

Design & Access Statement

20 Sir Thomas Street
Liverpool
L1 6BA



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION & EXISTING BUILDING

Not much is known about Minerva Chambers including that of its Architect & builder, other than it was originally built in 1880 solely for the purpose of providing offices, and it served as an office building from 1880 to 1889.

The four storey building is constructed of stone with basement and attic with a slate roof. The seven bays have varying widths. The building is decorated with foliated capitals and panels carved with ferns. The top bracketed cornice and parapet has carved panels and a central inscription reading "MINERVA CHAMBERS". Within the fanlight is the house number 20. (1)

It is noted by Architectural Historian Nikolaus Pevsner in his Architectural guides, he describes the building as "a striking design: a sort of palazzo?"

He also describes the proportions of the columns on the front of the property as looking more like cast iron than stone. (2)

It has also been considered a most unusual building, and not following any of the standard Victorian prototypes. (3)

The upper storeys, ground to fourth are now occupied with privately-owned residential accommodation [flats], whilst the lower ground floor [basement level] with street level presence currently lies un-occupied, having previously been used as a bar & restaurant.

Sources:

*(1) List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest
District of Liverpool, 19-JUN-1985*

*(2) Joseph Sharples 2004 Liverpool
Pevsner Architectural Guides Page(s)162*

(3) Copyright © Stephen Richards www.geograph.org.uk

BUILDING USE

The lower Ground Floor of 20 Sir Thomas Street is currently Class A3, having previously been occupied by a bar restaurant. As part of the refurbishment it is proposed for the building to be changed to Class A2 for the purpose of becoming an estate agents as part of the national franchise; Belvoir!.

LOCATION & ADJACENT PROPERTIES

The building is located on Sir Thomas Street within the heart of Liverpool's city centre, and shares the street with several other, similarly grand, listed buildings

There is already a precedence for the current proposals with the adjacent properties along Sir Thomas Street; with No.22 housing a bridle ware outlet on its lower ground floor with projecting hanging signs as does the current hotel development at No.14 that also has projecting window canopies

It is considered that the proposed development will not cause any detriment to the adjacent properties.

PROPOSALS

As part of the proposals, some exterior signage and internal and external redecoration will be required to align with Belvoir! National franchise branding identity but it is the intention that this will be limited to the extents of the existing retail areas only whilst the listed elements would be retained untouched.

Externally, as part of the proposals mentioned above, it is the intention to;

- Re-decorate existing painter timber window & door frames in white to match existing
- Remove & replace split doors in the centre of the bay two tripartite window light and replace with a single-pane glazed panel in white painted hardwood frame to match existing
- Remove & replace the split-pane door in the centre of the bay six tripartite window light and replace with a patten-10 style single-pane entrance door in white painted hardwood frame to be more in-keeping with the adjacent bays
- [Broken] Glazed pane in bay seven to be repaired and glass replaced
- Install four new projecting hanging signs, with frames in black-painted wrought-iron as per previous existing with re-lettered signage on a white background

Internally, as part of the proposals mentioned above, it is the intention to;

- Re-decorate existing painted/wall-papered surfaces
- Removal of all previous bar restaurant fit-out including bar area & beer cellar
- Install new flooring throughout
- Install some stud partitioning to create cellular office spaces and staff facilities
- Carry out all necessary remedial work and repairs as required whilst ensuring all work is suitable for the building's existing Architectural nature

Details of these proposals can be found in the accompanying drawings;

- Location Plan
- Site Plan
- Existing & Proposed Plans
- Existing & Proposed Elevations

ACCESS STATEMENT

Due to the age and construction of the existing building, along with its listed status, access and circulation for mobility impaired persons is fairly restricted in terms of level access to the building. However, all customer facing operations will be carried out on the lower ground floor level which will benefit from an open plan design promoting ease of circulation, whilst a proposed area has been set aside at the front of the layout to accommodate the future installation of a platform lift if required.