brick

White gault brickwork will harmonize with the limestone arches without attempting to compete or replicate. It will create a neutral backdrop for the arches. A range of brick sample panels will be built on site to determine the most appropriate material in situ.

The top of the brick frame aligns with the eaves of Ellwood Court and forms the balustrade for the 3rd floor level terrace. The brick piers extend vertically in line with the historic stone piers up to balustrade height with frameless glazing in-between to form a castellated upper edge to the front elevation. Above the brick screen the built form steps down from 4 storey plus roof beside Ellwood Court to 3 storey at the east. This forms a transition between the adjacent buildings and visually breaks down the bulk of Ellwood Court when viewed from Fulford Road.

At 3rd floor the rhythm of the brick façade continues, but the building line is set back. The piers and external walls at this level are proposed to be rendered and painted white to allow the brick screen to be seen as a discrete, visually separate architectural element. At 4th floor level accommodation is within the roof space with dormer windows creating an open plan living space for the duplex apartment. Architecturally the dormers also provide a vertical feature which interrupts the bulk and line of the large roof on Ellwood Court and articulates the 'stepping down' silhouette of the new building.

The ridge line of the proposed building will be lower than that of Ellwood Court and the roof is proposed to be in slate, with grey zinc dormer windows. Windows and glazed doors will be high performance double glazed with aluminium frames.

The rear elevation of the flats block is proposed to be rendered and painted white. Changing the building material from an expensive facing brick at the front to a simple more economic material at the back is a typical constructional device. In this situation, where the context at the rear is a mix of materials and styles, a simple plain façade will not compete with its neighbours, nor add to the muddle, but bring reflected light and simplicity to the outlook from surrounding properties.

4.3 Proposed Coach Houses

The existing coach houses are in a dilapidated state but the proposal seeks to retain as much of their fabric as possible and convert them into 4 houses.

The southern block will form houses A and B. This block has an existing vehicular access through it and to allow efficient use of the site for parking and soft landscaping the proposal is to relocate this accessway re-using all its historical original elements.

The houses will then have their front entrances either side of this opening facing the new parking courtyard. Currently this elevation is blank and abuts the nursery shed building but is proposed to be sympathetically redesigned in keeping with the character of the coach houses. House B will incorporate all the salvaged joinery from the existing building to form a complete historical composition. House A will have joinery and windows in matching scale, proportion and layout but in modern materials.

The northern coach house block will form houses C and D with the front entrances as existing into the courtyard space and private gardens to the rear. Where original feature can be salvaged they will be incorporated into the façade designs, where new openings are required simple modern timber windows, to the same proportion will be used.

The roofs of both coach house blocks are proposed to be raised to allow higher first floor accommodation that meets current legislation and space standards. Ground floor walls will be rendered and painted, first floors will be as existing in polychrome matching brickwork.

Original roof features, such as pitched dormers, verge boards and overhanging eaves will all be retained and where damaged or missing replicated with new to match.

Extending the houses at first floor level above the parking bays on the north western boundary is proposed to contain the inner courtyards and screen the flank wall of the rear of Ellwood Court. It will also provide additional accommodation and private external amenity. Extensions to the historic coach houses will be simple, modern and minimal to contrast with and allow the decorative Victorian features to be prominent. Rendered white walls, aluminium framed glazing and sedum flat roofs are proposed to be discreet and subordinate in character.

5.0 Sustainability

The proposed development and site layout aims to maximize the sustainable and environmental benefits from its location and orientation.

The application site is within walking distance of York City Centre and is close to the local shops and services on Fishergate. Regular buses run along Fulford road and footpaths connect the area to the amenity of the riverside footpaths and cycle ways. This makes it an ideal location for residential development.

The flat block has a solid brick screen and set back loggias to Fulford Road which provide the properties with an environmental buffer between living spaces and the busy road.

Glazing brings passive solar gain and maximizes natural daylight to all properties avoiding the need for artificial lighting. In terms of well-being the connection between inside and out is possible for all residential units and all have at least dual aspect to allow sunlight inside the properties throughout the day.

Flat roofs maximize the potential for external amenity, growing plants and green roofs. The prevailing situation and distances between the development and existing buildings allows this without causing privacy or overlooking problems to neighbouring properties.

The construction of all proposed buildings will be in good quality materials with high levels of insulation to walls and roofs.

The existing coach houses will retain their external walls and footprint and therefore will need to be upgraded from the inside. Replacement timber windows will be high specification and double glazed. Walls and roofs will be waterproofed and highly insulated.

Reducing the impermeable footprint on the site and increasing the permeable ground surfaces will additionally bring the benefit of reducing speed of surface water run-off. Rainwater will also be harvested from all roofs. Low energy appliances, electrical and sanitary fittings will be specified.

On site waste and recycling storage is provided and this is located close to the entrance into the site for convenient use by residents and ease of local authority collection.

The creation of semi-enclosed courtyards facing southwest maximizes the benefits of shelter and creates a beneficial microclimate for planting, wild-life and residents.

6.0 Ecology & Landscaping

The site is a previously developed brown field site with past uses including workshops and a nursery school. Currently over 63% of the site is built on with additional areas of hard standing. There are no trees on the site and the open areas are overgrown with scrub, weeds and bushes.

The proposal for landscaped courtyards will allow for permeable paved surfaces and soft landscaped edges. Trees will follow the boundary line to the west to provide a green buffer with the rear extensions of the guest houses, improving the outlook for all surrounding properties. Planting and soft landscaping alongside a sheltered microclimate will encourage biodiversity of plants, insects and birds.

Bat sightings were notified by residents when the site was purchased in March and the owners commissioned a bat survey by MAB Environment &

Ecology. This is attached to the planning application and found no evidence of bats on the site.

Nadine Rolls, CoYC Countryside and Ecology officer along with PC Ruth Atkins also visited site and found no evidence of bats. PC Ruth Atkins has since asked the witnesses to identify exactly when and where they have seen bats, to assist the additional pre-work activity survey, but none of the witnesses were prepared to state their observations in writing. Nonetheless, a further survey will be undertaken to fully comply with the Wildlife Protection legislation.

Hard landscaping fronting Fulford Road is proposed with a low stone plinth on the boundary and period metal railings and gates to repair the street frontage line, provide an appropriate setting for the stone arches and create an outdoor seating area for the café.

Conclusions

- The development provides 9 residential units on a vacant, derelict brown field site.
- The site is efficiently planned to create a considered development that fits in with the prevailing context and visually improves both the streetscape and backlands.
- The proposal retains and restores the 'Theatre Royal' stone arches, giving them greater prominence and improving their setting.
- Integrating the stone arches into a café allows long term viability, alongside social benefits, economic regeneration and public enjoyment.
- The historic coach houses are retained and given a sustainable viable purpose as dwelling houses to ensure their long-term maintenance.
- Parking is provided on site to reduce the pressure of on-street parking.
- The residential use provides much needed homes. It is an appropriate use in this location, supported by planning policy, sustainability and accessibility to local and city centre services and amenities.
- The development will regenerate the site and the wider Fishergate area.