

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Former Cinema Corn Exchange Bondgate Within Northumberland NE66 1SX

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Format

This assessment has been prepared as part of a listed building consent application for change of use, alterations and refurbishment of the subject property. The assessment has been conducted in accordance with general guidelines set out in the English Heritage publication 'Informed Conservation' and in particular responds to policies outlined in Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5). In terms of local policies, The Core Strategy sets out the overall vision and spatial strategy for the Borough and seeks to achieve the regeneration and renaissance of Blyth Valley by 2021 and will give expression to the vision and priorities in "Spatial Vision For Alnwick District" has also defined the nature of information gathering and assessment. This assessment supplements a Design and Access Statement already prepared.

1.2 Methods of Investigation

Visual inspections of the property, carried out in May 2013, were completed with the aid of existing and proposed building drawings. Background research into the building was conducted through consultation with the following main resources:

- Northumberland planning department
- The National Archives
- Historical texts

The Corn Exchange is a grade II Listed building therefore any proposals which may impact upon the special architectural or historic interest of the building will be managed in relation to the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This statement assesses the impact of proposals to refurbish the existing building into a public house. Any impact is assessed in relation to the special architectural and historic interest of the building.

2.0 CONTEXT AND SETTING.

2.1 Alnwick is a small market town in north Northumberland, England. The town's population was just over 8,000 at the time of the 2001 census, while the former Alnwick district's population was 31,029.

2.2 The town of Alnwick lies on the eastern fringe of low hills overlooking the locally narrow coastal plain 33 miles north of Newcastle and 30 miles south of Berwick. Its equidistance between these two towns, on a major north-south route way, and at a crossing point of the River Aln, has given it an historic strategic significance fully reflected by the presence of the baronial Alnwick Castle, the seat of the Percy family for 700 years and a major border stronghold for 900. Today, as well as its administrative function as the head of Alnwick District, the town serves as an important market centre for surrounding rural areas and is increasingly important as a tourist destination. It has a population of around 9000. Although there has been considerable expansion to the south and east (its development was historically constrained to the north by Alnwick Castle and its parks and gardens) the core of the town has maintained much of its early character. The main streets within this core, amongst which are Bondgate, Narrowgate and Clayport, Market Street and Fenkle Street, are of great age and some may, in origin, be pre-Conquest routeways.

2.3 Geological resources at Alnwick have not been a major factor in its economic development. Although minor coal seams have been worked nearby at Radcliffe, Shilbottle, Alnwick Moor and Newton-on-the-Moor and limestone was quarried on Alnwick Moor, the town lay outside the area of the Northern Coalfield and remained largely unaffected by industrial changes which transformed towns towards the south-east of the county. Throughout medieval and post-medieval times the town grew around its market place which formed the hub of commercial activity in the town.

2.4 By the mid-16th century the town's population was around 2000 and it was considered an important regional centre, reflected in the fact that many of the gentry of the district had town houses in Alnwick. There were also many trades and crafts in the town. over the 18th and 19th centuries, most notably fulling and tanning, but manufacturing never supplanted Alnwick's traditional function as market for the surrounding region and as a staging post on the Great North Road.

2.5 Possibly the single most influential factor on the development of the modern town was the decision by the Duke of Northumberland in the 1750s to take up the castle as his main residence. This use of the castle, and significantly the extensive landscaped gardens around it, restricted any development of the town to the north.

2.6 Over much of the 19th century the town did expand significantly to the south. The Howick Street development of the 1830s on the southern fringe of Alnwick remains an excellent example of a suburb of this date. Industrial activity was largely confined to the southern and western fringes of the town also, and largely to an area along and bounding Dispensary Street. Even this maintained the continuity of long established trades such as brewing and tanning. Alnwick enhanced its established role over the century and continued to act as an important market town and service centre.

2.7 Post-medieval Alnwick was a regional centre for a large part of the county with extensive cattle and sheep markets. Its importance was in no small part due to its location within a road system helped by the increase in the movement of goods and people after the Union of the Crowns in 1603.

2.8 The centre of town is the marketplace, with its market cross, and the relatively modern Northumberland Hall, used as a meeting place. Surrounding the marketplace are the main shopping streets, Narrowgate, Fenkle Street, and Bondgate Within. The last of these is a wide, spacious road fronted by attractive commercial buildings. In mediaeval times, Alnwick was a walled town and one remain—Hotspur Tower, a mediaeval gate—is extant, dividing Bondgate Within from Bondgate Without, and restricting vehicles to a single lane used alternately in each direction. Pottergate Tower, at the other side of the town, also stands on the site of an ancient

gate, but the tower itself was rebuilt in the 18th century. Its ornate spire was destroyed in a storm in 1812.

2.9 Encroachment of buildings onto the Market Place had begun by the 16th century and continued into the 18th century. A succession of smaller market houses and shambles were constructed and pulled down on the site of the Assembly Rooms, which was constructed in 1826.

2.10 By the 1820s, the sheep and cattle market had fallen into disuse, but there was a fortnightly corn market. The butcher market was held in front of the shambles and there was a fish market held in front of the town hall, selling fish from Newton, Craster, Boulmer, and Alnmouth. The poultry, egg and butter markets were held at the west end of the shambles.

2.11 The capacity of the town as a market centre was enhanced by the construction of The Corn Exchange along Bondgate Within in 1862.

3.0 Building History

3.1 The Corn Exchange is a Grade II Listed Building, due to its special architectural interest and important former use as Alnwick's Corn Exchange:

LISTED DESCRIPTION

The Corn Exchange, Alnwick

Description: The Corn Exchange

Grade: II

Date Listed: 25 August 1977

English Heritage Building ID: 235640

OS Grid Reference: NU1873213201

OS Grid Coordinates: 418732, 613201

Latitude/Longitude: 55.4124, -1.7057

Location: Bondgate Within, Alnwick, Northumberland

Locality: Alnwick

Local Authority: Northumberland

County: Northumberland

Country: England

Postcode: NE66 1SX

Listing Text

BONDGATE WITHIN

1

5330

(South Side)

The Corn Exchange

NU 1813 SE 1/164

II

2.

1862. Two storey foyer to a long building set back up steps from Bondgate. Ashlar gable end and foyer with raised quoins and 1st floor window surrounds. Two large

doorways with raised voussoirs and impost mouldings and 2 side doors. Moulded cill string to 8 1st floor openings; moulded cornice and blocking course, a small bellcote in centre with scrolls at sides. Lower gabled extension at south end.

3.2 A history for The Corn Exchange building has been thoroughly researched by Marjorie Brown of the Alnwick and District Local History Society, which she presented in a talk to the society in 2008:

The Corn Exchange was designed by Thomas Robertson and dates from 1862. It is situated on the southern side of the town centre between Bondgate Within and Green Batt, accessed from the alley by the side of Hannay's. It has a long flight of steps to the entrance, is 100 feet long and 50 feet wide and held 1,500 - 2,000 people.

It is only one storey high, with a music gallery, and a kitchen which was used to cater for soirees and public dinners. The front of handsome dressed stone with a bell turret was designed to impress, and the skylights in the roof provided natural light until at least the 1930s.

The proposal for the erection of a Corn Exchange building was made when Alnwick was becoming a town of greater national importance. With the new railway, tourists were attracted to Alnwick.

The castle was undergoing extensive restorations and the town had a new piped water supply and sewerage system. The market was growing, business was prospering, but there was criticism about the town's infrastructure. The introduction of piped water and the sewage system had been slow, and the town needed proper paving and a general clean up.

One thing that rankled was that there was no Corn Exchange. The old corn market took place outside in all weathers, or the traders used the public houses or merchant's offices. There was no space suitable for public dinners as the Town Hall was unsuitable and Northumberland Hall was a private hall for the gentry. There was a need for a winter drill hall and storage facilities for the volunteers corps, which had been formed when Napoleon III took the French throne and there was fear of invasion. A corn exchange was proposed in 1861 and a site purchased.

There was an immediate response for a "better" scheme, to develop the Market Place, demolishing all the buildings on the west side except the Town Hall. A huge public room would link into the Town Hall on the second floor, and there would be shops and offices underneath. Open arches to provide shelter for carriages arriving at the Assembly Rooms were also planned. It was a grand scheme, but the first scheme had a head start, and work started immediately.

It opened in April 1862 with a fund raising event for the Rifle Volunteers. 385 was raised at a bazaar and the Corn Exchange provided space for use as Drill Hall and store. In May the Corn Market opened. Trading was on Saturdays and lasted two hours per week.

The hall, was of course ideal for public functions. There were a number of large public dinners, all catered for by Mr and Mrs Dunn, proprietors of the Nag's Head, Fenkle Street, quite a money spinner.

In 1862 a dinner was held for the Festival of Parochial Choirs. In August, there was another to celebrate the return of the Duke and Duchess from a visit to Kielder. A month later another workman's dinner was held to celebrate the completion of Allerburn House, a state-of-the-art building designed by FR Wilson, with every convenience.

In the following year, there was another big public dinner, tickets three shillings each, with a public ball to celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales to Princess Anne of Denmark.

The Corn Exchange had become a very popular venue for large events.

It was used by the Mechanics Institute when they held a "Conversazione" in 1869. There were four public lectures, followed by an exhibition of works of art, antiquities and the like. 800 children were admitted free to the exhibition, which was accompanied by a piano recital.

There was a similar event in 1874, with a prom concert in the evening. An Egyptian Exhibition was held in 1880s, and in 1883, a Poor Children's Christmas Treat. An idea to give the children a present snowballed, as people donated money, clothing, books, toys etc, and the Bijou Band offered its services. The children were given clothing, a toy, both individually chosen, an orange and a piece of fruit cake. Mr Flintoff was praised for his insistence that all poor children should be included, not just the "deserving" poor.

In 1875 ownership of the Corn Exchange changed, and the building was leased to Henry Sanderson. By 1879 market activity had ceased and the Artillery Corp also moved out in 1888.

Nonetheless, the building was sufficiently well used to make a profit, without no great effort to promote its use. In 1886 it was redecorated, and fitted out as a "Victorian theatre". Adam Robertson was responsible for the painting and redecoration. Concerts and recitals were given and Charles Dickens junior came to read some of his father's work. Mr Bentley's company gave the Alnwick audience Hamlet and Macbeth and Sir Henry Irving also appeared.

In 1896 there was a new use for the building - a dairy school was established, teaching cheese and butter making.

By 1910-11, activities were winding down, and there was talk of plans for a new public hall. But there were still many popular activities. Bowling had ceased, to be replaced with "rinking" or roller skating, which was very popular, scratch races, gymkhanas, hockey matches etc, and there were moving picture shows.

However, competition appeared in 1915 with the building of the Playhouse cinema. The Playhouse was more popular, but the corn exchange continued as cinema, and then a bingo hall, until its closure in 1986.'

3.3 Henry Sanderson of Narrowgate Street, Alnwick, is described as a grocer and tea dealer in W. Whelton and Co., History, Topography and Directory of Northumberland, 1855. By 1864, a Henry Sanderson is described as both grocer and tea dealer and ale and porter merchant, trading at 20 Bondgate Within. By 1897, the proprietors of the business were Joseph and Henry George Sanderson, described as wholesale and retail grocers, wine, spirit and ale merchant's. They were also lessees of the Corn Exchange, described as follows in a directory of 1887:

'The Corn Exchange, situated between Green Bat and Bondgate, is a modern structure, and was a private speculation. It is a one-storey building, comprising a large hall, capable of accommodating between 1,500 and 2,000 persons, and several ante-rooms. It has long been discontinued as a place of merchandise, and is now used as a public hall.'

3.4 Kelly's Directory of Northumberland, 1925, describes the Corn Exchange as 'a music and cinematograph hall', whilst a printed label on a trade ledger, 1912-20, reads 'From the Alnwick & County Stores. John H. Sanderson Corn Exchange Buildings Alnwick'

3.5 An advertisement handbill from May 1862, gives further insight into the original use and layout of the building:

'ALNWICK CORN EXCHANGE

In order to place this Market upon the best footing, the Proprietors of this Exchange have obtained information respecting Covered Markets in this and neighbouring Counties.

The Kelso Market is most like this in size and shape. There, the Corn Merchants and Farmers find it extremely convenient for buyers and sellers. The Farmers, as well as dealers in Seeds and Manures, brewers, and others, have Stalls (about 70 in number) with their names and addresses painted on boards, fastened to the walls above their stalls, so that any one may be found in a moment. The seller has small wooden dishes before him, in each of which is place a sample of the article for sale. The buyer goes his rounds and very shortly supplies himself with what he wants.

It is proposed that the Alnwick market should begin at 11.30am, after the south train has arrived, and that it should close at 1.30pm – subject to such alterations as the Merchants and Farmers may hereafter think best.

Each stall will have the private office of the taker, for his own exclusive use during market hours, and his desk will be fastened with his own lock and key.

The Rent will be £2 2s per annum, same as Kelso, payable in advance, reckoning from January 1st; and larger stalls, fitted up from 3 to 5 guineas, as Corn Merchants and extensive Dealers may wish.

Sellers who have no stalls pay 7s. 6d, and buyers 10s. 6d, in advance, as annual subscribers, for which tickets will be issued.

In other respects, every person, except owners of stalls and annual subscribers, pay during market hours 1d for every time of entry. Persons wishing for stalls to make an entry in the keepers list, and they will be accommodated, according to the date, as far as the stalls extend.

This Market will be opened every Saturday from and after Saturday the 17th of May, 1862.

BY ORDER,

ROBERT WARDHAUGH, Keeper of The Exchange

Alnwick, May 7th, 1862.'

3.6 All of the above evidence gives a rich insight into the history of the building and provides clues as to the features remaining in the fabric of the building as it now stands

4.0 Building Description

4.1 The former Corn Exchange building takes the form of a large open hall with a two storey foyer at the North end and lower gabled extension at the South end. It is constructed from Local sandstone, Ashlar to the front (North) elevation and rear (South) elevation with coursed rubble walling to the side (East and West) walls. The roof is pitched and slated roof with clay ridges, with timber sarking to the roof trusses and cast iron rain water pipes.

4.2 The two storey foyer at the North is in a dilapidated condition internally due to a failed roof; the first floor joists remain, although floor decking has been removed historically. 2no staircases at the East and West sides of the foyer gave access to the first floor. There is a frieze identified as Lincrusta 'Adam' wallpaper within the entrance foyers which is thought to be contemporary with the cinema's later use. 4no openings within the gable wall of the main building from the two storey foyer at first floor level, together with the remnants of a balcony structure within the first bay of the main hall. It is surmised that this was a balcony feature in connection with the building's later cinema use. This is borne out by the fact that the stubs of steel columns exist within the sub-floor at ground floor which are surely later interventions into the space as all of the main structural components in the original building are timber. 4no openings onto this balcony area have been blocked up historically and their line can be read internally due to the later

removal of plaster finishes to all walls. The ground floor of the foyer is some two steps below the main floor of the building.

4.3 The main space within the building is a large hall divided into six approximately equal bays by timber trusses supporting the roof structure.

4.4 The ground floor of the building is of timber construction, supported from sleeper walls. Much of the existing timber structure has been removed so only a central section now remains. There is evidence that the floor levels of the building may have changed at some point in its history, as the sleeper walls of original store construction are at a lower level and have been built up by later addition of honey-comb bond brickwork sleeper walls on top of the existing stone. The level change is further evidenced by steps that exist from a former opening in the East elevation which extend to below the level of the remaining timber floor area.

4.5 The main hall has 1no large doorway at each end (North and South of the main space). These feature Ashlar surrounds with decorative arched heads and remain the main entrance into the body of the building. A triptych of arched windows exists at high level at both ends of the building although these have been partially blocked up historically. The line of a doorway on the eastern elevation is evident internally and on the outside of the building. It is thought that this may be contemporary with the original construction as there are remnants of steps on the inside which extend below the current floor level.

4.6 The trusses supporting the roof are of timber construction, supported on shaped stone plinths and strapped back to the main walls with ironwork. It is interesting to note that the bottom cord of the trusses takes a perfectly circular form. This is achieved by the use of laminated timber sections held and tensioned by iron rods and demonstrates the use of the best available technology in the mid-Victorian period. There is evidence of rot to several of the trusses and posts, as borne out in the timber & damp report provided.

4.7 The truss frame closest to the South gable of the main space carries evidence of the former cinema / theatre use in the form of a decorative frame at high level on the line of what was once the stage / screen area of the theatre / cinema.

4.8 Very little natural light exists in the building which is unusual given the original use as a Corn Exchange, when the available artificial lighting at the time of the original construction would not have been sufficient to illuminate the space to standard sufficient for a market environment. It is considered therefore that Marjorie Brown's description of skylights in the roof which existed until the 1930s is accurate and that these were probably removed as they were undesirable for the building's later use as a cinema.

4.9 There is evidence that the walls internally were once plastered and that this has been removed by mechanical means. There also exist timber grounds within the mortar joints of the walls at low level, suggestive of a wainscot panelling, together with a continuous line of repair at mid-level of the main walls suggestive of a frieze rail. It is impossible to tell whether these features were contemporary with the building's original use or later additions in connection with the theatre / cinema usage.

4.10 2no roof fans exist on the upper East roof slope, which are ducted internally using MDF. These are undoubtedly later additions, probably from the early 1980s when that material was first used extensively within the industry.

4.11 The lower gabled extension to the South of the building is of two storey construction although little of the original first floor remains except the line of supporting beams and a number of joists together with a timber staircase from ground floor. An internal wall currently divides this space into a rear foyer and boiler room although it is not thought that this is contemporary with the original construction of this part of the building.

4.12 A chimney and fireplace opening of stone construction with a decorative string course exists at the East side of this two storey outrigger, along with a stone chimney stack on the exterior of the building which has been later extended vertically in brickwork.

4.13 It is considered that the southern outrigger is contemporary with the main building although being of a very slightly later date as its outline is indicated on the first Ordnance Survey map of 1863, a year after the original building's construction. The outrigger is clearly not part of the original design as it cuts across the line of the triptych of windows at high level on the main hall and renders the main doorway into the main space at the South of the building internal where stone detailing around this door clearly suggests that it was once visible externally. It can only be surmised that as the original Corn Exchange was built speculatively by private subscription that this addition to the building was considered necessary in the early days of its use.

4.14 Externally, the building is of a reasonable condition for its age and lengthy period of dereliction. There is evidence of some cracking in several locations which can be repaired as borne out in the structural engineer's report. The building also requires several areas of re-pointing and urgent works are necessary to the roof to make the building watertight and prolong its life.

4.15 External doors at the front and rear of the building are thought to be original although they are in a state of disrepair. All existing windows are blocked with timber boarding and the condition of the frames beneath has not been able to be assessed.

5. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 This section of the report assesses individual elements of the proposal in relation to the impact upon the special architectural and historic interest of The Wallaw Cinema as a listed building.

The assessment will explain how the impact has been addressed and where necessary provides a justification for the proposal in reference to the relative significance of the historic building and its component parts.

The building is a vacant, its last use being a Cinema. It is a detached Victorian stone building, and is one storey in height, with a small mezzanine level over the front entrance. The main ground floor of the building is above the external entrance level and has a very simple rectangular plan.

A) Change of use – The building's previous use was as a Cinema, but due to a fall in demand of this type of facility over the years the building has been vacant for almost twenty years. Our client JD Wetherspoon PLC, are committed to retaining the aesthetic of the existing building and they are aware that the property is listed. As such JD Wetherspoon propose to finish the new areas with sympathetic design to complement the existing interior space.

B) New bar and back of house areas – The bar will be situated along the north to south axis located along the west elevation. The back bar design will expose the existing timber columns in order to enhance the existing character of the building. This new bar servery area with back of

house areas to the rear acting in the same manner as the back stage did when the theatre was in use and will provide support to the front of house customer space where staff will perform their duties. This is proposed in order to preserve the existing character and enable the full void and cruck trusses and construction to be appreciated as they should be by the customers and staff alike.

C) *The creation of external terraced area* - This area will be formed in the existing yard, and will give the building useable external space which will help provide the building with a long term sustainable development. The existing yard area will be refurbished & include both paving & landscaped areas to form a new external drinking area, and provide vehicular access for deliveries and disabled access for customers

D) *Alterations to the North Elevation and main entrance* - are two sets of existing doors in this elevation, both of which currently have a step at the threshold. As part of the overall refurbishment of the building, the applicant will make necessary repairs to the entrance steps to the left hand doors to afford safe access for customers. The double entrance door will be replaced with a new timber door of a pattern to match the existing, which is beyond repair, and the secondary door to the front elevation will be replaced with fully glazed windows.

E) *Construction of new male and female toilets* – This is proposed to the first floor and has now been designed to respect the significances of the building. Keeping the WC's to the south of the building enables the customer area to keep one of its most striking characteristics which is the double height void, which showcase the spectacular trusses and the symmetry of the building. The female toilets will have a window overlooking the main customer area and there will also be a balustrade on the upstairs lobby again overlooking the main customer area. One toilet cubicle in both the ladies and gents will be designed and fitted-out in accordance with the recommendations in BS8300:2001, for use by people with ambulant disabilities. A disabled unisex-accessible WC, on the ground floor, will be provided to meet the recommendations of BS8300:2001 and the guidance identified in the Approved Document to Part M (2004) diagram 18. Right hand transfer will be available within reasonable travel distances.

F) *New Heating and air conditioning and introduce a new beer cooling unit* –The proposal is to provide a new modern, efficient air conditioning system with heat recovery modules, alongside a wet heating system with cast iron column radiators in the customer area which will adequately heat the space , to minimise the damage to the fabric of the building. A cooling unit will be provided within the cellar area, which is a necessary feature for the proposed use of the building.

G) *Exterior repairs and replacement* – External repairs to the buildings fabric and roofs are essential to the conserving the building's weatherproof integrity and must be conducted with due care and attention in order to reduce the risk of damage. It is understood that the repairs, given their nature and extent, would be unlikely to require listed building consent. Minor repairs to delaminating stonework are also planned and these are to be carried out by specialist contractors with a strong track history of conservation work in the region. Test sampling and non-aggressive techniques are to be employed, so as to minimise the risk of damage and preserve the integrity of the masonry.

H) *Formation of new bin store to rear elevation* – The proposed new bin store is proposed for the rear of yard area, this this will be sectioned off from the customer area by a 2 metre high close boarded timber fence.

I) *Renewal of two Staircases* – The existing staircases at the north end of the building are in a poor state of repair due to water ingress and it is proposed to renew them like for like. They will provide access to a staff and store room at first floor level.

J) *Treatment of existing windows* – It is proposed that the windows to all elevations are replaced with new double glazing in timber frames of a pattern to replicate the original window frames.

K) *Repairs to ceiling and roof* – Areas of the roof are damaged and in need of repair. There is evidence of roof leaks throughout the whole building. The roof over the front entrance is poor condition and will require stripping, and timbers replaced.

L) *Plumbing & Electrics* – The plumbing throughout the building has been stripped out and a new system will be fitted to support the new design. The cast iron rain water pipes and fascia boards around the building are in varying degrees of disrepair and will require replacing. New electrics will also be fitted as there is only the meter remaining.

M) *External & Internal Flooring* – Access to the site is via a public footpath and up a number of stone steps from Bondgate Within. It is proposed to resurface the public right of way footpath in tarmac, and repave the area in front of the main entrance to highways standards. Extensive areas of the timber ground floor have been removed throughout the building, and the ground beneath exposed; a new timber floor will be constructed on the ground floor.

N) *Treatment of Internal Features* – Within the proposed customer area, it is intended to retain and refurbish existing features of the building where possible. At the North end of the building, the two existing staircases will be replaced like-for-like and the existing Lincrusta frieze will be replicated in this area in the new proposals. Plaster finishes will be reinstated with wall panelling at wainscot height throughout. Within the main space, the existing crook truss frames will be restored, replacing all rotten timbers and re-painting to bring them back to their original condition. There is evidence of wainscot height panelling throughout the whole of the ground floor and this will be reinstated as part of the proposals, along with a frieze rail at high level, evidence of which is suggested by the existing building fabric. The main entrance doors at the North and South of the main hall will be retained as openings with the decorative arched heads left exposed. Finishes within the space will be complementary with the existing building fabric and new fixtures will be contemporary so as to avoid a pastiche and allow the new interventions to be read as such.

6. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.1 The proposal falls in line with Paragraph 56 which considers the Governments requirement for the great importance to the design of the built environment. 'Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people'.

6.2 The proposal considers Paragraph 57 considers the why 'it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes'.

6.3. Paragraph 58 considers the general design principles within the built environment and where developments should 'function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development'. Paragraph 58 also requires developments to 'respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation'.

6.4. The proposal seriously considers paragraph 61 which stipulates that 'the visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings as very important factors securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

6.5. As stated in paragraph 62 the proposal has been reviewed by the Local planning authority. Harrison Ince Architects understand and agree that the 'local design review arrangement is in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design.'

6.6. Harrison Ince Architects agree with the clause set out in Paragraph 63 and understand that when determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.

6.7. Paragraph 64 considers that the proposal should be of the highest design standards and promote the use of high quality materials. The building will take 'the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.'

6.8. The proposal does not promote poorly placed advertisements' as this can have 'a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment'. Paragraph 67 stipulates that 'the control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.'

6.9. The design considers Paragraph 69 which promotes having 'safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.'

6.10. Paragraph 126 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that 'new development will make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness'. In accordance with paragraph 128 of the NPPF, as part of the planning application the significance of any heritage assets affected should be described, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail required should be proportionate to the assets' importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

6.11. The reason for this Heritage statement is because at Harrison Ince Architects we understand the significance of this heritage asset that will be affected by our proposal. We believe this statement along with all the other documentation for this scheme is in line with Paragraph 128 of the NPPF. 'The level of detail proposed is now proportionate to the assets and importance and no more than is sufficient to for local authority to understand the potential impact of the proposal. The appropriate expertise has been called upon where necessary in order to aid us in providing the information. This in turn has helped create an understanding of the special interest of the former Corn Exchange.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposal above thus far establish the approach taken to the proposed work i.e. reversibility, minimum intervention, sympathy to the existing fabric to be considered alongside an assessment of the building's architectural and historic interest, which justifies the need to alter the building. In essence this relates to the pursuit of an active use for the building. As mentioned earlier, in recent times historical demand for a large leisure space in the region has witnessed a notable decline demonstrating high vacancy rates brought about by macro and micro-economic factors. The global recession and the particular impact on the banking sector has been well publicised, whilst at local level the demand for buildings with 'character' which have large open spaces, have been affected by the arrival of new hi-spec developments which have the added benefit of flexible, well serviced facilities and have relatively low running costs. This has led to similar competition subsequent decline and the risk of a sustained depreciation in the value of property in the vicinity.

7.2 In response to such threats and as acknowledged in numerous publications by English Heritage and the more recent addition of Government planning policy statements PPS5, there is often a need to 'intelligently manage change' in order secure a long term future for heritage

buildings. This objective would appear particularly appropriate in respect to the subject building, which has itself lain vacant now for 27 years when it could maintain an active use, and therefore the plans would be viewed as epitomising the objectives lain down in PPS5.