DELEGATED REPORT / CASE OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

Ref No: ST/0273/22/LBC
Proposal: Retrospective Listed Building Consent required for loft conversion works carried out by a previous owner of the property, including installation of staircase, rooflights and internal finishes. Additional proposed works to include structural strengthening of the roof timbers, construction of a partition wall to provide two separate rooms, insulation installation, lighting and storage heater installation.
Location: 2 Mansion House
St Nicholas Terrace
West Boldon
NE36 0QW

Site Visit Made: 27/06/2022

Relevant policies

1 DM1 (A) - Management of Development

2 DM6 (Bix & C) - Heritage Assets and Archaeology

3 SPD9 - Householder Developments

4 SPD11 - West Boldon Conservation Area Management Plan - Adopted August 2007

Description of the site and of the proposals

The application dwelling forms part of Mansion House (nos. 1-5 Harton View), a Grade II listed building. The building was listed in 1985 and, originally a house and wings, and which is now five separate dwellings.

Constructed during the late 18th Century / early 19th Century, the list description describes Mansion House as being a two-storey property constructed from coursed squared limestone with an ashlar sandstone porch, Welsh slate roof. The low-pitched roof to the house has wide eaves and three transverse chimneys. The listing description outlines that two late 19th Century windows and doors have been inserted into the second bay. The square one storey porch at the second bay from the right has open-pedimented Tuscan doorcase with eight-panelled door and decorated round fanlight in deep reveal panelled in the same style as the door with margined sashes in the side walls, dentilled cornice and blocking course. The wing to the west is rendered and two storeys with a flat roof and the wing to the east is to the rear of the property and is ashlar with a canted bay window with a brick return and pantiled hipped roof.

The application site is also located within the West Boldon Conservation Area. Mansion House is described within the Conservation Area Appraisal as one of the largest original houses in West Boldon, Mansion House (listed Grade II), stands somewhat isolated by later development. Its grandeur is still seen in the south and east elevations (despite sub-division into five dwellings, early and quite sensitively handled), and the deep eaves, impressive porch and rich Tuscan doorcase and fanlight add interest and intricacy to the street. The rear elevation also has original windows and features.

This application seeks listed building consent for some proposed works, and for some works that have already been carried out. The Heritage Statement notes that the loft space has previously undergone

unauthorised alterations by a previous owner, and the current owner of the property is seeking to regularise alterations made and make further alterations to the property. The Heritage Statement states that requests for additional changes to the building are only being sought where there are health and safety issues, where the property is unsuitable for modern living and, or where there has been deterioration of historic features.

Several of the structural beams providing support to the roof have been denoted as failing by a Structural Engineer. The loft space had been converted by a previous owner, with skylights and a staircase having been installed, but there is no sufficient source of heating and insulation to enable this space to be suitable for modern living.

The application proposals seek consent retrospectively for the loft conversion works, including the installation of staircase, rooflights and internal finishes.

It is noted that conservation rooflights are detailed on the proposed floor plans, which have already been installed within the roof slope (it is understood from discussions on site that the current rooflights were installed in recent months on an urgent basis due to water leaking into the property as a result of the previously existing rooflights failing).

The new rooflights replace those installed in the late-1990s, in the same locations. A search of the planning history for the property indicates that unfortunately a flue and three rooflights were previously installed without listed building consent back in the mid-1990s. An Enforcement Notice was served (reference ENF/95/104), which was upheld by the Inspectorate (Appeal reference: F/98/649950-51), with an amended notice requiring the installation of conservation type roof windows, which the Inspector considered would be appropriate. The unauthorised windows were removed and replaced to comply with the terms of the amended notice, and the flue was removed, complying with the Notice.

A planning history search also highlighted that listed building consent had been granted on a retrospective basis for the conversion of the loft space and other associated works at 3 Mansion House, the property next door (application reference: ST/1210/14/LBC).

The application proposals include the following internal works within the loft space:

- Proposed structural bracings to be fitted to the failing roof timbers, removal of existing timber panelling, shelving and eaves storage to the East and South elevations;
- Installation of timber stud partition wall and doorway to provide two separate rooms (no fixings are to be drilled or nailed into the original timber beams within the roof void);
- Installation of insulation beneath the roof covering (with the depth of visible beams to remain as is);
- Installation of two storage heaters (no beams will be interfered with as part of the installation, or positioning of the storage heaters);
- Installation of storage cupboards to unusable floor space, as shown on appended proposed floor plans.

Further details of these proposals are specified within the Heritage Statement (at section 5.0), the Design and Access Statement, and through annotations on the floor plans. Some minor updates have been made to these documents to provide additional detail and clarification, and the application is determined on the most recent revision of these documents (Rev B) received on 19/08/2022.

Consultations (Expiry date 28/05/22)

1) **Responses to neighbour letters/Site & Press Notice publicity –** None received

2) **Consultee responses**

STC Historic Environment Officer

Initial comments provided in response review the information initially submitted and following a site visit to the property (no objection, but further information requested)

I have no objection to the replacement rooflights – these are smaller than the previous rooflights and have a lower profile.

In relation to the proposal to install insulation, I have spoken to Building Control and they have indicated that the ceilings would need to be taken down and then the depth of the void would determine what sort of insulation would be suitable. The ceilings are not original so there would be no loss of historic fabric and I am quietly confident that an improvement can be made without affecting the overall appearance of the beams. I would think this would need to be conditioned, unless the applicant is willing to remove a small section of ceiling to inspect the depth of the void – this would allow the work to be properly specified without the need for a planning condition and the owner has already indicated they may be willing to do some investigative work elsewhere (set out below).

Structural bracing: whilst we spoke to the owner and he indicated that metal bracing was to be used, it would be useful if their locations were illustrated on the plans, and we were provided with an image of what the bracing looks like. The owner also indicated that additional support might be needed in the area where panelling has been fitted. We would need details of this including methods of fixing. The gentleman suggested he might be willing to remove a section of panelling so that the details could be firmed up. This would avoid the need for a planning condition.

Removal of timber panelling and shelving: These are not original. The proposed replacement cupboards would be fitted behind the beams and would not be affixed to them.

Installation of stud partition to create defined office space: Whilst I would prefer not to see the beams obscured by a purpose-built cupboard, the proposed stud wall would obscure part of the beam in question anyway, and all of these alterations are reversible. I would just ask that no fixings be drilled or nailed into the beams.

Storage heaters: I would ask for confirmation that no beams are being interfered with.

A subsequent response was provided after the submission of additional/amended information on 12/08/2022 (no objection).

The additional information is very helpful in clarifying the extent and nature of the proposals.

In relation to the insulation, if the agent is able to confirm that the depth of visible beam would remain as is after insulation has been installed then I would have no objections to the proposal. (NB. Additional clarification was provided in respect of this on 19/08/2022.

Assessment

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority 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.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 194 states that in determining an application, 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.

The NPPF further states in paragraph 199 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building should be exceptional.

The NPPF states, at paragraph 201, 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.

The main issue relevant to the assessment of this application is the impact on the architectural and historic interest of the property, which is an integral part of a group of other listed buildings. The application proposals would have realistic potentially to impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties or have material impacts in respect of any other planning considerations.

It is considered in this instance that the main heritage significance of the Grade II listed building is largely contained to the external fabric which once, along with the neighbouring properties, formed the original larger house. The building has subsequently been sub-divided to five private dwellings, and the internal environment is somewhat distinct from the original function and character, with many original characteristics no longer in place. Nonetheless, some elements of the original historic fabric do remain and are of some significance.

Significant weight has been given to the consultee comments provided by the Council's Historic Environment Officer in the assessment of the application.

No concerns are raised regarding the conversion of the roof space that has already taken place, the installation of the staircase, or the replacement rooflights, which are considered to be more suitable than those they replaced, as they are smaller than the previous rooflights and have a lower profile.

In respect of the works involving the structural bracing and the other internal works, it is considered that a good level of information has been provided clarifying the extent and nature of the proposals.

The proposals to install insulation would involve the ceilings being taken down, but these are not original. There would be no loss of historic fabric and these improvements can be made without affecting the overall appearance of the beams. The submitted details confirm that the depth of the visible beam would remain 'as is' after the insulation has been installed.

Details of the proposed structural bracing have been provided, including methods of fixing.

The timber panelling and shelving are not original and the proposed replacement cupboards would be fitted behind the beams and not be affixed to them.

The stud partitions and associated alterations are reversible, and confirmation has been provided that no fixings would be drilled or nailed into the beams in the application documentation.

Confirmation has also been provided that no beams will be interfered with to install the storage heaters.

Based on assessment of the information submitted and available as part of this application, it is not considered that there has been any harm to the heritage asset. No features of special architectural or historic interest at the property have been or would be harmed by the retrospective and/or proposed works.

It is considered, for the reasons detailed above, that the works within this application are acceptable on their merits – on the basis that they would be carried out in accordance with the details specified within the application documentation. Subject to a condition requiring that the works be carried out in accordance with these details, this application for listed building consent is considered to accord with South Tyneside LDF policies DM1 (A) and DM6 (Bix & C), and policies on conserving the historic environment in Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

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

Recommendation

Grant Permission with Conditions

Conditions

1 The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

As required by Section 18A of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and to ensure that the development is carried out within a reasonable time.

2 The proposed works shall be carried out in strict accordance with the details provided on Drg No. R1211_001 Rev B received 19/08/2022 and within section 5.0 EXISTING & PROPOSED WORKS of Building Surveyors; Mansion House, St Nicholas Terrace, West Boldon, NE36 0QW; Heritage Statement; March 2022 Rev B received 19/08/2022. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority pursuant to this condition.

To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and in the interests of ensuring that the fabric of the listed building would be preserved/enhanced in accordance with South Tyneside LDF Development Management Policy DM1 and Policy DM6.

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.

List of plans for standard note

Plan Reference

Drg No. R1211_001 Rev B received 19/08/2022

Building Surveyors; Mansion House, St Nicholas Terrace, West Boldon, NE36 0QW; Design & Access Statement; March 2022 Rev B received 19/08/2022

Building Surveyors; Mansion House, St Nicholas Terrace, West Boldon, NE36 0QW; Heritage Statement; March 2022 Rev B received 19/08/2022

Case officer: Chris Stanworth
Signed: Chris Stanworth
Date: 24/08/22

Authorised Signatory: Geoff Horsman
Date: 25/08/22

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