



To help preserve what is best worth retaining amongst its old buildings and to encourage new building worthy of its civic traditions and character

38 Mattock Way
Abingdon-on-Thames
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14 January 2022

Planning Application P21/V3388/FUL: Old Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon

As stated in our comments on the previous application (P21/V1498/FUL), the Friends of Abingdon Civic Society has no objection in principle to this application. However, we have the following concerns with respect to possible damage to or loss of important heritage features of Old Abbey House.

Unusually, the applicants state that alterations in the northeast corner and to the roof structure could be seen as ‘substantial harm’. However, they claim that this is counterbalanced by the alterations in other areas which allow the building as a whole to be repaired and brought back into use. We note that the Conservation Officer made a number of comments in response to the original planning application and requested that a proper schedule is provided of all the heritage features which will be obscured (or removed) by these works. We strongly support this.

As far as we can see there is no mention in the Heritage Impact Assessment of what the applicants propose to do with any heritage features (stained glass, fireplaces, window fittings etc.) that will be removed from the building. Would it be possible for heritage organisations in Abingdon (Museum, Historical Society, Civic Society etc.) to be given the opportunity to review the material to be removed and suggest possible homes for it?

We reiterate our previous comment that “it is essential that a proper 'archaeological' recording of the building itself is performed during the work, from which we would hope to answer some important questions about the date(s) and development of the building”. This should include assessment and recording of the impact of any below-ground works such as new foundations or services.

In view of the continuing deterioration of the building we hope that the conversion can start as soon as possible before the damage becomes irreparable, with the proviso that the utmost care is taken to preserve as many as possible of the heritage features and to ensure that any that have to be removed can be found homes elsewhere.

Roberta Nichols
Planning Trustee, Friends of Abingdon Civic Society