

ADVANCE NOTICE OF DELISTING

The Clerk to the Council
Belfast City Council
Donegall Square
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Our Ref: HB26/50/181

Date: 20/02/2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: 58-66 ROYAL AVENUE, BELFAST, COUNTY ANTRIM, BT1 1DJ

DELISTING OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

Article 42(3) of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 requires the Department of the Environment to consult with the appropriate District Council before removing any building from the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

The Department is currently considering the delisting of the above-mentioned property/properties and I should welcome the receipt of the views of your Council within 6 weeks of the date of this letter. *If there is no reply to this correspondence within the stated timescale we shall assume that you agree to the delisting of the above building.*

The building has been recommended for delisting because it does not meet the criteria to be a listed building.

Yours faithfully




GERALDINE BROWN

Enc Second Survey District Council Report

**Second Survey Database
District Council Consultation Report**

HB26/50/181

Address 58-66 Royal Avenue Belfast County Antrim BT1 1DJ	HB Ref No HB26/50/181
Extent of Listing	
Date of Construction 1880 - 1899	
Townland Town Parks	
Current Building Use Shop	
Principal Former Use Office	

Conservation Area	Yes	Survey 1	B1	OS Map No	130-13NE
Industrial Archaeology	No	NIEA Evaluation	Delist	IG Ref	J3372 7455
Vernacular	No	Date of Listing	06/04/1989	IHR No	
Thatched	No	Date of Delisting		SMR No	
Monument	No			HGI Ref	
Area of Townscape Character	No				
Local Landscape Policy Area	No				
Historic Gardens Inventory	No				
Vacant	Yes				
Derelict	Demolished				

Owner Category

Building Information

Exterior Description and Setting

The former four storey, ashlar stone Italianate building known as Crown Chambers has been demolished and is replaced by a four storey with attic, brick and stone Classical pastiche building.

East elevation is symmetrical comprising 6 windows, a central 3 window dormer with single window dormers to each side.

The south elevation is abutted and obscured by a modern construction (Castlecourt).

The north elevation is abutted and obscured by a listed building HB26/50/182.

Setting

58-66 sits directly on to the pavement on the west side of the major commercial street of Royal Avenue. The terraced building is adjoined to north by HB26/50/182 and faced by HB26/50/185.

Roof: Natural slate
Walling: Brick
Windows: Timber sash 1/1
RWG: not seen

Interior Overview

Interior not visited.

Architects

Eaton, William

Historical Information

Nos 58-66 Royal Avenue, a four-storey stuccoed building, was erected in 1885 but has been replaced by a modern brick and stone commercial building as a result of the Castlecourt redevelopment of the late-1980s. The original building was designed by William Eaton, a Belfast-based architect who was active between the years 1879 and 1886 and also designed residences and buildings on Dunluce Avenue, Wellington Park and Malone Road making nos 58-66 Royal Avenue Eaton's only known commission in Belfast's city centre. Eaton designed nos 58-66 in Newry granite stone which was adorned with a stucco façade and terra-cotta detailing; the builder contracted to undertake Eaton's design was a Mr. Thomas Price of Belfast (Irish Builder, p. 12; Dictionary of Irish Architects).

Nos 58-66 Royal Avenue, also known as Crown Chambers, consisted of three ground floor shops and office space in the floors above; when originally completed in 1885 the total value of the building was set at £341 10s. One of the first occupants of the ground floor units was the Ulster Echo Newspaper who occupied the site as a printing works for which it operated until the mid-20th century. By the Belfast Revaluation (1900) the value of nos 58-66 Royal Avenue had been greatly increased to £865 15s; in that year the valuer noted that 'this building is very roughly run off and is at present in a bad repair.' The Belfast Street Directory records that in 1901 the ground floor units were occupied by the Belfast Stream Printing Co. Ltd. who were the proprietors of the Ulster Echo and Witness newspapers, the other retail units were held by A. Hunter & Sons, who operated a gun making and fishing tackle warehouse, and a Mr. R. Brownlie who was an 'Artists' outfitter, fancy goods salesman, print seller and high class frame manufacturer.' The upper floors of the building were occupied by a variety of private firms and organisations; in 1901 the offices were occupied by stock and share brokers, general merchants, land and property agents and accountants, however the Crown Chambers was also used as the offices for the Shorthand Institute and School of Typewriting, the Commercial Cycling Club, and the Belfast District Ancient Order of Foresters (Belfast Street Directories – 1901).

By 1910 there had been few changes to the occupants of either the ground floor units or the upper offices; however the northernmost shop (No. 66) had passed to the Baird Bros., shoe and boot makers, by that year, although their shop lay vacant in 1918. Including the Ancient Order of Foresters, Crown Chambers was also utilised as the offices for a variety of other 'friendly societies' such as the Sanctuary Belfast Royal Archers, the Saddler's Society, Sailmakers Society and No. 2 Branch of the Machine Men and Mill Sawyer's Society which all occupied the third floor in 1918 (Belfast Street Directory – 1918). By the end of the Annual Revisions, which were cancelled in 1930, the total value of nos 58-66 Royal Avenue stood at £567. Under the First General Revaluation of property in Northern Ireland the value of the building was almost doubled to £1,093 5s. At that time the Belfast Steam Printing Co. continued to operate from the site, however by the second revaluation, which commenced in 1956, the print works had vacated the site. Royal Avenue was hit by a number of bombs during the Belfast Blitz of 1941 when a number of its buildings were moderately damaged and in the aftermath of the Second World War. With the end of the second revaluation (1956-72) the total value of Crown Chambers stood at £2,368; by the 1970s the ground floor retail units were occupied by the Ulster Savings Committee whilst the adjoining units were operated by Gardiners Ltd., a construction firm, and Swiss Arcade Ltd., general store.

Nos 58-66 Royal Avenue is one of the many commercial properties erected on the newly created boulevard of Royal Avenue which was laid out in 1880-81 by the surveyor J. C. Bretland (who in the process relocated approximately 4,000 people). Prior to the redevelopment of the area Donegall Place and Hercules Street (the precursor to Royal Avenue) were divided by an additional line of buildings located on the eastern side of the current street. The demolition and clearing of Hercules Place and Hercules Street created the long open boulevard which now extends from Donegall Square to York Street; however it required the destruction of almost all the buildings on the street pre-dating the 1880s. The only building to survive the clearing of the area is the former Provisional Bank of Ireland (HB26/50/106) which continues to occupy the original line of Hercules Place (a narrow square that linked Donegall Place to Hercules Street) and as a result is set further back than the adjoining buildings. Nos 58-66, along with the adjoining nos 68-88 (HB26/50/182; 183; 184), were amongst the last buildings to be erected along the western side of the newly laid out boulevard (Brett, p. 40; Patton, p. 282; p. 286).

Nos 58-66 Royal Avenue was listed in 1989; the First Survey Image (1984) notes that the Ulster Savings Committee continued to occupy the ground floor unit at No. 58, whilst the other two shops were occupied by a newsagents and a clothing store called French Connection. Writing in 1993 Patton described nos 58-66 as a 'four-storey building in unpainted stucco with pair of roundheaded dormers containing sunbursts in spandrels. Broken pediment to slightly off-centre doorcase; strapwork in spandrels of second floor windows; courses of rosettes over first floor windows and at main cornice [whilst it] originally had balustraded parapet over cornice' (Patton, p. 288).

Since 1984 the original four-storey stucco building was demolished to facilitate the construction of the adjoining Castlecourt shopping centre in the late-1980s; the current building was constructed in brick and stone and possesses a classical facade of no historical importance. The modern commercial property currently lies vacant, having been occupied by the clothing store JJB in recent years.

References

Primary Sources

1. PRONI OS/6/1/61/2 – Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1858
2. PRONI OS/6/1/61/3 – Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1901-02
3. PRONI OS/6/1/61/4 – Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1931
4. PRONI OS/6/1/61/5 – Fifth Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1938
5. PRONI VAL/12/B/43/E/1-13 – Annual Revisions 1862-1896
6. PRONI VAL/12/B/43/C/17-44 – Annual Revisions 1897-1930
7. PRONI VAL/7/B/12/1 – Belfast Revaluation 1900
8. PRONI VAL/3/B/3/13 – First General Revaluation of Northern Ireland 1935
9. PRONI VAL/4/B/7/41 – Second General Revaluation of Northern Ireland 1956-72
10. Irish Builder, Vol. (1 Jan 1886)
11. Belfast Street Directories (1861-1918)
12. First Survey Image – HB26/50/181 (1984)
13. Ordnance Survey map 130-13NE (1959-60)

Secondary Sources

1. Brett, C. E. B., 'Buildings of Belfast: 1700-1914' Belfast: Friar's Bush Press, 1985.
2. Patton, M., 'Central Belfast: An historical gazetteer' Belfast: Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 1993

Online Resources

1. Dictionary of Irish Architects - <http://www.dia.ie>

Criteria for Listing

**Second Survey Database
District Council Consultation Report**

HB26/50/181

Architectural Interest

Not listed

Historical Interest

Not listed

Evaluation

The former four storey, ashlar stone Italianate building known as Crown Chambers has been demolished and replaced by a four storey with attic, brick and stone Classical pastiche building. A late 20th century four storey Classical pastiche has replaced the original Italianate stone building and is of no historical or architectural interest.

Replacements and Alterations

Inappropriate

If inappropriate, Why?

Original demolished, new build

General Comments

Monitoring Notes – since Date of Survey

Date of Survey 19/11/2012
