

Innovative way of getting around coronavirus restrictions – new glass roof and dining terrace

by Joseph Anderson, Local Democracy Reporter.

An Edinburgh landmark is set for a facelift as the owners look to establish a retractable glass roof and chic dining terrace.

Kevin Doyle's property management company Caledonian Heritable has applied to The City of Edinburgh Council for permission to install a glass roof at the category A-listed Dome on 14 George Street, New Town.

The building houses the Why Not Nightclub, The Dome Bar and Restaurant, and Rose Street Garden, a bar with a limited food menu.

The glass canopy, which will be retractable on days when the sun shines, will cover the rear of the garden on Rose Street and the developers say they are aiming to create 'a unique dining experience'.

A design statement, submitted by Duddingston Road-based architects Format Design on behalf of Caledonian Heritable, reads: "The idea for the present proposal has been driven by the need to strengthen the revenue stream to cover exceptional

running costs, to provide a more socially distant environment in the wake of the global Covid-19 pandemic, and to provide a very high quality environment with a permanent and resilient cover to customers within the external terrace area.

“The applicant needs something which will be architecturally positive in order to uphold the very high standards set by The Dome, and which have made it a top destination.

“The tables are presently protected by several large square canvas parasols, but these are not particularly effective at guaranteeing an acceptable environment for customers, and they do not reflect the ‘quality’ that The Dome aspires to.”

The Dome stands on the site of the old Physicians’ Hall, which was built in 1775 but largely demolished in 1844 when the Commercial Bank of Scotland acquired the site.

The facade, with its Georgian columns, was kept and the eponymous dome was constructed behind it.

Due to several mergers, the site was eventually acquired by The Royal Bank of Scotland, which sold the building to Caledonian Heritable in 1993, and the company opened The Dome Bar and Restaurant three years later.

The design statement continues: “The proposal will significantly enhance an existing vibrant city centre use and allow it to compete successfully in an ever more competitive market.

“It will help to secure the viability of The Dome as a prominent and respected city centre destination and allow it to manage the very high costs of maintaining a large and complex category A listed Victorian building.

“It will create a more Covid-19 compliant environment with increased floor area providing table service to customers in a more socially distant fashion. It will also enhance the city

centre's role as the capital city.

"In particular there will be a significant enhancement of the character and ambience of the area through early evening into the night.

"The proposed retractable glazed roof will create a unique and contrasting feature within the setting of the grade A listed building, enhancing the appreciation of its character and architecture.

"This can be achieved without any negative impacts on the fundamental qualities of the listed building and its setting within the World Heritage Site.

"The works are of a scale that can be wholly contained within the rear sunken basement area.

"Visibility through the railings will be limited, and the clear view to the rear curved bay of the former bank and its stained-glass windows will be retained.

"The installation of the roof is ultimately reversible in the long term, with no intrusion into the stonework."



The Dome on George Street PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter
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