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Design and Access Statement / Heritage Impact Statement



Alterations and repairs to a grade II Listed Building

Upper Floors, 39A Westgate Street, Gloucester

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying documents and drawings as part of applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent.

THE CONTEXT

The proposed alterations are to a Grade II listed building No.39 Westgate Street located in Westgate Street in Gloucester City Centre in the county of Gloucestershire. The building was listed 12th March 1973. The electoral ward/ division is Westgate and the Church of England Parish is Hempsted with Gloucester, Saint Mary de Lode and Saint Mary de Crypt. The Church of England Diocese is Gloucester.

The building sits within Westgate Street and is located within the 'City Centre Conservation Area'. In total Gloucester City Council has adopted 14no. Conservation Areas. A Conservation Area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and are fine examples of the City's unique and varied heritage. They invariably have a concentration of historic buildings many of which are Listed Buildings and their character and attraction comprise more than buildings alone.

There is a group of buildings within Westgate Street referred to as 'The Sword Cluster'. On the other side of No. 51, through which the Westgate entrance to The Fountain runs, there begins a cluster of five listed sites, starting with the grade-II* Nos. 47 & 49 (the latter currently occupied by a pizzeria). Although the early-18th century structure we see today is relatively recent, it was possibly a conversion of a medieval merchant's large townhouse, the 13th-century cellar of which is still there.

Adjacent are grade-II Nos. 43 & 45 (aka The Sword pub), which are both more examples of originally 16th-century properties. Once again, the timber-framing of these properties has been masked, in the case of No. 43 by render and at No. 45 by 18th-century re-fronting. The alteration to No. 45 has also masked a gabled front, as can be seen at its neighbour, with a flat roof-line which is actually just a wall on which the two outer windows have been painted. The properties are referred to in the Historic England listings by their former name of the Tailor House; No. 45 was the home and shop of the tailor John Pritchard, who was the inspiration for Beatrix Potter's *The Tailor of Gloucester*.

This cluster of listed buildings on the south side ends with the grade-II listed Nos. 41 & 39, two visibly different properties that, it is believed, were constructed as one in the 16th century. The very distressed looking No. 41 still shows some pedigree as a timber-framed building, whilst No. 39, which runs alongside the medieval Bull Lane (known as Gore Lane c.1260) was re-fronted and heightened in the early-19th century.

THE SITE

The proposed works are at No. 39 Westgate Street, a shop on the ground floor and former dwelling over, now derelict. Front block early C19, at rear two bays of a late C16 range retained from earlier building; C20 alterations. Brick front block, the upper floors of the rear range are timber-framed and rendered, with first-floor jetty on west side of Bull Lane underbuilt in brick, slate roof. Front block and rear range.

The exterior is formed of three storeys and attic; on the front an early C20 shop-front with recessed entry to left and a plain panel fascia, on the upper floors, above a plain projecting band above the shop fascia, painted brick with a plain crowning band and a high brick parapet; on each upper floor a single, plain, horned sash a flat-arched opening with stepped-and-raised voussoirs, and projecting stone sills. Elevation to Bull Lane has front block of plain brick above rendered dado; rear block of two framed bays with first-floor jetty supported on the ends of bridging beams and knee brackets; in the left-hand bay a C19 sash to first floor with a single vertical glazing bar and a larger C18 sash to second floor with glazing bars (3x4 panes).

The interior at the rear of the shop the west wall has an exposed chamfered storey post and on upper floors in east wall to rear several exposed posts; in front room on first floor doorway and windows with early C19 architraves with paterae on the angle blocks, and a reeded plaster cornice; below the shop a low cellar with stone rubble walls, possibly medieval.

HERITAGE VALUE

There is a considerable amount of existing fabric that is vulnerable requiring structural and conservation works. In terms of heritage value (as outlined within Conservation Principles, as evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal) it is considered that these are high to medium for the significance of the building.

Evidential

The evidential value of No. 39 Westgate Street is considered to be towards the higher end due to the architectural significance of 'The Sword Cluster' that sit within Westgate Street. Whilst the building is quite unassuming, it tells a story of late C16 range to the rear with early C19 alterations to the front and internally and is charming in its character. This is recognised through its Grade II designation.

Historical

The historical value is considered to be of medium level. Nos. 39-41 Westgate Street were originally two tenements which by the 14th century were both in the ownership of St Bartholomew's Hospital, one of the three medieval hospitals in Gloucester. They were sublet to commercial tenants, usually butchers. In the late 16th century both tenements became leased together, initially by one Thomas Weekes and then by two generations of the Strafford family. At some point in this period whatever earlier buildings were on this site were replaced by a two-bay two-storey timber-framed building running parallel to Westgate Street. Not long after the initial construction of the range, a rear range was added running behind No. 39, along the western side of Bull Lane. By the mid-17th century both tenements were in separate use again. The 19th century census records and directories show that both properties were still being used as commercial premises. No. 39 was occupied by the Manning family for much of the 19th century, who used the premises for their cork-cutting business.

Aesthetic

The aesthetic values relate primarily to the front and side elevations. The building's front elevation is a valuable contribution to Westgate Street and the building's side elevation add a valuable contribution to Bull Lane.

Communal

The communal value of the site is considered to be medium to high, due to the architectural significance of 'The Sword Cluster' and its location within the 'City Centre Conservation Plan'.

PROPOSED WORKS

The proposed alterations are for the following works:

- Conservation fabric repairs to the existing fabric including the medieval timber frame. Conservation of the first, second and third floors into 2no. residential accommodation including associated improvement and modification works to meet building regulations.

The proposal will have little visual impact on the exterior of the building as the majority of window and door openings will be retained. The 3no. large windows within the front and side elevations will be replaced from 2 over 2 Victorian timber sashes to 6 over 6 timber sashes which are more in keeping with early C19th. There is 1no. window to the rear elevation third floor that will be replaced with 2no. smaller windows that will be more in keeping with the building. There is 1no. opening roof hatch to the front of the building and this is to be replaced with an opening conservation roof light. A further 4no. small conservation roof lights are to be added into the roof slopes.

Internally it is proposed to provide 2no. residential units and these were proposed after looking at a number of different layout options. The preferred option was selected after consultation and was selected as it was considered to have a minimal loss of original existing fabric.

The proposal will remove 1no. staircase from the first to second floor and will introduce a new staircase within the later rear extension. This solution will enable separate access to 2no. residential

units and will provide each flat with access and escape routes compliant with building regulations whilst retaining a mediaeval truss in situ to the rear of the property.

Traditional materials have been selected to preserve the exterior aesthetic. The exterior of the building will be rendered in lime over lath and repointed in traditional lime, where required. The roof will be re-slatted and insulated with TLX Gold in order to minimise the roof build up to mitigate the visual impact of altering roof lines by upgrading with insulation.

All new doors and windows will be of timber.

CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This project has developed by trying to achieve a delicate balance of conserving the existing built fabric whilst adapting and bringing back to use the upper levels for residential occupancy that meets the requirements of acoustic and fire requirements of building regulations.

The project has been supported by a specialist team of consultants, the local conservation officer, Historic England and the Cathedral Quarter Project Officer from Gloucester City Council (who administered a major grant contribution from 'High Street Heritage Action Zone').

In consideration the proposed development is considered to have a positive impact overall to the building and will enhance the wider context of the Conservation Area.

The proposal will have positive visual impact, the proposed changes are not considered to result in exterior loss or harm. Initially the alterations have been carefully considered to minimise loss of heritage values and mitigate change through repair of the building and providing it with a new use and therefore ongoing sustainability.

Local and traditional materials are incorporated into the design of the proposed development wherever possible. The proposed works are a small scale development of traditional design and the highest quality conversion works would be unlikely to harm the external visual aesthetic, setting or significance of the listed building. The level of potential harm has been mitigated through the design quality of the development and minimal external change.

Internally, there will be alteration and loss of historic fabric resulting from the proposals, although this will be mitigated by the replacement of the traditional roof, repairs to the timber mediaeval structure and therefore enabling sustainable and continuing use for a largely redundant building that has started to decay and would be considered an at risk building.

Overall the level of harm is considered to be less than substantial to no harm at all.

APPENDIX ONE

Summary of research findings on Nos. 39-41 Westgate Street (by Rebecca Lane, Historic England)

Nos. 39 and 41 Westgate Street now represent two separate properties sitting on the southwestern side of Westgate Street in the centre of Gloucester. No. 39 is listed grade II (NHLE 1271926). The list description notes the front block of the property to be of 19th century date, but the rear to contain part of an earlier, 16th-century building. It sits to the south of Westgate Street, and immediately west of Bull Lane, which now forms a narrow alleyway running south from Westgate Street connecting with Longsmith's Street to the south. No. 41 sits immediately west of No. 39, as part of a continuous terrace of buildings running along the street. It is also grade II listed (NHLE 127927) with the list description indicating that it is mainly of the 16th century, with 20th century additions to the rear. As part of recent works to the buildings, a survey and recording exercise has been undertaken by Historic England. A full report on the buildings will be available in due course, but the following represents a summary of the findings of this work.

Nos. 39-41 Westgate Street were originally two tenements which by the 14th century were both in the ownership of St Bartholomew's Hospital, one of the three medieval hospitals in Gloucester. They were sublet to commercial tenants, usually butchers, as the southern side of Westgate Street was the area which specialised in that trade and was known in the late medieval period as the Butchery. At the Dissolution the hospital lands were retained to support the hospitals as secular institutions, although the land was now managed by the Gloucester Corporation.

In the late 16th century both tenements became leased together, initially by one Thomas Weekes and then by two generations of the Strafford family. At some point in this period whatever earlier buildings were on this site were replaced by a two-bay two-storey timber-framed building running parallel to Westgate Street. This has been dendrochronologically dated to the period AD1545-1577. The western bay of this building survives today as No. 41. This was jettied to the street, and the jetty joists survive within the bay. The original doorway was on the western side of the bay, in roughly the same position as the current doorway today. Not long after the initial construction of the range, a rear range was added running behind No. 39, along the western side of Bull Lane. This has also been dendro dated to the late 16th century, but is structurally separate from the front range, and thus appears to have been added slightly later.

By the mid-17th century both tenements were in separate use again, and at some point in the mid-to late 17th century an additional single-bay range was added to the rear of No. 41. This ran parallel to the front range and was structurally supported off the rear range of No. 39. To the west it left a narrow passageway clear accessing the rear of the front range. At ground-floor level this rear range was heated by a chimney stack along its eastern side. A chimney stack was also added to the earlier front range at around the same time. This was not structurally tied into the building but rested on the original floorboards of the first floor of the range.

In the early 19th century the front section of No. 39 was reconstructed, replacing the eastern bay of the original late 16th century building, although the dividing cross frame of the original timber-frame range was left in situ in the western wall of the bay (the dividing wall between No. 39 and 41). This provided an additional storey to the building. At around the same time, or possibly earlier, the jetty of No. 41 was underbuilt to create a flat façade, although much of the original timber of the jetty was left in situ. At some point after 1841 both premises were sold off by the corporation. They certainly did not own either by 1886. The 19th century census records and directories show that

both properties were still being used as commercial premises. No. 41 had a series of relatively short-lived tenants, but No. 39 was occupied by the Manning family for much of the 19th century, who used the premises for their cork-cutting business.

Commercial use continued in the 20th century. At some point the original passageway to the western side of No. 41 was built over in makeshift manner, by running timbers off the rear range to the east and the adjacent building to the west. Possibly at the same time, No. 39 appears to have acquired some of the ground-floor rear area of No. 41, building out into the rear range with a brick wall, and creating a flying freehold arrangement at first-floor level. Both premises continued in commercial use.

The surviving buildings have considerable significance as an example of a relatively modest 16th-century commercial building in Gloucester. Whilst such buildings probably characterised most of the streets at the time, they have generally been replaced or significantly modernised in the 19th and 20th centuries generally to provide larger premises. The survival of the front range of No. 41 is particularly remarkable in this context, as it was the front sections that were most often subject to replacement.