

Heritage Statement

'The carpenter's firm of Charles Sparks in Tarrant Street was dealing in furniture in 1852, later taking on the businesses of auctioneer, house and estate agent, cabinet maker, upholsterer, house decorator, and undertaker, and from c. 1877 occupying a large brick building in Tarrant Street of six bays and three storeys'

-A History of the County of Sussex [Vol. 5, part1]

Sparks Furniture Depository, albeit initially constructed as a warehouse, appears to have also accommodated a variety of Charles Sparks' other enterprises. A separate but related piano storage building was at some time also constructed to the north of the building. In the mid 20th Century, both buildings were multi occupied as commercial premises. The Furniture Depository became known as The Emporium and for a number of years operated as a retail 'flea market' on its two lower floors with an apartment on the third floor, above.

In the late 1989 the building was acquired by the architectural practice of Thorpe Architecture and together with the adjacent Avola House and Piano Store buildings. They were combined to form a relatively large scale design studio campus. The internal configuration of the building was subsequently changed, with a new stairway connecting all three floors and associated service accommodation constructed in the Tarrant Street level of the northern part of the building footprint, all primarily accessed from the elevated Sparks Yard into the second floor level of the building.

The 'Sparks Yard' hard paved area was created by combining the external areas of all three properties. A new access stairway was created to the elevated yard area, from Tarrant Street, located within the eastern lean-to element of the building.

The Tarrant Street ground floor level of the building was later fitted out as a restaurant separately accessed direct from Tarrant Street. The yard was subsequently reduced slightly in area when Avola House was sold a few years later and subsequently converted to residential use.

No 1 Sparks Yard was listed grade II in December 1994. The description reads:

'Furniture repository, later offices and restaurant. C1880. Red brick with contrasting yellow/red brick decorative courses and segmental arches and surrounds to windows. Brick modillion eaves cornice. Slate roof Brick chimneys. Three storeys with 2 storey lean-to section at east end. Double gabled roof South elevation to street: ground floor has arcaded front with five archways, the central one being taller with a stone keystone to its arch. The masonry arches forming the facade at this level were blocked with timber hoardings at time of inspection. At the west end a larger arch with stone keystone has a double wooden garage door. The lean-to section at the east end has been altered (c 1991) to an arched entrance to match that at the west end, leading to a flight of brick steps. First floor: 6 double-hung sash windows with glazing bars, 1 small window in lean-to section replaced by an arched opening. Second floor: 6 double-hung sash windows with glazing bars. East elevation: second floor has 3 double-hung sash windows with glazing bars and

painted sign. West elevation is similar to east but 2 of the 3 windows have a differing glazing bar configuration.'

The architectural practice continued to occupy 18 Tarrant Street until 2012, albeit that its accommodation requirements significantly reduced after 2002. The adjacent Piano store building was occupied by a graphic design organisation in the later 1990s and early 2000s, whilst Sparks Yard General Store opened for business in the Tarrant Street Ground Floor Level of the building in 2003. The business grew rapidly and within 12 months, it grew to also occupy The Sparks Yard Ground Floor level above. Later it grew again to occupy the whole building, with a restaurant on the third floor level.

Sparks Yard General Store traded for over in excess of 16 years, winning many awards until closing at the beginning of January 2019, as a result of a dramatically worsening trading environment.

The proposals

The proposals within this application seek to retain as much of the character and detail of the listed building as possible both for the lifetime of the uses proposed and other possible uses in the future. During all of its changes of use, largely as a result of the high flexibility of the building's 'open floor' warehouse format, very little variation to the building's structure and fabric have been required. It has retained the original utilitarian character both externally and internally. The proposals within this application adopt a similar approach.

Externally.

This is an iconic building within the Tarrant Street Streetscape. It is the largest, most visually prominent building in this part of Arundel. It is not the intention to change any elements of the building visible from either Tarrant Street or any other part of the town, from which, the building is significantly visually exposed

The building's overall form is not changed. The south [Tarrant Street] elevation is unchanged except for the reopening of the two side-hung timber service doors in its western part. These doors were sealed in c.1994 and are now proposed as opened up, to provide an access lobby to the reconfigured ground floor commercial unit. The east elevation remains the same except for the addition of a personnel access door to the existing lift motor room. The North [Sparks Yard] elevation remains as existing, whilst some works are proposed to the west elevation. This elevation, forming the boundary with 18a/18b Tarrant Street requires some modification in order to accommodate works required to those now amalgamated buildings, in order to create a revised main access canopied stairway [subject of a separate application]. 18b Tarrant Street having been at some stage in the past, internally connected to the application building and for many years sharing that external stairway [by right of way] with no.18. In order to accommodate the proposed works to 18a/18b whilst also at lower level creating a secure boundary, this application proposes that 3no. Existing windows and 1no. External personnel are closed and infilled with brickwork to match that surrounding the existing openings. It is also proposed to remove all extraneous drainage pipework from this elevation.

It is proposed to add 2no conservation roof lights in the central 'roof valley' of the building, over the to be created two storey height main entrance loggia of the single residential unit. These south wing roof lights will be totally visually concealed from all surrounding parts of

the town. The existing Kitchen extract flue at the western end of this valley , will be removed and the food made good.

Internally

The design aim is to retain not only many of the existing valuable elements of the building as possible but also to retain as much of the open feel of the building as possible, especially in the third level, where currently all roof trusses are currently exposed. The spited drawings indicate insulated pasteboard linings to all external walls in the residential component of the building. This is included in order to comply with the expected standard required by the building regulations. It is the intention however, given the nature of the current warehouse like environment, to seek, by negotiation, other means of sufficiently satisfying the insulation requirement whilst leaving the currently exposed fair faced painted brickwork as the finally exposed finish.

All internal partitions within the third story will, with the exception of those already in place and to be retained, only extend to the soffit of the exposed timber roof trusses. Original freestanding internal columns will, where possible, be 'freed' from existing partitions as much as possible, in the form of the colonnaded hall to the Loggia at second storey level and the open balustraded areas to the Loggia at third storey level.

Thorpe Architecture 10.05.2019