

DELEGATED REPORT / CASE OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

Ref No: ST/1061/20/LBC
Proposal: Listed Building Consent sought for the following works: Clean out of existing cellar/storerooms and conversion of same to two bedrooms and bathroom with internal access from living room and to include two new softwood sliding sash windows to front basement in existing reveals, complete with light wells and replace existing upvc windows to front and rear elevations with softwood sliding sash type.
Location: Flat 2 Wellesley Court
83 Greens Place
South Shields
NE33 2AQ

Site Visit Made: None

Relevant policies/SPDs

- 1 DM1 - Management of Development
- 2 DM6 - Heritage Assets and Archaeology
- 3 SSTCW AAP Policy SS12 - Protecting the Built Environment Assets of South Shields

Description of the site and of the proposals

This application site is a two storey Grade II Listed Building. Although the application has been submitted by an Agent on behalf of the resident of Flat 2 at 83 Greens Place, this two storey building is split into a small number of private self-contained residential apartments with a communal access and egress serving the building to the front and rear. Nos. 83, 84 and 85 Greens Place occupy the application site and No. 83 is subdivided into four self-contained flats (numbered 1 -4).

The listed building description for this Grade II Listed Building relates to all of the residential properties that are contained within the building envelope. The listing building description for the application site reads as follows:

“Early C19. Red brick, slate roofs, hipped at west end gabled at east end. Modillioned eaves cornice, same design, continuous across both houses. No 83 of 5 bays, 2 storeys above a semi-basement. Stone heads, windows re-glazed, stone cill band at ground and first floors. Stone Doric portico to central entrance. At the west end a deeply recessed one bay, 2 storey wing. Nos 84 and 85 of 4 bays, 3 storeys above a semi-basement. They are slightly set back from No 83. Stone heads to windows which are re-glazed. Stone cill bands to all floors. Simple Tuscan doorcase. Later bay window to ground floor. These houses were used as the Pilot Office from 1886 until 1980.”

This application seeks Listed Building Consent to carry out the following works:

- Clean out the existing cellar / store rooms and convert them to two bedrooms and a bathroom, with internal access from the living room.
- Install 2no. new softwood sliding sash windows to the front basement in existing window reveals, complete with light wells.

- Replace existing upvc windows to the front and rear elevations with a softwood sliding sash.

Publicity / Consultations (Expiry date 27/01/2021)

1) Neighbour responses

None received

2) Other Consultee responses

Historic Environment Officer

I am afraid there is insufficient information to enable me to make a recommendation.

Whilst I am supportive of proposals that seek to ensure that historic buildings remain in active use, I am not satisfied that the agent has submitted sufficient detail. A Heritage Statement has not been provided. Where it is proposed to remove or alter an historic fabric, its significance must properly understood and explained in the document. Applicants for Listed Building Consent must be able to justify their proposals and will need to show why works, which would affect the character of a Listed Building, are desirable or necessary

The purpose of Heritage Statements is set out in paragraph 128 of the NPPF, which states: "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."

(Case Officer comment – the NPPF has since been revised and the above text is now contained at paragraph 194)

Understanding a building and the journey it has been on is key to producing a Heritage Statement, just as it is key to informing design decisions that will change the asset or its setting. Where an aspect of the proposal has potential to harm the significance of heritage assets, we need information to explain why it is necessary and what measures have been taken to minimise its impact.

The heritage statement should ideally be prepared by an appropriate professional with the necessary expertise to assess properly the heritage asset and its significance.

The plan form of a building is often one of its most important characteristics and the internal partitions, staircases and other features which create historic plan form are integral to retaining that significance. Proposals to reconfigure or remove internal arrangements including forming new openings, removing internal partitions or blocking staircases will have to be well justified and will be subject to the same consideration of impact on special interest as for externally visible alterations.

As per a previous submission, I note that the intention would still be to reduce the size of the double width doors to the ground floor bedroom. During a visit to the property in 2019 this was

found to contain decorative glazing - is the stained glass fanlight integral to the heritage significance of the property? Can its loss be justified? This all need to be explained through the heritage statement.

The conversion of basements for residential use is difficult to achieve without an appropriate level of intervention into a building. Tanking of the basement is being proposed but the details of this need to be thoroughly explained as part of the heritage statement as some interventions are more acceptable than others in light of the building being of traditional construction.

The introduction of new services to historic buildings can, if not well designed and carefully considered, be detrimental to the character, appearance and even structure of an historic building. Relatively minor changes such as the provision of vents, flues, meter boxes, air conditioning units and signs, can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a Listed Building. These should be included on the drawings and must be carefully considered in order to minimise their impact.

The reinstatement of timber sash windows is supported. However, I would expect to see technical drawings of windows submitted in a scale that will allow Officers to measure the width of frames and glazing bars. This is to ensure that the dimensions match the original windows throughout the rest of the building. Photos of the interior of the windows would be useful so that I can assess whether any original features might be affected by the proposed secondary glazing.

The grilles to the proposed lightwells should be specified with a black finish.

Assessment

In assessing this application due regard has been had to the requirement of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The main issues associated with this application for listed building consent is whether the proposal would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), introduced in March 2012 to replace all existing government planning policy guidance, is a material consideration in all planning applications. With regard to Listed Buildings the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should set out a positive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment and recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; and
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including economic viability.

When considering the impact of proposed development on a Listed Building the NPPF states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of the asset. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

LDF Policy DM6 seeks to support development proposals that protect, preserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character and heritage, visual appearance and contextual importance of our heritage assets and their settings, including listed buildings. It states that planning permission will be refused if the impact of development on heritage assets remains is unacceptable.

The site is set in close proximity to Arbeia Roman Fort. Policy SS12 of the South Shields Town Centre & Waterfront Area Action Plan seeks to protect together with their settings the built environment assets of the South Shields town centre, riverside and foreshore areas including the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Arbeia Roman Fort and Vicus as part of the universally-important Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site.

This application proposes works consisting of:

- Clean out the existing cellar / store rooms and convert them to two bedrooms and a bathroom, with internal access from the living room.
- Install 2no. new softwood sliding sash windows to the front basement in existing window reveals, complete with light wells.
- Replace existing upvc windows to the front and rear elevations with a softwood sliding sash.

The applicant has supplied the following information to support the application:

- Site Location Plan
- Existing Floor Plans and Elevations (Dwg No. 2/WC/01/2020 & Dwg No. 2/WC/01/2020)

The Council's Historic Environment Officer has been consulted on this application and is not supportive of the application as there is insufficient information to demonstrate that there would be no harm to the significance of the Listed Building. The Historic Environment Officer has previously visited the site on 20th January 2020 prior to the submission of this application however the Historic Environment Officer and Case Officer have not been able to gain access to the site in order to assess this planning application.

No details have been provided regarding a methodology for the works, and no details of the proposed new windows (such as large scale plans and cross sections) have been provided. Furthermore, no justification has been provided for the works which would alter the fabric of the Listed Building.

At Paragraph 194, the NPPF sets out that "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance".

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states that "any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional."

Paragraph 201 of the NPPF states that “Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use”

The application proposes to convert the basement rooms into bedrooms, and this would involve the tanking of the basement and the introduction of services and internal partition walls. However no further details have been provided regarding this, particularly including the proposed materials and the proposed method of working. These would be required to set out the impact that the proposed works would have upon the significance of the Listed Building, and justification for any harm would need to be provided.

It has been noted by the Historic Environment Officer that the plan form of a building is often one of its most important characteristics and the internal partitions, staircases and other features which create historic plan form are integral to retaining that significance. The submitted floor plans show that the ground floor and lower ground floor levels would have their layouts slightly altered and the size of doorways altered, however the applicant has not provided any justification for this and has not set out how the proposed changes would harm the significance of the Listed Building.

It is also proposed to remove upvc windows to the building and to replace them with timber sash windows. The property gained Listed building Consent in 1989 (ref: ST/0767/89//LB) to install upvc double glazed windows. Timber windows would be a preferable option as opposed to the existing upvc windows, subject to an acceptable design. However, no technical drawings of the proposed windows have been provided. These would be required so that the Local Planning Authority could assess the impact that the design would have upon the significance of the Listed Building.

No heritage statement / planning statement has been submitted to accompany this application. The applicant has therefore failed to set out how the relevant historic environment record has been consulted and has failed to assess the designated heritage asset using appropriate expertise. Furthermore, the application contains no description of the significance of the heritage asset.

As the above information has not been provided, it is not possible to fully assess the impact that the proposed development would have upon the Listed Building and whether any harm is justifiable. Furthermore, it has not been possible to access the interior of the building to assess the proposed works. The Case Officer has requested the required information from the applicant but this has not been forthcoming.

As set out in Paragraph 200 of the NPPF any harm to a Grade II Listed Building should be exceptional and justification should be provided for this. Consequently it is considered that the proposals are considered to cause less than substantial harm. It is considered that there is no suitable justification provided for the harm caused to the Grade II listed building. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is considered that the proposal would not provide any public benefit that would outweigh this harm. The proposal would have no wider public benefit and would be solely for the use of the host property. It is considered that there is no suitable justification provided for the harm caused to the Grade II listed building and, consequently, the impact upon the listed building would be unacceptably harmful.

It is therefore considered that the proposal does not accord with historic environment policies within the NPPF, or LDF Policy DM6. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Recommendation

Refuse Permission

Refusal Reasons

- 1 The proposal would result in an unacceptable level of harm, amounting to less than substantial harm, to the significance of the Grade II listed building, without suitable justification or public benefits to outweigh the harm caused, and would not be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework or Policy DM6 of the South Tyneside Local Development Framework 2011.

Informatives

- 1 In dealing with this application the Council has implemented the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework to seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. However, the proposed development is contrary to the policies referred to in the reason(s) for refusal and it has not been possible to reach an agreed solution in this case.

List of approved plans for standard note

Plan Reference

Drg No 2/WC/01/2020 Rec 07/12/2020

Drg No 2/WC/02/2020 Rec 07/12/2020

Drg No 2/WC/03/2020 Rec 07/12/2020

Drg No 2/WC/04/2020 Rec 07/12/2020

Case officer: Seán Gallagher

Signed:

Date: 10/03/2022

Authorised Signatory:

Date:

«END»