Planning Committee: 01 March 2022 **Item Number:** 6

Application No: W 21 / 2004 LB

Registration Date: 29/10/21
Town/Parish Council: Leamington Spa **Expiry Date:** 24/12/21
Case Officer: Emma Booker
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United Reformed Church, Spencer Street, Leamington Spa, CV31 3NE
Repairs, refurbishment and redevelopment of Grade II Listed United Reform Church to facilitate a change of use to office space (Use Class E). FOR Complex Development Projects

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This application is being presented to Committee because Warwick District Council own the site.

RECOMMENDATION

Listed Building Consent is recommended to be GRANTED.

PLANNING HISTORY

W/06/1718/LB & 1719 - Part demolition, conversion, refurbishment and extension of existing building for use as theatre and associated facilities

W/09/0081 & 0082/LB - Formal approval of amendments to application No. W06/1718LB & W06/1719 Part demolition, conversion, refurbishment, and extension of existing building for use as theatre and associated facilities

W/20/2134 - Extensions, alterations and change of use to office space (Use Class E). – Granted.

W/20/2135/LB - Internal and external alterations for creation of new office space. – Granted.

DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The proposal seeks Listed Building Consent (LBC) for internal and external alterations to facilitate the creation of new office space. The application site comprises three buildings: The United Reform Church (URC), Old Dole Office and Nursery, which have already been granted Planning and Listed Building consent for alterations under application references: W/20/2134/FULL and W/20/2135/LB. The work to the URC was approved under those two applications but there have since been some alterations made to the proposals which now require further approval.

Previously, the alterations comprised:

- Opening up the staircase well to the basement, with the staircase to serve the upper floor
- The extension of the mezzanine level with access gained via a central atrium
- The reinstatement of windows
- Reroofing and the insertion of 4 No. conservation rooflights
- Works to the basement to create office space
- The introduction of steps and a new entrance for the rear elevation

Although not an exhaustive list, since the approval of the previous LBC application, the following elements have been added to the scheme:

- The omission of a number of the previously approved new windows, doorways, stud wall partitions
- The demolition of internal walls to widen openings
- New stud walls and screens, and other minor alterations to those previously approved to alter the layout of spaces
- New internal windows
- The removal of plaques
- Alterations to the floor level on the first floor
- New balustrades
- Relaying surface finishes to the front of the building
- The installation of new gates
- Repair works to the elevations
- The amended design of the steps and new entrance for the rear elevation

THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

This application for listed building consent is related to works to The United Reformed Church Building only. This forms part of a wider scheme relating to 3 buildings around Spencer Yard. This area lies within the town centre of Leamington Spa, within the Conservation Area and forms an integral part of "The Creative Quarter". The site is situated within a predominantly commercial part of Leamington Town Centre.

The 3 buildings forming the wider scheme are; the Grade II listed United Reform Church (URC), the former benefits office building (the Old Dole Office), and the Nursery.

The URC is adjoined to the east by the Grade II listed building, 5 Spencer Street. This forms part of a group, 5-13 Spencer Street. These contain a variety of residential and commercial uses.

A further Grade II listed building adjoins the site to the west in Spencer Street. The Loft Theatre is located to the north.

Vehicular access to the rear of the site is gained off Spencer Street via Spencer Yard; there is presently no public access into Spencer Yard via Victoria Colonnade. The central open area within Spencer Yard is used for car parking.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- National Planning Policy Framework

Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029

- HE1 - Protection of Statutory Heritage Assets
- HE2 - Protection of Conservation Areas

Royal Leamington Spa Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2029

- RLS3 - Conservation Area

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Royal Leamington Spa Town Council: Support the application. They however commented that they were disappointed to learn that the cafe on the ground floor would not be open to the public.

WDC Conservation: No objection, following amendments, and subject to conditions.

ASSESSMENT

Impact on the Listed Building and Conservation Area

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 explains that in considering whether to grant permission for developments affecting listed buildings or their setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

In paragraph 190 of the NPPF it is stated that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This includes putting heritage assets to viable uses consistent with their

conservation so that they can bring wider social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits to the historic environment.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states 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.

Policy HE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 states that development will not be permitted if it would lead to substantial harm to or total loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset, unless it is demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

Policy RLS3 of the Royal Leamington Spa Neighbourhood Plan relates to development located within the Conservation Area and requires proposals to demonstrate that they harmonise with the existing character in terms of design, scale and external facing materials. The policy supports the use of suitable boundary treatments when considered in relation to the surrounding local context and the retention, restoration and reinstatement of period details such as decoration, ornamentation, and ironwork. Where proposals impact on the significance of Listed Buildings, the proposal should demonstrate a regard for this and not result in harm.

The URC in its current state has been left empty for many years. It is starting to fall into a state of disrepair.

The application, as amended, seeks to gain approval for relatively minor alterations to the previously approved scheme. The majority affect the internal spaces, such as those which comprise minor revisions to the position of stud walls, new openings (doors and windows) and the installation of balustrades to meet the Building Regulations. Several plaques are also proposed to be removed which are not referenced in the listing description but none the less form a part of the listed building.

Externally, the application proposes repair works to some of the decaying external facing materials (repointing and new render for example). The design of the new rear access has been amended and the basement windows are proposed to be infilled with brickwork. New gates will be fitted at the corners of the building for increased security and surfaces replaced to improve the appearance of the site.

WDC Conservation have been consulted throughout the course of the application. They have confirmed that the raise no objection to the revisions to the application provided that large scale details for new windows, lintels and the limecrete floor slab are secured by condition. They also consider that sample materials for the new brickwork should be secured by condition.

The Conservation Officer did raise concerns with the revised design of the rear entrance to which the agent has submitted an amended drawing to meet their requests.

On this basis, WDC Conservation raises no objection. Therefore, by virtue of its appropriate design and scale, it has been concluded that the scheme of works would preserve the character and appearance of the Listed Building and would preserve its significance. The works to the exterior of the building are considered sympathetic to the building, will improve its appearance and character and will therefore be of benefit to the significance of the Conservation Area. The recommended conditions will ensure that the finer details of the proposals maintain the quality of the scheme.

The proposed works would facilitate the reuse of a Listed Building that has been vacant for a number of years. The proposed alterations facilitate a change of use which is viable and consistent with the conservation of the building. As such, the proposal accords with the NPPF and Policies HE1 and RLS3.

CONDITIONS

1 The works hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this consent. **Reason:** To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the site location plan and approved drawing(s) and specification contained therein;

Submitted on 29th October 2021:

12000 - 104 T1	Church- Proposed Sections
12000 - 105 T1 2362.01.0040. T1	Basement Floor Strip Out_Demo Plan.
2362.01.0041.T1	Ground Floor Strip Out_Demo Plan
2362.01.0042.T1	First Floor Strip Out_Demo Plan
2362.01.0043.T1	Second Floor Strip Out_Demo Plan
2362.01.0044.T1	Roof Floor Strip Out_Demo Plan
2362.01.0045.T1	Reflected Ceiling Plan Strip Out_Demo
2362.01.0046.T1	Elevation Strip Out_Demo

2362.01.0047.T1	Existing Section A-A Strip Out_Demo
2362.01.0048.T1	Existing Section B-B Strip Out_Demo
2362.01.1000.T2	Proposed Site Plan
2362.01.1100.T2	Proposed Basement Plan
2362.01.1101.T2	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
2362.01.1102.T2	Proposed First Floor Plan (Mezzanine).
2362.01.1104.T3	Proposed Roof Plan
2362.01.1200.T1	Proposed South Elevation
2362.01.1202.T2	Proposed East Elevation
2362.01.1203.T1	Proposed West Elevation
2362.01.1803.T1	Proposed First Reflected Ceiling Plan.
2362.01.2000.T2	Proposed Section A-A.
2362.01.2001.T2	Proposed Section B-B.
2362.01.2002.T2	Proposed Section C-C
2362.01.2004.T2	Proposed Section D-D
2362.01.3002.T3	Detail - Roof Section.
2362.01.3005.T2	.Detail - Basement Tanking
2362.01.3010.T1	Detail - Memorial Signs.
2362.01.3015.T1	Detail - Vents
2362.01.3050.T1	Detail - New Gates
2362.01.3053.T1	Detail - Mezzanine Balustrade

2362.01.3054.T1	Detail - Window Details
2362.01.3055.T	Detail - Upper Mezzanine
2362.01.3056.T1	Detail - Proposed Balustrade on ground
2362.01.3060.T2	Detail - Central Stair Details

Submitted on 24th January 2022:

2362.01.1201.T2	Proposed North Elevation

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies HE1 and HE2 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.

3 Large scale details of the new windows and doors (including a section showing the window reveal, heads and cill details) (except for those already provided on drawing no. 2362.01.3054 submitted on 29th October 2021), all new lintels and a section drawing of the limecrete slab (with labels) at a scale of 1:5 (including details of materials) must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement on any works in association with that element of the scheme in question. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with such approved details. **Reason:** To ensure a high standard of design and appearance for this Listed Building and the Conservation Area, and to satisfy Policy HE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.

4 No development shall be carried out to the basement windows on the North elevation of the building unless and until samples of the external facing materials to be used to infill the basement windows have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details. **Reason:** To ensure that the proposed development has a satisfactory external appearance in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policies HE1 and HE2 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.