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North Yorkshire Council
PO Box 787
Harrogate
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15th February 2025

Dear Sirs

APPLICATION REFS: ZC24/04121/FUL & ZC25/00136/LB PROPOSED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS, 23 KIRKGATE, RIPON

Ripon Civic Society wish to object to the above proposals to alter 23 Kirkgate in Ripon.

The property is an historic Grade II listed building in the conservation area and makes and important contribution to the appearance and setting of the conservation area as well as the setting of other nearby listed buildings, not least of which is the Cathedral immediately to the east. Whilst the rear of the building is less visible, it is still formed around the recognisable historic plan form of two wings with a narrow central yard.

The proposal is for both internal and external alterations including re-roofing to the rear, the removal of a staircase and some internal walls, and the addition of a first-floor fire escape exiting through a modified rear window.

The need for re-roofing to the rear wings would appear to be necessary, although how much this has been caused by historic poor repairs and lack of maintenance is questionable. Whilst the existing roofs do present a mixture of forms and materials, they do follow the historic form of the building with a pitched lean-to roof above the kitchen wing and a felted infill over the central yard area. The replacement of all of these roofs with a single pitched roof significantly degrades the legibility of the building form and removes the existing parapet to the east of the lean-to. The use of zinc as a roofing material is not considered appropriate in this setting. A reconsideration of the proposed roof form and material in this area to respect the historic fabric would be welcomed.

Whilst there appear to be issues associated with fire escape from the upper storey, these would seem to be exacerbated by the removal of the staircase to the rear of the restaurant. The need for the new rooftop escape route would seem to be in compensation for this. It may be that there are other measures which could be explored such as layout changes or more separation which could reduce the need for this external escape and the consequent impact upon the fabric of the building. No assessment is provided of the significance of the window to be altered.

No comment or justification appears to be provided for the loss of the staircase and it is not clear if this is historically significant or not.

Whilst the Heritage Statement makes and assessment of the building as a whole with some generalised comments on specific elements, the impact of this application is upon individual details and no assessment has been made of these such as the window replacement/alterations to form the fire escape, the loss of the staircase, or the roofs to the rear. This is essential in order to be able to make a detailed assessment of the impact of the proposals.

In our opinion the proposed external alterations degrade the appearance and legibility of this important building whilst a more careful consideration of the internal layout that still meets the needs of the applicant could reduce the need for an external fire escape and the resultant impact on the window in particular.

We trust you will take these comments into account when considering this application.

Yours faithfully

Rachel Wigginton
Planning Lead
Ripon Civic Society