
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 October 2022 17:25
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Flask Walk 39, 2022/3648/PRE

Dear Thomas,

The site is a modest early-19th-century two-bedroomed house, one of a terrace of four, listed grade II and making a positive contribution to the Hampstead Conservation Area. It has benefitted from the addition of a substantial full-width rear building, linked to it by a former scullery wing, itself enlarged and extended to two storeys. A small yard beside this scullery separates the host building from the modern addition.

The applicant wishes to undertake internal alterations and to re-model the rear extension, enclosing the yard.

There seem to be a couple of discrepancies in the DAS. The house appears to be roofed with natural slates, not fibre cement tiles as noted in the DAS. There is also confusion in this document about an upper-storey “back room” that is referred to as having been extended.

Any project arising will be assessed according to policies D1 and D2 of Camden’s Local Plan of 2017, and section 16 of the NPPF. This, among other things, requires Camden to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets; and to weigh harm caused to such assets by development against public benefits accruing therefrom, including securing the asset’s optimum viable use.

Proposed works

No works are proposed to the front elevation.

On the ground floor, it is proposed to increase the amount of panelling in the front room, adding more above the dado-level material already existing. Non-original fitted cupboards are to be removed.

It is also proposed to panel the hall.

In the rear room, currently the kitchen, it is proposed to rearrange a small chamber containing a lavatory that has been inserted there.

A second doorway that has been inserted to allow access to the rear room will be infilled.

A courtyard that separates the full-width rear extension from the historic house is to be glazed over, and have most of its partitions removed, allowing the whole area to bleed into a single volume. The glazed doors that currently separate the exterior from the back room of the house are to be removed.

On the first floor, the rear room (a single-volume bathroom) is proposed to be divided in half, to turn it into two bathrooms. A new doorway would be created to allow one of these bathrooms to be *en suite* with the front bedroom.

Additionally, the two bedrooms (one of which is not in the historic part of the house) are to be panelled.

At the rear, alterations are proposed to the extension. This will result in the tidying up of the ground-floor rear elevation. A pitched roof with an untidy relationship with a non-original window would be replaced with a flat roof surrounded by a parapet.

Comments

It is not considered appropriate to install reproduction panelling in the vicinity of existing areas of historic panelling. This alters the historic condition of the room as it has survived, and blurs the ability to differentiate between old and new. However, panelling may be used in areas of the house that are demonstrably not historic.

The re-arrangement of the planning of the lavatory in the back room misses the only opportunity the scheme offers for historic reinstatement. If this facility, and perhaps the kitchen, were moved into the modern structure to the rear, this would be to the advantage of the historic interest of the house.

The loss of the courtyard would be regrettable and would be resisted. The courtyard allows clear demarcation between the historic host building and the new additions, so providing legibility. It also allows the rear elevation of the house to be appreciated, and means that the back room of the house has a correct relationship with the outside, rather than simply leaching into a modern, open-plan volume. It is highly probable that the house's rear takes the form it does because previous planners were concerned about exactly these issues, rather than simply allowing a full-width rear extension, as is currently under discussion.

Similarly, the demolition of the walls, windows and doors enclosing the courtyard, and the raising of its ground level by 50cm to floor level will also harm this differentiation and legibility.

The removal of the second door to the kitchen is the sole heritage benefit of the scheme. However, since this is only achieved at the cost of connecting the kitchen with the open-plan space created by infilling the courtyard, it is more than offset as a benefit.

The works to the modern rear extension seem likely to increase its stature within the garden, replacing a pitched roof with a parapet. Although the Eternit upstand and the roof's junction with the window are inelegant features, there is no great heritage merit in their removal.

The proposed glazed lean-to structure attached to the privy at the foot of the garden may be acceptable subject to detailed design and subordinacy. This semi-detached curtilage structure is of interest in its own right.

Upstairs, the panelling of the historic bedroom would be resisted for the reasons already outlined. Reinstatement of suitably modest cornices could be acceptable.

The subdivision of the back bedroom to create two bathrooms cannot be said to improve the historic condition of the house or to bring public benefit. The addition of a second door to the front bedroom would likewise result in loss of historic fabric and harm to plan form.

Conclusion

There are no heritage benefits to the scheme, apart from the removal of a non-original doorway from the kitchen, which is achieved at the cost of greater harm. Repairs and general maintenance, for instance to the rubbed-brick window head on the façade, cannot be considered a heritage benefit. The remains of the proposal are either neutral or less-than-substantially harmful without corresponding public benefit. The listed building will not fall into disuse if the works are not carried out – it will remain a very valuable and desirable house – so there is no argument of securing its optimum viable use.

This means that, in its current form, according to paragraph 202 of the NPPF 2021, the application would not be considered acceptable.

Please let me know if you need any further information.

This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.

ENDS

Kind regards,
Nick Baxter MSc, BA (Hons)
Senior Conservation Officer
Regeneration and Planning
Supporting Communities
London Borough of Camden

Web: camden.gov.uk

5 Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG

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