

Report of:	Executive Member for Environment, Finance and Governance Director of Environment and Community Services
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	10 May 2022
Title:	Demolition of the former Slam Nightclub
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Physical environment
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £150,000
Urgent:	No
Why:	For the purposes of the call-in procedure, this report is not urgent.

Executive summary

This report seeks an Executive decision to approve the Demolition of the former Slam Nightclub.

The building is not in keeping with its location in a designated conservation area which is being invested in by the Council and Historic England, through the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) project. Four of the A66's Viaduct's structural columns are sited within the building. As a result of water ingress at the bridge joint one of the A66 columns, Column 20b, needs significant repair works to make it safe.

As a minimum the Council must part-demolish the building in order to carry out essential A66 repair work. The costs to partly demolish and then reinstate the building to a letting standard will cost almost as much as full demolition.

Historic England understand the demolition of the SLAM building would mean the elimination of the physical barrier and reinstatement of the permeability between the

south and north sections of the A66, and it would be one of the key legacy aspects of the HSHAZ project. Therefore the Council's plans for the building will be one of the factors Historic England use to assess how successful the HSHAZ scheme has been.

The impact of approving the report will result in the ability to demolish the building, allow open access for future inspections and maintenance work to A66 overbridge and supporting columns. Removes a building which will detract from the HSHAZ and any future regeneration, is not in keeping with the historic area, attracts ASB, blocks views in and out of the square and reduces pedestrian flows.

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to seek Executive approval for the demolition of the former Slam nightclub.

Background and relevant information

2. The 'SLAM' building is in Middlesbrough's Historic Quarter, under the A66. It fronts onto Exchange Square, with the rear facing Wilson Street. The building is on a main thoroughfare from the retail core to the Railway Station, Boho Zone and Middlehaven.
3. The building is in a designated conservation area which is being invested in by the Council and Historic England, through the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) project. Historic England understand the demolition of the SLAM building would mean the elimination of the physical barrier and reinstatement of the permeability between the south and north sections of the A66, and it would be one of the key legacy aspects of the HSHAZ project. Therefore the Council's plans for the building will be one of the factors Historic England use to assess how successful the HSHAZ scheme has been.
4. The property was last used as the SLAM bar and nightclub, which closed its doors to customers in 2016. The building has been vacant since this date. Until recently, whilst Middlesbrough Council owned the freehold, the property was subject to a 125 year lease. This lease has now been surrendered by the leaseholder.
5. The fascia of the building extends up to the A66 Viaduct soffit creating a 'loft' space between the ceiling and the underside of the bridge deck – in bridge inspection terms, this is classed as a confined space, which makes access for inspection difficult and costly. Four of the A66's Viaduct's structural columns are sited within the building. Of note is the central column at row 20 which has an expansion joint and associated drainage channel above it – expansion joints allow movement between bridge sections whilst maintaining a waterproof seal, with a typical life span of 10 to 15 years. Failure of the joint allows water to seep beneath the structure where chemicals within the water have a potential to cause substantial damage if not spotted early. It is therefore essential that these are inspected on a regular basis. The columns need to be visually inspected every two years, with a detailed principal inspection every six years. As a result of water ingress at the bridge joint one of the A66 columns needs significant, imminent repair works to make it safe, which will require part-demolition of the building.
6. For the reasons summarised above, this is an opportune time to consider the future of the building; to assess its commercial value versus maintenance and risk factors; and, to understand if the space has a role in opening up links from central Middlesbrough to the Boho Zone, Middlehaven area and Historic Quarter.
7. The proposed demolition of the former Slam nightclub will affect Central Ward. Ward Members have not yet been consulted for their views.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

That the Executive:

- Approves the demolition of the former Slam nightclub.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

8. As a minimum, the Council must part-demolish the building in order to carry out essential A66 repair work. The costs to partly demolish and then reinstate the building to a letting standard will cost almost as much as full demolition. Leaving the building in-situ will, in the future, create access issues for general and principal inspections of the overbridge structure and supporting columns and additional cost if further remedial or maintenance works are ever required to the bridge columns or spans.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

9. Following partial demolition to carry out essential bridge repair works some reinstatement works will be necessary to make the building water-tight and safe. Minimal works will be undertaken to achieve this, which will leave the building in an unlettable condition. This would inevitably lead to further deterioration over time, and if the building is subsequently let will create access issues and have cost implication for further inspections of the bridge and any future maintenance requirements therefore this option would not be recommended.
10. Sale of the building - This would not be recommended given the ongoing need for access to the A66 and its column supports.
11. Operational use – the property could be an operational/storage facility for the Council. This is not recommended for the following reasons:-
 - Operational or storage space may be better suited to an out of town centre location
 - Would not generate any income and require operational costs, utilities and business rates.
 - The Council would carry the maintenance liability.
 - Potential access issues for bridge inspections.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

12. The impact of approving the report will result in the ability to demolish the building, allow open access for future inspections and maintenance work to A66 overbridge and supporting columns.

Legal

13. Any legal issues associated with the demolition of the former Slam nightclub will be dealt with and managed through the Council's established procedures.

Strategic priorities and risks

14. If the works are not carried out the following risks may apply:-
 - Further deterioration of the building fabric.
 - Partial or total closure of parts of the A66 highway network if repair works to bridges and structures are not identified, or carried out, due to future access problems if the building becomes occupied.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

15. There will be no negative, differential impact on protected groups and communities and no collation or use of personal data associated with this report.

Financial

16. It is anticipated at this point that the cost of partial demolition and subsequent reinstatement of the building will be circa £100,000. Estimated costs for full demolition are circa £130,000. The cost to repair column 20B is estimated to be £105k which includes costs for jacking to A66, bearing replacement, concrete and steel repairs to the column and traffic management on A66 and Wilson Street whilst works are ongoing. The demolition and column repairs costs have already been accounted for within the current ECS investment strategy.

17. The current asset valuation for the property is £67,000 as at 1st December 2021 (value of the asset for accounting purposes). This has decreased from £300,000 in 2017 as a result of the damage to the property. Based on the Rateable Value of the property, the Council could potentially receive £55,000 p.a. in rent for the property, but this is dependent on the condition the Council would offer the property to the market. This figure would not be achievable in the building's current semi derelict condition.

18. The annual business rates payable would be £28,160 p.a. (the Council would be liable for this if not let, unless the building is beyond economic repair). Council Tax of £2,804.22 is also payable for 2021/22.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
To demolish the building a specification will be prepared and tender documents published through an appropriate framework to invite bidders. The successful bidder will be awarded the contract for demolition.	Chris Bates	August 2022

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

Background papers

There are no background papers to this report.

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