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Dear Ciara,

2023/5477/PRE

Pre-application advice in respect of proposals requiring listed building consent (GII) at
109 Camden Street

Proposal

“The installation of external gas equipment.

“The proposals at the property include for the installation of 1 no. new gas riser to the front elevation of the property and 1 no. new gas meter box to the front basement lightwell. The proposals also include for the relocation of 3 no. gas meters within three of the flats.”

This advice is based on the documents submitted (23012782_PLN_EL_1.2, 23012782_PLN_EL_1.1, design photos annotated) and on the site visit.

Site and significance

Number 109 Camden Street is an early-19th-century terraced house, one of a group of six, listed at grade II.

The list description notes: “Terrace of 6 houses. Early C19. Yellow stock brick with rusticated stucco ground floors. End houses slightly projecting. 3 storeys and basements. 2 windows each. Round-arched doorways with patterned fanlights and panelled doors. Entrances to Nos 107 and 117 in recessed side porticoes. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floors with cast-iron balconies. Stucco cornice and blocking course. INTERIORS: not inspected.”

The house’s significance lies in its architectural design, plan form and historic fabric, and its townscape contribution.



Number 109 is the second house from the left

The site is a mid-terrace house of three floors plus basement, containing four flats. The first-floor flats have ornamental cast-iron balconies, the window heads feature finely gauged brickwork and the basement and ground-floor flats are fronted with banded stucco, but otherwise the frontages are restrained and austere. The two upper floors are of London stock brick.

The group of six houses takes the form of a central, flat-fronted row of four, with the house at each end stepping forward slightly. The frontage is unimpaired by downpipes, etc, although some unauthorised gas flues penetrate it.

Terms of this assessment

The assessment of the proposed works is applied to the impact on the significance of the listed building. This advice does not include an assessment of any planning matters outside of listed building consent and heritage impact.

If this advice fails to mention or assess any aspect of the proposals it should not be taken to imply that such elements are acceptable.

External works

Because of changes in gas fitting practice, it is apparently no longer possible to run the house's gas supply internally in the traditional fashion. Now, a necessary repair has led the installer to require that the supply be run externally, up the façade, entering each flat through the front elevation.

The new supply will run from the road, under the front garden path. A meter box will be installed under the bridge in the area. From here, pipes will enter the basement and climb the façade. It was stated on site that the pipes would be painted black on the brickwork and white on the stucco section.

Internal works

It is not altogether clear which photos in the document refer to which flat. However, in general, the pipes will navigate the internal fittings of the flats, sometimes following existing pipe runs, and sometimes connecting to existing gas equipment.

Comments

To the extent that they can be understood from the documents, the alterations to the interiors of the flats appear not to be more harmful than the existing state of affairs.

The exterior works are problematic.

The new feed into the basement and the external meter will be concealed beneath the area bridge and so are not considered harmful.

However, the addition of a gas pipe up the front elevation of this early-19th-century house would clearly mar its appearance. The works would harm the house's historic character and the composition of the group and are unacceptable. It must also be borne in mind that the remaining houses in the group, and all listed buildings that benefit from a gas supply, will eventually face applications for the same treatment. The existing flues from the boilers are also harmful and should be removed.

Two potentially less harmful alternatives were explored on site.



Firstly, the rear elevation was examined. Although highly visible from Carol Street, this elevation already features downpipes, both from the original roof drainage and from later internal plumbing. It is likely that gas pipes could be carefully placed on this elevation without significant harm. However, the applicant stated that he was unable to carry out the work using this elevation for reasons of access.

The idea of running the pipe up the staircase was also considered. Since the interior was not available for inspection, it cannot be known whether or not this approach would have been acceptable in heritage terms, or whether ornamental plasterwork, etc, was present. However, this approach too was unacceptable to the applicant for technical reasons to do with ventilation.

Summary

Unfortunately, the external works proposed would be considered unacceptable if they were to come forward, except in the case of the basement flat.

Listed building consent application information

Should you choose to submit a listed building consent application that addresses the outstanding issues detailed in this report satisfactorily, I would advise you to submit the following for a valid planning application:

- Completed form – Listed Building consent Application
- An Ordnance Survey based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the application site in red
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Section drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Design and access statement
- Heritage statement
- The appropriate fee
- Please see supporting information for planning applications for more information.

We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals and for all external works to a grade-II-listed building. We would put up a notice on or near the site and advertise in a local newspaper. The council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received. You are advised to contact your neighbours prior to submission, to discuss the proposals.

Non-major applications are typically determined under delegated powers, however, if more than three objections from neighbours or an objection from a local amenity group is received the application will be referred to the Members Briefing Panel should it be recommended for approval by officers.

This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and is not binding upon the council.

Nick Baxter

Senior conservation officer