

CABINET

THURSDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2014

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMY AND EDUCATION

CONSERVATION GRANT APPLICATIONS

PURPOSE

For Members to consider and approve two grant applications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the following grant offers be made from the conservation budget 2013-2014 subject to the normal grant conditions:

1. A grant of £7,649 is made in respect of 110 Lichfield Street, Tamworth
2. A grant of £7,777 is made in respect of 14 Aldergate, Tamworth subject to the additional condition that it dependent upon the grant of the appropriate planning consents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has operated a conservation grant since 1994 with the purpose of assisting the repair and restoration of historic buildings. In terms of eligibility, the grant is available to all statutorily and locally listed buildings and all non-listed historic buildings within the Borough's seven conservation areas. The grant can be used for works that would improve the condition and appearance of those buildings.

The two applications are referred to Cabinet because the total cost of each would result in a Council grant of more than £5,000.

The first application relates to 110 Lichfield Street, Tamworth, a statutory Grade II listed mid-terrace building. It is located on the northern side of Lichfield Street, a major gateway into the town centre. It lies within the Town Centre Conservation Area and forms a pair with number 111. The building dates from the late 16th century/early 17th century when it was built as a house, the shop front was added at a later date. It is of timber frame construction, which is apparent inside and on the rear elevation, where portions of the timber framing are visible. The building has been vacant for some 30 years and has fallen into disrepair. The applicant started a programme of substantial repair and refurbishment in 2011, the first phase of which involved new front and rear windows and structural works to the rear elevation.

The current grant application relates to repairs to the roof and second floor structure. The roof is in a particularly poor condition. It will be dismantled, repaired, the structural timbers treated for rot and the tiles reinstated, using reclaimed tiles to match the existing where necessary. The chimney stack is unstable and requires rebuilding. The existing dormer window to the rear roof slope will be replaced with two dormers, although only one replacement dormer is grant eligible. Internal structural works at the second floor level involve dismantling and rebuilding the wall between 110 and 111, which is in poor condition and partly dismantled. The front and rear walls need tying back in and the applicant proposes to construct a timber framed floor which will tie into the wall plates and provide stability. It will also perform the function of protecting the original ash floor which is in a fragile condition.

Number 110 is not a large building but it is listed, vacant and in a poor condition. The works are urgently needed and would help to bring it back into positive use, as well as enhancing the conservation area and the Lichfield Street gateway. The total cost of the grant eligible works is £20,634. The structural works qualify for 40% and the dormer window 50%, resulting in a total grant of £7649.

The second application refers to 14 Aldergate, which is located on the west side of Aldergate, within the Town Centre Conservation Area. The building is Grade II listed and dates from the early 1800's, it was originally built as a house and is now a guest house with restaurant operating as The Peel. The main building fronting onto Aldergate is three storeys, whilst the outbuildings to the rear are two storey. When it was built it had a central doorway and bow windows to both sides but these were removed and a modern shop front, which extends the full width of the frontage, inserted in the 1960's or 1970's. The shop front was subsequently changed at some point to the current arrangement, which is highly intrusive and has a negative impact on the character of the listed building.

A hot food takeaway outlet occupied the front portion of the ground floor until recently and the intention is to refurbish this area for use as a restaurant, kitchen and reception area in connection with the guest accommodation. As part of the refurbishment, the owners propose to replace the unsympathetic shop front with a scheme that is more in keeping with the character and appearance of the listed building. The scheme involves installing a painted timber shop front with detailing and signage that is more typical of a building of this age, taken references from surviving historic shop fronts in Tamworth town centre.

It is considered that the proposal should be supported. It will result in a substantial improvement on the existing arrangement. The style of the proposed shop front is in keeping with the age of the building and will enhance its character and appearance. It will also enhance the conservation area and the Aldergate gateway into the town centre.

The total cost of the new shop front is £18,472, to which a grant rate of 50% is applied, resulting in a grant of £9236. However, there is only £7777 remaining. It is therefore recommended that this amount is offered. The grant application will run in tandem with applications for planning permission and listed building consent for the wider refurbishment scheme and the grant should be made subject to these consents being obtained first.

The emerging Tamworth Draft Local Plan recognises that the strength and potential of Tamworth's tourism offer owes much to its history, and that future success depends on regenerating the town centre in order to improve the perception and image of the town as a destination for retail and leisure. Town centre regeneration incorporating improvements to the retail, leisure and service offer and expansion of its tourism and cultural role will need to be complemented by improvements to the physical environment. Grant assistance to the two listed buildings will contribute towards physical improvements and safeguard their future.

The following two photographs show the appearance of the buildings before the grant works.



Photograph 1 showing 110 (left) and 111 Lichfield Street



Photograph 2 showing unsympathetic shop front of previous takeaway use

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There is adequate provision in the Borough Council's Conservation Grant budget as follows:

Conservation grant revenue budget 2013-2014	£34,130
Reserve under-spend 2012-2013	£22,127
Under-spend from 2012-2013 carried forward	<u>£12,460</u>
Total available funds 2013-2014	£68,717
Spent to date	£18,651
Committed to date	£24,640
Amount offered up for other projects	£10,000
Grant proposed at 110 Lichfield Street	£7,649
Grant proposed at 14 Aldergate	<u>£7,777</u>
Balance remaining if grant is approved	£0

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Listed buildings are a finite resource and it is important that they are conserved and enhanced. The grant scheme assists owners of listed buildings to undertake repair and restoration works to maintain their structure and integrity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The approved policies and procedures for the grant scheme set out the types of buildings and works that are eligible and also the applicable grant rates. All statutory and locally listed buildings plus unlisted historic buildings in conservation areas are eligible. The types of works include maintenance works to the roof and walls, brick and render repairs and are grant aided between 30% and 40%. Repair and restoration of original features such as windows, rainwater goods and architectural features are grant aided at a higher rate of between 40% and 50%. In both cases, the higher rate applies to statutory and locally listed buildings. Grants are limited to £10,000 per building in any financial year and all potential grants of £5000 and more are referred to Cabinet for a decision.

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Cabinet 14 June 2006, minute number 67.

APPENDICES

Not applicable.