

UTT/0452/11/LB (THAXTED)
(Applicant is related to an UDC employee)

PROPOSAL: Listed building application for the renovation of heraldic carvings under first floor bay windows of Grade II* listed building

LOCATION: The Recorders House, 17 Town Street, Thaxted

APPLICANT: Mrs K Starr

AGENT: None

GRID REFERENCE: TL 611-309

EXPIRY DATE: 16 May 2011

CASE OFFICER: Mr C Theobald

1.0 NOTATION

1.1 Within Development Limits/Within Conservation Area/Thaxted Local Policy 1/Grade II* Listed Building.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

2.1 The site comprises an historically important mid-C15 three storey timber framed and plastered town house jettied at first and second storey levels with two window range on each level and central door entrance which occupies a prominent location mid way along the southern frontage of Town Street. The ground floor of the building is currently a gift shop and has C19 shop window bays, whilst the building also has bay windows at first floor level which are supported by original oriel cills which are plaster carved with the heraldic arms of Edward IV flanked by a lion and a bull (left hand cill) and a griffin (right hand cill). A detailed description of the carvings is given by Bluemantle Pursuivant of the College of Arms, which state that *"[We] can advise that the Arms borne by Edward IV were those of France...quartering England. The use of Supporters to the shield, the creatures either side, developed during the fifteenth century...The various supporters attributed to Edward IV including a silver or gold lion and a black bull are clearly the supporters in evidence here...Although griffins were used as Royal Badges during the fourteenth century, their use became very rare after 1400"*.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 This application seeks listed building consent to renovate the historic plaster carvings described above in more historically representative relief and colours and to depict them more clearly in their visual representation. The benefits of re-blazoning as is so called are stressed by Howell and Bellion, specialist church interior decorators, who state that *"Both the materials and execution of the proposed work would be of high quality and designed to last. Repainting and gilding would greatly improve the appearance and impact of the heraldry, drawing attention to the history and significance of the building and enhancing the general appearance of the street for many years to come"*.

4.0 APPLICANTS CASE

4.1 The application is accompanied by the following documents:

- Design and Access Statement
- Photograph of front fascia of 17 Town Street showing historic carvings located under the first floor windows with close up photos of each carving under oriel cills

- Scale 1:10 coloured illustration of each carving showing proposed renovation works by use of recommended relief detailing and colours for Coat of Arms, Lion, Bull, and Griffin set against background colour
- Letter dated 5 August 2010 from Bluemantle Pursuivant with enclosure providing historical interpretation of Coat of Arms for Edward IV
- Report and recommendations of Howell & Bellion dated 28 January 2011 providing critical account of existing relief detailing and colour representation of carvings and proposed re-blazoning of heraldry within correct historical context

4.2 It is stated by the applicant that the carvings have previously been painted in an unrefined manner which does not depict their heraldry correctly and that their renovation as recommended will provide a striking finished effect with bold colours and the use of gold and silver (palladium) leaf which will strengthen their visual appearance on this important listed building.

5.0 RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

5.1 None.

6.0 POLICIES

6.1 National Policies

- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5)

6.2 East of England Plan 2006

- Policy ENV6: The Historic Environment

6.3 Essex Replacement Structure Plan 2001

- None.

6.4 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

- Policy ENV2: Development affecting listed buildings

7.0 PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

7.1 No objections.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

English Heritage

8.1 This application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of your expert conservation advice.

Ancient Monuments Society

8.2 Response not received. (Due 15/4)

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

8.2 Response not received. (Due 15/4)

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments

8.3 Response not received. (Due 15/4)

The Georgian Group

8.4 Response not received. (Due 15/4)

Victorian Society

8.5 Response not received. (Due 15/4)

Council for British Archaeology

8.6 Response not received. (Due 15/4)

Specialist Advice on Historic Buildings and Conservation

8.7 I consider the submitted additional information [applicant's proposed drawing] relating to the renovation of the existing heraldic carvings acceptable in principle and suggest approval subject to the following conditions:

- Any existing residue of previous paints to be removed if necessary in a non-abrasive manner
- Any new paint type to be compatible with the preservation of the existing timber carvings

9.0 REPRESENTATIONS

9.1 None received. Advertisement expired 22 April 2011. Site notice expired 26 April 2011.

10.0 APPRAISAL

The sole issue to consider in the determination of this application is:

- **Whether the proposed works would conserve or enhance the special characteristics of this Grade II* listed building**

10.1 The two bay windows and oriel cills underneath containing the heraldic carvings at jettied first floor level form an interesting frontage feature of the building within its setting. However, as previously mentioned, the two carvings are currently decorated inappropriately as more particularly identified and described by Howell and Bellion in their report to the applicant dated 28 January 2011:

“At present, the carvings below the windows are not particularly noticeable from the street. This is partly due to their present colouring being dull and faded, but also because the splayed brackets supporting the windows are painted black, which is too dominant a colour; one sees the silhouette of the black background more than the heraldry...The existing colouring diverges from [the] blazon, either because of a lack of knowledge of the rules of heraldry or the exercise of artistic licence, which is not permissible in heraldry”.

10.2 The report describes the strict rules concerning the design and colouring of Coats of Arms (this coincides with the historical interpretation of the Coat of Arms and associated Badges on the carvings as previously described by Bluemantle Pursuivant above at Section 4.1) and advises that it is important to get the restoration details correct if the arms are to be repainted and gilded, adding that it can be very disappointing to discover some inaccuracy once the work has been done. The report identifies the specific discrepancies with the current painting and interpretation of the heraldry on the carvings and provides a concise recommendation of how each of the heraldic feature components should be repainted and gilded to reflect the correct blazon.

10.3 The illustrative drawing of the two carvings submitted by the applicant showing the proposed renovation work as recommended by Howell and Bellion shows accurately as far as is able within the constraints of pictorial representation the modified detailing and correct colours for the Coat of Arms and Supporter Badge detailing (Lion, Bull and Griffin). Providing that the re-

blazoning work as professionally advised is properly implemented and executed, the proposal would undoubtedly restore the carvings back within their correct historical context and would as a consequence enhance the overall appearance of the front façade of this Grade II* listed building in terms of its special characteristics. As such, the proposal would conform to PPS5, East of England Plan ENV6 and ULP Policy ENV2.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 The following is a summary of the main reasons for the recommendation:

- The heraldic carvings presently do not show their true historical association by reason of inappropriate relief and colouring
- The proposed renovation work through proper execution would reflect the true historical association of the carvings and would therefore enhance the special characteristics of this Grade II* listed building.

RECOMMENDATION – CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Conditions:

- 1 Time limit for commencement of development - listed buildings
- 2 To be implemented in accordance with approved plans
- 3 The proposed carving renovation work shall be carried out in strict accordance with the guidance contained within the report and recommendations prepared by Howell and Bellion dated 28 January 2011 entitled “Proposed Re-Blazoning of the Heraldry of the 1st Floor Oriel Windows”
Standard Reason a): In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the listed building and its setting.
- 4 Any existing residue of previous paints shall be removed if necessary in a non-abrasive manner
Standard Reason a): In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the listed building and its setting.
- 6 Any new paint type shall be compatible with the preservation of the existing timber carvings.
Standard Reason a): In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the listed building and its setting.



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