

**Item 4I**                      **13/00523/CON**

**Case Officer**              **Ian Heywood**

**Ward**                         **Chorley South East**

**Proposal**                    **Demolition of part of 10 - 14 St George's Street - former Harry's Bar function room.**

**Location**                    **Harrys Bar 14 St Georges Street Chorley PR7 2AA**

**Applicant**                    **Progress Housing Group Limited**

**Consultation expiry:** **12 July 2013**

**Application expiry:** **2 August 2013**

### **Proposal**

1. Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the former function room to Harry's Bar, 10 – 14 St George's Street, Chorley
2. Planning Permission for the conversion of former Harry's Bar and erection of new building on the site of the former function room to create eight one-bedroom apartments.

### **Site Description**

3. The building was erected in the 1840s as 'The Reform Club' and extended in the 1870s when the function room was erected, located in the then fashionable St George's Street within Chorley town centre. This street is lined with former merchant's houses, which were subsequently converted to businesses – offices and shops in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and early 21<sup>st</sup> Century many of these buildings have fallen empty and have remained so for many years. Harry's Bar has been empty for approximately 6 years. The building is within the St George's Conservation Area and the buildings immediately adjacent to east and north are grade II listed buildings. These are all designated heritage assets as defined by Annex 2 to the Framework. The buildings are constructed of red brick laid with fine mortar joints in Flemish bond with Welsh slate roofs and sandstone detailing including window and door surrounds, string courses, parapets with lead-lined box gutters and sash windows. The former function room is unusual in that it has no entrance of its own – access was always gained through the adjacent building to which it was an extension. The whole building is in poor and deteriorating condition as a result of being empty for a number of years. Within the Chorley Council Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals document that was published as a supporting document to the Local Development Framework in February 2009 by the Council's Executive Cabinet the building is marked as both a 'focal building' and one that makes a positive contribution to the character of the area, it was also recognised that it was in desperate need of repairs and a new use needed to be found for it. No change to that status has occurred in the intervening years, until now.

### **Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that these applications are granted conservation area consent and full planning permission.

### **Main Issues**

5. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:
  - Principle of the development
  - Background information
  - Design and impact upon the significance of designated heritage assets

## Representations

6. No letters of objection have been received.
7. No letters of support have been received.

## Consultations

8. **Chorley Council Strategic Housing Team** – Fully supports the application

## Assessment

### Principle of the development

9. Policy EM9 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review (2003), Policy 10 of the Adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy DPD (2012) and the Central Lancashire SPD on Controlling the Re-Use of Employment Premises (2012) all seek to protect employment sites or sites last used for employment. The SPD suggests a number of criteria that have to be met where proposals for alternative uses to employment are being proposed:
  - a) There would not be an unacceptable reduction in the type, quality or quantity of employment land supply – in this case there remains a ready supply of identical sized office accommodation currently vacant within the immediate vicinity. It is clear therefore that at the present time supply is greatly exceeding demand.
  - b) The provision and need for the proposed use – there is an almost insatiable demand for modest, low cost housing in the Chorley area.
  - c) The relative suitability of the site for employment and for the alternative use – demand for employment sites (offices or retail) in this precise area has been diminishing for a number of years and the relative difficulty of altering a listed building means that such uses are not best catered for by these buildings. In many instances their original use – residential – is actually their best use.
  - d) The location of the site and its relationship to other uses – this is a highly sustainable location with easy access to services and transport links, ideal for the proposed use.
  - e) Whether the ability to accommodate smaller scale requirements would be compromised – this is already the smallest size of unit available, so such requirements would not be compromised.
  - f) There would be a net improvement in amenity – clearly an empty and deteriorating building is doing little for the amenity of its neighbours and the area as a whole. The sensitive reuse and rehabilitation of the building and the redevelopment of part of the site using a complimentary style of building is to be welcomed.
  - g) Convincing evidence of a lack of demand through rigorous and active 12 month marketing period – the building has been empty for at least six years and has been actively marketed for that entire period, without success. There are also a number of other empty public houses within close proximity to the site.
  - h) An assessment of the viability of employment development – it is patently clear that employment use is no longer viable in this area for this building as evidenced by the long periods of vacancy for both this and many other adjacent buildings.

It is clear that the proposed redevelopment of this building for residential use meets these policy requirements and furthermore will help to address the demand for low cost residential accommodation within Chorley.

### Background Information

10. Additional information has been supplied by the Strategic Housing Team: As a result of Government plans to reform the benefits system and to restrict the amount of Housing Benefit paid to claimants according to the size of property they need the Council identified a need for smaller properties and in particular 1 bed roomed apartments in the town centre to assist childless couples and single people looking for affordable accommodation. This proposal will also bring back into use a former commercial building and long term empty property, accordingly it will also help to regenerate and improve this area of the town centre. In support of this project on 21st March 2013 the Executive Cabinet approved a capital contribution of £271,679 to assist New Progress HA in converting the existing building into 8 x 1 bed apartments for Social Rent. In return New Progress HA will give the Council 100% nomination rights over the completed apartments in perpetuity.

### Design and impact upon designated heritage assets

11. The proposed development includes the demolition of the former function room to the Reform Club. This building was a later addition to the original club building. It is of tall single-storey dimensions and includes a clerestory or lantern roof over the central area that was designed to let hot air, and no doubt clouds of cigar/cigarette and pipe smoke out whilst remaining water-tight during periods of rain. Having inspected the building and the roof it is clear that the structure is failing badly. Water ingress has been considerable, resulting in large holes within the floor and rotten floor joists. The dimensions of the building, added to its very poor condition, make it very difficult and costly to convert to alternative uses. This being the case it is considered that the best way forward is to demolish this element of the building and erect a sympathetic, complimentary, yet subtly different building in its place that is fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Pre-application discussions with the applicant and agent have shaped this decision and the proposed design for both the new building and the conversion works.
12. Whilst the building is not a designated heritage asset in its own right, it is located within one – the St Georges Conservation Area. Furthermore any development on this site has the potential to affect the setting of the other listed buildings within St Georges Street. The building is clearly comparable age to the adjacent listed buildings and is of a similar quality and style. It can therefore be considered to be a heritage asset.
13. The Framework refers, in Section 12, to Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 131 therein states that: *In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of: The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.*
14. Policy 16 of the Adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy refers to Heritage Assets. Amongst other things this aims to: *Protect and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting by: Supporting development or other initiatives where they protect and enhance local character, setting, management and historic significance of heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that will improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition, or at risk.*
15. The Framework also states that: *The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.* Clearly the proposed development will bring back a heritage asset into sustainable economic use and thereby provide it with a secure future. It is considered that the public benefit of losing the former function room outweighs the loss of significance, which is considered to be relatively low, of this part of the building.
16. The design chosen, as has been mentioned previously, reflects pre-application discussions between the Council, the applicant and the agent. In particular the design of the new-build element has been carefully chosen so as to be sympathetic in both style and choice of materials but at the same time sufficiently different so as not to be seen as a pastiche copy.
17. Overall it is considered that the design is acceptable and that the impact upon both designated and non-designated heritage assets is acceptable such that the proposal is considered to comply with national and local policies. Furthermore the development is considered to enhance the appearance of St George's Street and to enhance the significance of the Conservation Area and the significance therein.

### Section 106 Agreement

18. This being a 100% affordable housing scheme there is no requirement for a S.106 Agreement.

## Overall Conclusion

19. The proposed development supports the Council's policies on re-use of buildings in this area. It is also considered that it will enhance the significance and character of the St George's Street Conservation and is in line with the Council's management proposals for that area. The applications are therefore recommended for approval.

## Other Matters

### Planning Policies

The Framework (NPPF): Section 12, Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Saved Policies from the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review 2003: EM9, HT7, HT8

Adopted Central Lancashire Joint Core Strategy DPD (2012): Policy 16, Heritage Assets

Also of relevance but currently limited weight is the emerging Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026, Policy BNE8: Protection and Enhancement of Heritage Assets.

### Planning History

<b>Ref:</b> 99/00207/FUL	<b>Decision:</b> WDN	<b>Decision Date:</b> 17 May 1999
<b>Description:</b> Single-storey rear extension, formation of beer garden and car park,		
<b>Ref:</b> 5/1/03027	<b>Decision:</b> PERFPP	<b>Decision Date:</b> 2 May 1968
<b>Description:</b> New Sign		
<b>Ref:</b> 86/00850/FUL	<b>Decision:</b> PERFPP	<b>Decision Date:</b> 7 April 1987
<b>Description:</b> Provision of Four Globe Lights		
<b>Ref:</b> 85/00839/FUL	<b>Decision:</b> PERFPP	<b>Decision Date:</b> 20 January 1986
<b>Description:</b> Single storey rear extension for cellar and w c		
<b>Ref:</b> 85/00565/ADV	<b>Decision:</b> PERFPP	<b>Decision Date:</b> 10 September 1985
<b>Description:</b> Display of neon sign and lights		
<b>Ref:</b> 84/00785/FUL	<b>Decision:</b> PERFPP	<b>Decision Date:</b> 2 January 1985
<b>Description:</b> Change of use of part of club building to offices with new front entrance to serve remainder of building		
<b>Ref:</b> 84/00784/FUL	<b>Decision:</b> PD	<b>Decision Date:</b> 2 January 1985
<b>Description:</b> Application to determine whether planning permission is required for change of use to public house		
<b>Ref:</b> 81/00504/ADV	<b>Decision:</b> REFADV	<b>Decision Date:</b> 19 May 1981
<b>Description:</b> Illuminated projection sign		
<b>Ref:</b> 79/00043/ADV	<b>Decision:</b> REFADV	<b>Decision Date:</b> 12 February 1979
<b>Description:</b> Illuminated box sign		

### Recommendation: Permit - Conservation Area Consent Conditions

- The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.**  
*Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*
- The works of demolition hereby authorised shall not be carried out before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment of the site has been made and**

planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment for which the contract provides.

*Reason: To ensure the protection of the heritage asset in the event that the development does not proceed.*