

Bar & Internal Floor

Following the guidance and permission provided by the conservation adviser Mr. Antony Lowe who was hired by Coventry City Council in 2019, we carried out the following bar alteration and internal floor works in November and December 2019:

Bar Area

The purpose to carry out bar area work is to widen the bar space and make it more attractive, without damaging any historical feature of the pub.

- Removed the panelling behind the bar. No timber has been found (Figure 1 & Figure 2).
- Erected new timber shelves and attached it to the back wall behind the bar (Figure 3). We didn't paint the walls.
- Removed the old bar (we retained one piece of timber as suggested by conservation adviser)
- Erected a new timber bar (Figure 4)



Figure 1 Old Bar & Panels



Figure 2 Wall after Removal of Panels



Figure 3 New Timber Shelves



Figure 4 Completed New Bar

Internal Floor

The front part of internal floor is bricks, while the middle and back parts are covered with slabs and concrete (Figure 5). The purpose of internal flooring is to replace the slabs and concrete with bricks to match to the front part old bricks. The completed overall internal floor will be consistent in both the colour and style (Figure 9 & Figure 10).

- Gently removed a few pieces concrete and slab on the floor by hand hammer, in order to investigate the floor layers underneath. No historical floor or timber found. It's two layers of concrete (Figure 6).
- After obtained the permission, we removed the top layer concrete and slabs by hand (Figure 7).
- Laid down the dark Damson bricks (Figure 8) in place to match existing front part bricks, using lime mortar to bed and point them.



Figure 5 Original Internal Floor



Figure 6 Sample Taken



Figure 7 Removal of Concrete



Figure 8 Selected Damson Bricks



Figure 9 Completed Internal Floor



Figure 10 Completed Internal Floor

We had a site meeting with conservation adviser Mr. Antony Lowe on 5th November 2019. During the meeting, we discussed the repairing work of the floor and alteration of bar area. Please see the appendix 1.

After the meeting, we communicated each other through emails (appendix 2). Any step of work we took on bar and internal floor was permitted and advised by Antony. He not only agreed us to remove the bar, but also permitted us to erect a new one. I have highlighted his permission in the appendix 2.

Appendix 1. Communications of Site Meeting with Antony on 5th November 2019

From: Coventry Planning <coventryplanning@thisisnode.com>
Sent: 05 November 2019 9:03 AM
To: congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: The Whitefriars 114-115 Gosford Street Coventry CV1 5DL

Hi Congwei,

Just to confirm I am feeling better and I am in Coventry today, so I will see you at the property at 9.45.

Thanks,

Antony

On Fri, Nov 1, 2019 at 9:17 AM congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hi Antony,

9:45am Tuesday is fine. Hope you get well soon.

Regards,

Congwei Shi

在 2019 年 11 月 1 日, 上午 8:39, Coventry Planning <coventryplanning@thisisnode.com> 写道:

Hi Congwei,

I hope you are well.

I am on the mend, but still under the weather today so won't be coming in to Coventry.

Based on how I feel I should have recovered by next week, so should be in Coventry on Tuesday (5th) if you have some availability.
We could do early again, say 9.45?

Thanks for your understanding this week.

Antony

Appendix 2. Guidance and Permission Obtained to Carry out Bar Alteration and Internal Flooring

From: congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com>
Sent: 23 December 2019 11:17 AM
To: Lowe, Antony <Antony.Lowe@coventry.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Whitefriars Garden

Dear Antony,

Thank you for the email. We will not do the garden floor at the moment.

My husband removed the panels behind the bar, and found out there is no timber behind. It's a pure wall. Please see the attached photos.

We just want to paint the wall behind the bar. We also want to paint the other side wall. The black part is the damp due to roof leaks which we have repaired. Photos attached. Thank you and have a nice Christmas!

Kind regards,

Congwei Shi

From: Coventry Planning <coventryplanning@thisisnode.com>
Sent: 28 November 2019 11:49 AM
To: congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: Floor at Whitefriars Coventry

Hi Congwei,

Apologies for the delay in coming back to you.

Those bricks look fine to me.

Thanks,

Antony

On 18 Nov 2019, at 10:58, congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hi Antony,

Please see the attached brick picture. We prefer to use the dark Damson to lay on the floor(not light birch grey), which will match the existing bricks on the front floor. Is this type of brick OK? We will use lime mortar.

We will first remove the bar panel and then decide what to put there after consulting you.

Kind regards,

Congwei
<image1.jpeg>
Congwei Shi

在 2019 年 11 月 11 日, 上午 10:09, Coventry Planning <coventryplanning@thisisnode.com> 写道:

Hi Congwei,

Many thanks for your email. I hope you had a good weekend?

Based on the images of the floor, I would agree that there is nothing there that would impact the character of the pub as a building of special architectural and historic interest. So I am fine for you to go ahead and remove the top concrete layer and slabs by hand.

Would it be possible, however, to please send me details of the brick you would like to lay down in its place and the mix of the mortar you are planning on using to bed and point them? With the mortar, I would recommend you use a lime rather than cement based mortar as lime works better with historic buildings.

As mentioned last week, as modern additions I am happy for the bar and panelling to come out - just please let me know when the panelling is down so we can have a look at whether any historic features remain underneath, such as a timber frame. Based on that, would it be possible to send me details of the bar you intend to put in its place please? I mainly just want to check how it connects to the wall, particularly if a timber frame is revealed when the panelling comes down. That is perhaps something we can discuss when the panelling is down.

Thanks and please let me know if you need anything else in the meantime,

Antony

On 8 Nov 2019, at 10:27, congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Antony,

Jimmy went to the Whitefriars yesterday and gently removed a few pieces concrete on the front floor and slab on the back floor by hand hammer. He found there are two layers of concrete. No timbers have been found underneath. Please see the attached photos.

Can we remove the top layer concrete by hand and lay down the bricks?

Kind regards,

Congwei

From: congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com>
Sent: 06 November 2019 2:38 PM
To: Coventry Planning <coventryplanning@thisisnode.com>
Subject: Re: Building survey - Whitefriars Coventry

Hi Antony,

Yes, I received both emails. Thank you.

Kind regards,

Congwei Shi

在 2019 年 11 月 6 日，下午 1:30，Coventry Planning <coventryplanning@thisisnode.com> 写道：

Thanks Congwei,

I will drop you an email next week and we can discuss the issues going ahead. In the meantime, can I just check you received both of my emails yesterday (sent at 11.10 and 3.53)? I just want to make sure the first didn't get buried in the email chain.

Thanks,

Antony

On Tue, Nov 5, 2019 at 4:51 PM congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hi Antony,

Thank you for the advice. We will lift some pieces of slab to see the materials and structures underneath. We will then send you pictures or even schedule another site meet with you to discuss it. We won't do any brick laying until we consult you first.

We met the architect today to go through the planning stages and the price agreement etc. We didn't have enough time to go through these points with him. But I will email him and copy you in to ask him the questions you raised.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Congwei Shi

在 2019 年 11 月 5 日，下午 3:54，Coventry Planning <coventryplanning@thisisnode.com> 写道：

Congwei,

Just further to my email earlier.

The more I think about it, the more I think we need an informed approach to the floors. Whilst works to the bar area can progress as we discussed, I do think we need to get more information on the floor before you fully remove the existing surfaces and replace with bricks.

Ultimately, I think we just need to know what historic floors or floor layers might be present underneath the concrete slabs and cement. As I mentioned above I think you need to do a bit of investigation prior to us deciding that those parts of the work can proceed without consent. That would include lifting only a small portion (or small areas) of the cement floor to see what is underneath. I would also suggest you lift a few of the concrete slabs first to see what is underneath. Those tests aren't overly onerous but will give us a better idea as to what survives.

This is perhaps something we can take up together with your architect and surveyor, along with issues such as the potential impact of pneumatic drills on the surrounding timber structure. Did you meet with them today to discuss next steps?

Does that make sense? I am happy to provide some clarification and apologies for any confusion - working with buildings such as this can be a very staged process.

Thanks,

Antony

On Tue, Nov 5, 2019 at 11:10 AM Coventry Planning <coventryplanning@thisisnode.com> wrote:
Hi Congwei,

Thanks for sending over the building survey, I will have a look through.

It was a pleasure to meet you and our husband earlier. I just wanted to send a follow-up. Please have a look through as there are some additional points I thought it important to raise that we didn't discuss in detail onsite.

- **I am fine for you to remove the bar and erect a new one.** The current bar is evidently modern, and was formed in 2000. There is a piece of timber that may be earlier and may have been reused from elsewhere, so I just recommend you retain this for possible re-use elsewhere.
- **I am fine with the panelling behind the bar to come down, as it is evidently also a modern addition of little interest.** As mentioned, however, once the panelling is down it is worth us having another chat as once the panelling is removed it will give us a better idea what remains behind (there may be a timber frame for example) and that will dictate the types of finishes and fixtures that can be used in this area.
- **I am fine for the concrete slabs to the rear part of the building to be lifted and replaced with bricks.**
- We discussed removal of the concrete/cement floor. I am broadly fine with this as again it is a relatively modern addition. However, as I mentioned onsite there may be historic flooring layers present beneath, but it is evidently unclear at present as it is covered. Before work progresses, therefore, I would recommend lifting a small sample of the floor only so we can ascertain what remains below and we can see the flooring layers. That might be something to discuss with your architect or structural engineer and we can then liaise on it. I appreciate that I didn't mention this onsite, but I do think it is important to gain a better understanding of that floor before it is lifted fully.
- On a related note, removal of the cement floor will likely require power tools such as a pneumatic drill. The vibrations from that drill could have a very negative impact on the surrounding timber structure or wall structure, especially if they are fragile. There are also those stone steps to the cellar just below that floor which may be impacted. It would be worth discussing with your architect and structural surveyor, and feel free to copy me in, whether there are any measures that can be taken to reduce that vibration impact and whether alternative tools are appropriate. It may be worth also discussing that with a contractor experienced in historic building conservation to get their view.
- As discussed, works in the garden, including lowering the ground level are likely to have archaeological implications and this is an area of archaeological constraint. Please feel free to contact the council's archaeological advisor who has said he is happy to discuss it with you directly. His name is Matt Parker-Wooding and his email is: Matt.ParkerWooding@coventry.gov.uk. I have also copied him in for ease. Matt, you and I discussed this one briefly but meeting Congwei onsite today she indicated they would also like to substantially lower the ground in the garden to provide level access.

Thanks all,

Antony

Antony Lowe

Heritage Consultant BA (Hons), MA, AssocIHBC

Node, Imperial & Whitehall, 23 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 2BS

Practice of the year National Urban Design Awards, 2017

On Tue, Nov 5, 2019 at 10:14 AM congwei shi <shicongwei@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hi Antony,

Please see the attached building survey. Thanks.

Kind regards,

Congwei Shi