F/24/97288 – 57 Church Road, Bishopstoke, SO50 6DN.

Context.
The Old Reading Room, subsequently a billiard or snooker hall, is a locally listed building, a little way north of the Bishopstoke Conservation Area before one reaches the church, in a residential area. This building was erected by a Captain Hargreaves, an owner of The Mount now called Bishopstoke Park, which was a hospital for many years after conversion from a large house.

The Proposal.
Having been unused for many years this building is in need of serious work to prevent it being lost. The size and nature of the structure in this setting lends itself admirably to being converted to residential use, particularly given there is a cottage attached to the rear which is not visible from the road.

The concept of adding dormer windows to the front roof is acceptable with one roof-light, which needs to be of a conservation type fitted with the glass level with the roof finish. The roof finish should be plain tiles as existing with the patterning of fish-tailed tile bands retained but related to the dormers to maintain the particular character of this building in the street scene.

While one would normally prefer the rear extension to have a pitched roof, in this instance it will not be seen from Church Lane due to the proximity of neighbouring properties and it stopping short of the ends of the main hall building.

The brick and flint front boundary wall is an important element of the street scene and needs to be maintained, as do the external elevations of the hall. (A note on the drawing outside the building refers to upgrading the external walls – this would need to be on the inside. It might also be an idea to add a doorway into bedroom 1 on the ground floor!)

The new first floor edge and up-stand behind the front windows should be painted matt black in order to be as inconspicuous as possible to maintain the impression of a single space from outside.

Conclusion.
In order to keep this building, which is a significant little gem of quality in the street scene representing bygone philanthropy, hence its local listing, a change of use to residential is acceptable with the reservations mentioned above.

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