



We recently overcame significant heritage impact and environmental health concerns, in order to secure planning and listed building consent for a high-end restaurant. The former St Thomas's Church at London Bridge will provide a home for the first European branch of Duddell's - the renowned Hong Kong-based restaurant, which holds two Michelin stars.

Acting on behalf of Lord Alpha Investments, we sought planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of air conditioning, kitchen extraction equipment and a largely modern fit out, to enable the Grade II\*-Listed church to be used as a high-end restaurant.

The Grade II\*-listed former church is located within the Borough High Street Conservation Area and was built in 1702-3, as part of St Thomas's Hospital. It is widely recognised as one of the best examples of Queen Anne architecture in London. The church had most recently been used as offices and although consent had been granted in 2014 for the building to be used as a restaurant, gaining consent for a workable fit-out and servicing solution was proving difficult. We were instructed to review the situation and obtain the approvals necessary to enable the project to happen.

The lack of high level extraction options was a particular challenge given the building's significance and prominent location. We were successful in achieving consent for equipment to be placed within the front lightwell and for louvres to be installed on the rear (north) façade. Securing permission for the modern fit-out and equipment required by a dim-sum restaurant proved equally challenging. We needed to balance our client's desire to apply their own style to the building, with the need to protect the historic and architectural significance of the Grade II\*-Listed church.



We were successful in achieving consent for our client's contemporary flooring, seating plan (including an intensification of covers), bar area and dim sum kitchen with dumb waiter connecting the basement and ground floors. We were also successful in negotiating with the local planning authority to find acceptable electrical and ventilation solutions. We obtained agreement for an appropriate lighting strategy, which includes hanging ceiling lights reminiscent of those evident from 1901, when the church was converted to a chapter house.

Our client was under significant pressure to avoid pre-commencement conditions and begin works on site as quickly as possible. We were successful in working proactively with the planning officer and conservation team at the local authority. This enabled us to avoid the need for pre-commencement conditions and allowed our client to begin works on site immediately after the consents were granted.

Our client expressed their satisfaction with our achievements upon confirmation of the successful outcome of the applications, commenting "Thanks so much for all the effort to this application and making our dream come true".

### Summary of achievements

- Clear advice and strategy formulation for our client in order to prepare a workable scheme for submission
- Preparation of clear and compelling statements to justify the proposed works
- Forming a close working relationship with the other consultants working on the scheme
- Preparation and submission of planning and listed building consent applications
- Monitoring the progress of the application and working proactively with the planning and conservation officers
- Successfully pushing through proposals and negotiating where necessary to create a workable scheme
- Balancing our clients' needs for a modern restaurant within an historic and sensitive setting
- Enabling the reuse of an important heritage asset

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