

Application for Listed Building Consent

BURNLEY MECHANICS MANCHESTER ROAD BURNLEY

Replacement of timber loading bay doors to the rear with powder coated aluminium

Applicant: Burnley Borough Council

Agent: Property Services (Liberata UK Ltd)

1.0 Application Property and Summary of Heritage Significance:

- 1.1 This application relates to Burnley Mechanics, a Grade II* Listed Building constructed in 1855 by the Mechanics Institute Movement to provide basic education to the working adults of Burnley. The building, which is a notable example of its kind and described by Pevsner as one of Burnley's best buildings, occupies a highly prominent position at the corner of Manchester Road and Yorke Street and contributes to a group of late Victorian and Edwardian commercial and public buildings within the Burnley Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The Mechanics is a heritage asset of high significance, reflected in its Grade II* listing. The nature of this significance is derived primarily from its architectural and historic interest. On the first count it holds a high level of value for its classical proportions, rich sculptural embellishment and fine craftsmanship to its principal elevations being heavily influenced by the Italianate style of architecture, which combine to form a distinguished and highly intact example of mid-Victorian civic architecture and show the building to be of some status. In terms of historic and communal values, the building serves as an important reminder of a type of education and cultural facility, common from the mid C19 to early C20, which revolutionised access to education for working adults and played a vital part in the development of state funded adult education and public libraries, and in this case was important in the foundation of Burnley College. It also has strong associations with a number of industrialists and other individuals of notable social and financial status within Burnley during the textile revolution.



Historic image c.1880s Manchester Road and Yorke Street Elevations 1980s Rear Extension

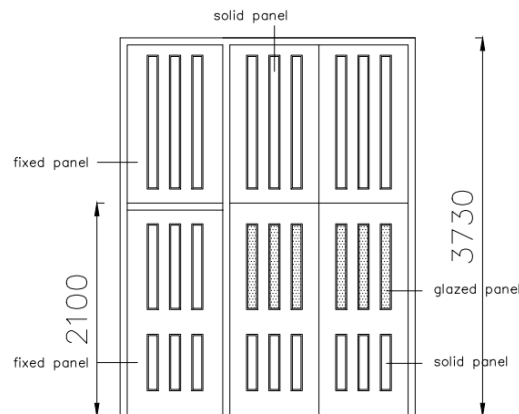
- 1.3 Substantial renovation in the 1980s resulted in the removal of much of the historic fabric with modern fit out including partitions and suspended ceilings. This has partially reduced the significance of the building's interiors and raises the value of surviving areas such as the basement and the former Tudor Room; and surviving features such as the historic staircases and decorative plasterwork.
- 1.4 This application relates to a utilitarian part of the building located at the rear and constructed in the 1980s to house a lift and hoist and other facilities for the back stage area. The extension makes no meaningful contribution to the significance of the listed building and is not readily visible within views from the public realm.

2.0 The Proposal:

- 2.1 This application seeks listed building consent for the removal and replacement of the modern timber loading bay doors and frames to the 1980s rear extension at both ground and first floors.
- 2.2 The doors are designed to enable large pieces of equipment to be transported into the building and are sized accordingly. Severe warping has occurred due to the insufficient physical support resulting in operational difficulties. Additionally, the doors do not provide any opportunity for enhanced security at ground floor level where they are vulnerable to forced entry and vandalism.
- 2.2 The case for the proposed replacement doors and frames is made on the basis that the existing hold no historic or architectural value and their condition and design deficiencies are such that they are not fit for purpose and are considered to be beyond reasonable and practical repair. Moreover, the doors are positioned on a modern extension which makes no contribution to the significance (special interest) of the listed building in terms of how the building and its heritage values are appreciated and understood.
- 2.3 It is proposed to replace the doors and frames with a powder coated aluminium door system in a design that closely matches the existing. The first floor doors will be split at 1100 mm from floor level to provide a safety barrier when only the top doors are open. The aluminium construction will resolve the issues of warping and ease of operation and provide enhanced security.



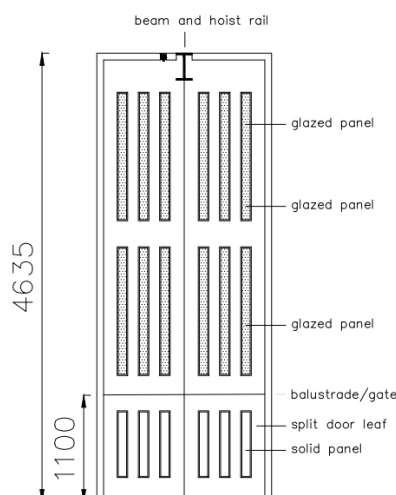
Existing Ground Floor Doors



Proposed Ground Floor Doors



Existing First Floor Doors



Proposed First Floor Doors

- 2.4 The application has been submitted following pre-application engagement with the Council's heritage planner who is satisfied that the proposal reflects the options discussed and the advice provided.

2.5 This application is presented to Committee as the applicant is Burnley Council.

3.0 Relevant Policies:

- 3.1 Burnley's Local Plan (July 2018): Policy HE2 (Designated Heritage Assets) outlines the key requirement for proposals to have regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of listed buildings and, where appropriate, securing a viable use most consistent with their conservation. All levels of harm should be avoided. The policy adopts the NPPF's categories of 'substantial' and 'less than substantial' harm and the corresponding policy tests (as set out in NPPF 207 and 208). In summary, these tests provide an opportunity for an applicant to demonstrate that there would be public benefits arising from a proposal which may outweigh heritage harm.
- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2023): The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their 'significance' is the focus of the NPPF. In particular paragraph 205 advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 206 continues setting out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 208 explains that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 3.3 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Sections 16 and 66 as below.

4.0 Planning History:

- 4.1 The site has an extensive planning history which mainly relates to internal and external works to maintain the upkeep and safeguard the viability of the building.

5.0 Consultation Responses:

- 5.1 Historic England: Do not offer their advice.
- 5.2 Publicity: No responses received

6.0 Assessment:

- 6.1 The main issue for consideration is the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 16(2) and 66 confer upon local planning authorities a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the special interest of a listed building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. With regard to the NPPF and Local Plan Policy HE2 this can be defined as the impact of the proposal on the significance (special interest) of the Listed Building affected with 'preservation' in this context meaning doing no harm to the significance as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.
- 6.2 Having regard to the relevant policy and legislation, as set out above, the main issue is whether the proposed alterations will preserve (not cause harm to) the special interest (significance) of the Listed Building.

7.0 Impact on the significance (special interest) of the Listed Building:

- 7.1 The long-term heritage objectives to preserve or enhance the special interest (significance) of listed buildings is to retain any historic or traditional features where they are capable of reasonable repair. Where they are beyond reasonable repair, it is desirable to replace them on a like-for-like basis in the same material so as to preserve the character of the building. In this case,

however the doors proposed for replacement do not hold any historic or architectural value and are positioned on a modern extension which makes no contribution to the significance of the listed building and is therefore less sensitive to alterations. Accordingly, their replacement with a suitable alternative is considered acceptable.

- 7.2 Whist powder coated aluminium fails to replicate the texture and patina of timber and in many situations is unlikely to be unacceptable for use on listed buildings, in this case it is proposed to replicate the style and dimensions of the existing such that the proposed doors would not detract from the overall aesthetics of the listed building or how it is appreciated visually. In this respect, to most observers the replacement doors are unlikely to be especially distinguishable from those they replace when viewed from a normal distance.
- 7.3 The special interest of the listed building has been assessed and the impact of the proposal on significance examined. The conclusion being that the degree of physical and visual change would have no greater than a neutral impact in that it would not diminish the special interest of the listed building nor would it alter the experience or understanding of its significance to any appreciable degree. It is therefore considered that the proposed alteration would preserve the special interest of the listed building in its entirety in accordance with Policy HE2, the NPPF and the duty assigned by the LBCA Act.

8.0 Recommendation:

- 8.1 In giving considerable importance and weight to the duties at Section 16(2) and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in consideration to the objective of the NPPF and Policy HE2 of Burnley's Local Plan I would recommend that listed building consent be granted subject to conditions.

9.0 Conditions and Reasons:

1. The works hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: As required by Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than to the specifications as indicated on the approved drawings except where modified by the conditions of this consent. The approved drawings are: Mechancis/Mec 01 (Proposed Loading Bay Doors at 1:100 Scale) received 22 February 2024.

Reason: To ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the approved plans and to avoid ambiguity.

3. All materials to be used in the approved scheme shall be as stated on the application form and approved drawings.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest and heritage significance of the building and comply with Policy HE2 of Burnley's Local Plan (July 2018).

4. This approval is limited to the works shown on the approved drawings and does not indicate approval for associated or enabling works that may be necessary to carry out the scheme. Any further works must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works commencing.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and to comply with Policy HE2 of Burnley's Local Plan (July 2018).

5. Any works of making good to the retained fabric, shall be finished to match the adjacent work with regard to the methods used and to colour, material, texture, and profile, except where indicated otherwise on the drawings hereby approved.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and to comply with Policy HE2 of Burnley's Local Plan (July 2018).

EEP (Principal Planner)