

Item 4(f) Statement from applicant



APPLICATION REF:19/01801/F

We are extremely pleased to see that Planning Officers support the planning application which is recommended for approval.

Primarily, we consider it imperative to bring to Members attention the fact that the buildings are unsound and dangerous and present a health and safety risk to the public.

Health and Safety Risk

Whitbread acquired the buildings last year, which have been derelict for some time and used by trespassers and squatters for anti-social behaviour (including drug abuse). The properties have been subject to arson and vandalism and are structurally unsound and dangerous; access to the properties is now prohibited.

Whitbread has also received complaints from neighbouring residents concerning blocked drainage problems and the prevalence of rats within the buildings and has had to further remedy these nuisances

In order to safeguard the properties and public safety, Whitbread has put in place 24 hour security to prevent the properties from being illegally accessed and occupied. The security is costing Whitbread approximately £9,000 per month, which has been a significant expense as the application process has been lengthy. The immediate approval of the application would therefore assist to remove this financial burden which is not sustainable.

Issues Addressed

All issues raised during the application process have been fully addressed as follows;

Heritage – The removal of the buildings are identified as a negative detractor to the Conservation Area. Their removal will enhance the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed buildings. The buildings also poses a fire risk to the listed buildings as illustrated by previous arson attempts.

Future Development – Whitbread are in pre-application discussions with the Council and Historic England about the comprehensive development of the site and wider area. An application will come forward for development in 2021.

Construction Traffic – The construction management strategy submitted with the application includes a traffic management section. Each traffic movement into and out of the site will be supervised by a vehicle marshal to ensure highway safety. This approach has been approved by NCC's highway officer. Whitbread have also engaged with the Baltic Wharf Residents representative.

Bats and Birds – Extensive surveys have been undertaken which have confirmed there are no bats on the site and a bird survey will be undertaken 48 hours before the demolition starts to ensure there are no nesting birds. If active nests are found then a 7m 'no works' zone will implemented until the young have fledged. Our ecologist will be on site to supervise the works.

Removal of Asbestos - Specialist contractors have been appointed to remove the asbestos. The contractor is fully trained in this area and have submitted a detailed method statement which is compliant with all regulations for its safe removal. This has been approved by NCC's Public Health Officer.

Given all these considerations; it is critical for planning permission to be granted for the demolition of the buildings. There are no other considerations under this application which should be given a higher priority.

We trust the application can be supported and granted permission.

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