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## THE OLD MALT HOUSE, ST JOHN'S ROAD, BANBURY

Formation of internal office accommodation on the first floor & installation of roof insulation.

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*This document was amended in November 2019 to include proposals to insulate the roof with Wood fibre insulation.*

### DESIGN

#### 1. Use

- 1.1. The Old Malt House is located on a residential street on the southern outskirts of the town centre of Banbury. It is a large palladium style building built in 1830 by the Austin Brewery Company. Although currently vacant, the last use of the property was as commercial offices.
- 1.2. The building has an imposing brick built façade with a raised parapet which restricts views of the roof from St. John's Road. The roof is half hipped, with slate covered slopes rising to a flat roof plateau finished with a single ply membrane.
- 1.3. The building is Grade II listed and is situated in the Calthorpe 19<sup>th</sup> century suburb of the Banbury Conservation Area.
- 1.4. The applicant has recently purchased the property and intends to re-establish the previous office use. In a pre-application advice report issued by the Local Planning Authority (19/00045/PREAPP) the case officer stated that:  
  
*"The proposal to retain the building in use as offices is welcomed by the Council and would help support a strong and prosperous economy."*
- 1.5. Listed Building Consent was granted in August 2019 (19/01091/LB) for the installation of roof insulation, ventilation slates and flat roof vents.
- 1.6. This further application seeks Listed Building Consent for the creation of internal office accommodation at first floor level to create a suitable layout for the occupying company. Also proposed is a change to the roof insulation material originally specified under 19/01091/LB and the installation of additional vents for extractor fans and boiler flues.

1.7. The works will be carried out to a high standard, using appropriate materials, helping to secure the long term future of the building. In the pre-application advice report the case officer stated that:

*“We have no objections to some limited subdivision of the internal space providing justification can be provided and the subdivisions are reversible additions to the building.”*

## **2. Amount**

2.1. The scope of the proposed works is limited to:

- a. The addition of timber stud and glass partitions to form the required accommodation.
- b. The creation of a ceiling over the central office pod with access to plant and services (see the submitted structural details provided by Wellan Consulting Engineers).
- c. The stripping back of the existing black paint finish and varnish on the trusses to reveal the timber.
- d. Patch repairs to the existing internal wall surfaces where necessary.
- e. The installation of an insulated timber floating floor (with under floor heating system) over the existing concrete floor structure.
- f. The insulation of the roof with a wood fibre solution, instead of the previously approved Kingspan PIR product.
- g. The installation of vents for extractor fans and boiler flues.

## **3. Layout**

3.1. The proposed first floor layout is indicated on the drawings included with this application.

## **4. Scale**

4.1. The extent of the proposed works is relatively minor in relation to the scale of the existing building, being limited to internal alterations, additions and upgrades.

## **5. Landscaping**

5.1. No landscaping works are proposed by this application.

## **6. Appearance**

- 6.1. High quality materials and finishes will be used to create a sensitive office scheme.
- 6.2. The visual impact of the development will be kept to a minimum to ensure that the vast vaulted roof will remain the dominant feature of the space, with all the existing imposing trusses left exposed.
- 6.3. The existing unsympathetic black paint and varnish finish on the existing trusses will be carefully removed to reveal the beauty of the original timbers. Further details of this process are included with the application.
- 6.4. A greater thickness of wood fibre insulation is required in comparison with the previously approved Kingspan PIR solution in order to achieve the intended U value. However, this alternative solution enables the roof to be vaulted and the existing truss rafter blades will remain partially exposed. As per the approved solution, the thickness of insulation required to be effective will result in the existing purlins being obscured from view. However they will remain in-situ and the proposed works are reversible.

## **ACCESS**

## **7. Vehicular & Transport Links**

- 7.1. The site has 29 existing car parking spaces, 9 at the front of the property and the remainder within the building at ground floor level. Banbury is conveniently positioned at Junction 11 of the M40 motorway, with easy access to London and Birmingham.
- 7.2. Banbury is a large market town with a full range of facilities and employment opportunities available within easy walking distance of the site.
- 7.3. There is an extensive range of public transport available from Banbury bus and train stations. Services to Birmingham, London and other major cities and towns are widely available.

## **8. Inclusive Access**

- 8.1. The proposed works will have no affect on existing access arrangements.

## JUSTIFICATION

- 9.1. The majority of the first floor will remain open plan. The proposed partitions forming the central office areas on the first floor have been kept to a minimum. They are required to create the enclosed private working and meeting spaces needed by the occupants to carry out their business effectively. Glass partitions and doors will be used throughout to allow natural light into the enclosed spaces. The offices have been designed with a flat deck over to ensure that the significance of the existing vaulted roof void and trusses is not diminished.
- 9.2. The new timber stud partitions, ceiling deck, finishes and insulated floating timber floor would be easily reversible in the future, leaving no lasting effect on the existing building. Note that the existing first floor structure comprises of a modern concrete deck – the timber floating floor will be installed over this.
- 9.3. The ceiling deck over the central office section will be structurally suitable to act as a platform for plant and services. The engineer has designed a nonintrusive solution to ensure that the existing structural historic fabric is unaffected.
- 9.4. The proposed scheme enables the roof to remain vaulted, ensuring that the existing trusses are visible. To enhance the existing trusses the unsympathetic black paint/varnish finish will be removed to reveal the existing timber beneath.
- 9.5. The works can be carried out without harming historic fabric. Some very minor patch repairs and making good to existing wall finishes will be necessary and these works will be carried out carefully using matching materials.
- 9.6. The principle of insulating the roof at rafter level was established by Listed Building Consent 19/01091/LB. The applicant has carried out additional research following the approval of the Kingspan PIR insulation system and concluded that an alternative specification using wood fibre insulation provides an enhanced and cost viable solution. Wood fibre is an organic based, environmentally friendly material which provides a comfortable and healthy indoor micro climate in both summer and winter. It is also a natural vapour permeable product and is therefore ideally suited to refurbishment projects in traditional buildings. The use of this type of insulation is supported by Historic England in published guidance (*Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulation at rafter level*, v1.3 January 2016).

- 9.7. A greater thickness of wood fibre insulation is required to achieve the necessary U value. However, this alternative solution enables the roof to be vaulted and the existing truss rafter blade will remain partially exposed. The works can be carried out without harming historic fabric. As previously approved, the existing rafters and purlins will be covered with insulation but will remain in situ and the works are fully reversible if required in the future.

## HERITAGE STATEMENT

### 10. Nature of the asset

- 10.1. The building is Grade II listed and the site lies within the designated Banbury Conservation Area.
- 10.2. The listing description is as follows:

*BANBURY ST. JOHN'S ROAD SP4540SW (South side) 9/204 Appliance House (Rare Spares) 07/10/69 and The Old Malt House (Special Libraries Book Service) (Formerly listed as Engineering Works (Improved Hinges Ltd.) - II*

*Malthouse, now offices. c.1830. Red brick with painted stone dressings. 2 storeys; 7-window range altogether, divided by pilasters. Central pedimented bay has tall C20 plank doors with small window above. 2 sets of flanking pilasters. To either side of central bay are 3 sashes with glazing bars, some with inward pivoting lights. Similar window arrangement to first floor. Keyblock surrounds. Pilasters flank end bays. Moulded stone eaves cornice below brick parapet. known as Austin's malthouse. Interior not inspected. (Buildings of England: Oxfordshire, 1974, p.442; V.C.H.: Oxfordshire, Vol.X, p.39).*

*Listing NGR: SP4544840094*

### 11. Significance of the asset

- 11.1. In the LPA's pre-application advice report the case officer outlined the core significance of the building:

*"The Conservation Officer has previously noted that the core significance of the building lies in its roof structure with its trusses spanning the width of the building and the 'surprisingly grand design' of the façade of the building. The design is unusual for a maltings in having just two floors, a large*

*number of windows and an elaborate façade. Given the changes to the buildings over the years there is minimal surviving visible evidence of the functional operation as a maltings. However, Banbury Civic Society and the Association for Industrial Archaeology have highlighted in the earlier applications that the still largely open plan nature of the building also contributes to its significance as this preserves some of the character of its commercial use.”*

- 11.2. No changes are proposed to the elaborate façade.
- 11.3. The proposal includes a certain amount of internal subdivision to create the required office and meeting space. However these enclosed areas have been designed with a low flat ceiling deck to ensure that the open vaulted roof void remains apparent and the imposing roof trusses remain visible.
- 11.4. No historic fabric will be removed or disturbed, other than some minor internal patch repairs and making good.
- 11.5. All the proposed works could be reversed in the future if required without impacting on historic fabric.