

## **FURNIVAL HOUSE, 50 CHOLMELEY PARK, HIGHGATE N6**

### **INFORMATION REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE 10 NOVEMBER 2008**

#### **Proposal; Conversion of existing student hostel into 15 flats including roof extension, rear infill extensions and basement extensions.**

1. At the Planning Committee meeting of 25 September 2008, Members considered the Report on a planning application to do works of conversion and extension to Furnival House. It was resolved to grant permission subject to a Section 106 Agreement covering Affordable Housing, and Education and Highways contributions.
2. Just prior to the signing of the Agreement and the issue of the decision, the Council were notified that the building had been made a Grade II Listed Building, following an inspection by English Heritage.
3. The reasons for listing include ;
  - Special historic interest as a purpose built hostel for domestic staff of one of the nation's major firms, built at a time when accommodation for emerging groups of women in cities was being defined, and reflecting the attention to staff welfare to which the Prudential Assurance Company was particularly committed.
  - Special architectural interest as a handsome institutional building in Edwardian Baroque style with quality building materials and craftsmanship, making rich use of the patron's motto and crest through architectural detailing.
  - Whilst the interior has been much institutionalised, the special interest can be clearly identified in some areas, particularly the elaborately plastered entrance hall and the remains of the dining hall.
  - The quality brick and stone boundary wall and composite stone balustrades in the grounds reflect its awareness of its location of quality. It has group value with the Grade II Cholmeley House, a modern apartment block of the 1930's, and a claim can be made for its associational group value with the group value with the Grade II\* Prudential Assurance headquarters at Holborn Bars by Alfred Waterhouse.
4. The listing of the building now becomes a Material Consideration for dealing with the planning application. It also means that Listed Building Consent is required for alterations to the building; in fact the applicants have already lodged an application for Listed Building Consent.
5. English Heritage has recently visited the property and advised the Council that it has concerns about the details of the scheme submitted as part of the planning application. The main issues are;-

- A. The need for further investigation into the original plan form of the building indicating subsequent changes ; of particular interest is the former dining hall area.
  - B. Investigation of the surviving fabric currently hidden behind suspended ceilings.
  - C. Investigation of impact on specific views, particularly longer views from the northern end of Cholmeley Park, in respect of alterations proposed to the rear elevation.
  - D. English Heritage engineers will also need to review the structural proposals for the substantial basement excavations and extension.
6. Given the above circumstances, the Council is not in a position to issue the Planning Permission. This will be held in abeyance until the Listed Building Consent issues have been worked through; the intention would be to bring both planning and listed building applications to Committee at the same time, assuming that the issues of concern to English Heritage can be satisfactorily resolved. If they are not, English Heritage would reserve the right to direct Refusal of the Listed Building Consent.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members note the current position with regard to proposals for Furnival House, in the light of the Listing of the building as being of special historic and architectural interest.**