

| Application No: | Consultees Name: | Received: | Comment: | Response: |
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| 2024/4277/L | The Ching Court Association (contact Rick Fisher) | 20/11/2024 00:05:07 | COMMNT | <p>The Ching Court Association represents the occupants of the buildings around the Comyn Ching Triangle, including 22 homes and several small businesses. Our objects include the maintenance and improvement of the historic nature and tranquil amenity of Ching Court, which is visited by hundreds of people each year and which features in books and other media Worldwide.</p> <p>This unique and significant development is a single, cohesive entity - whose parts happen, happily, to originate from four centuries. The importance of its buildings, features and character were recognised in 2017 when Historic England updated the List to include all the buildings that surround Ching Court as well as the space behind them.</p> <p>The Ching Court Association would like to flag a number of concerns in relation to this application. We hope that these can be resolved.</p> <p>We understand that there are 3 aspects of the proposals for 23 Mercer Street that could have impact on the buildings around Ching Court, and on those who live and work in them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sinking the basement lower, - removing the chimney breast on all floors to create more space and - changing the glazed roof at the back. <p>Other elements of the proposals, such as replacing the staircase throughout and changing some roof light positions, do not concern us.</p> <p>Sinking the basement lower, and removing the chimney breast that is an important part of the structure, are obviously a worry to the immediate neighbours at number 21 and number 25 Mercer Street, since those houses date from the 1690s and the Thomas Neal developments were notoriously badly built. If the works compromise those houses, or indeed number 23 Mercer Street itself, then any damage would also have an impact on Ching Court as a whole. We appreciate the content of the Basement Impact Assessment, and await the council's independent audit as well as the neighbours' party wall agreements in order to be reassured on these points.</p> <p>Changes to the glazed roof at the back are likely to have an impact on the all occupants of Ching Court. The applicants are proposing to replace the supporting walls and install a new glazed roof.</p> <p>Unlike all the other houses in the row, 23 Mercer Street has no wall at the back of the house at basement level. So the lightwell is part of the basement room. If the roof of this lightwell is opened up, then any sound from the whole of that basement room will rise up into Ching Court. We are very familiar with the fact that any sound in Ching Court can be heard by everyone. We have always said that the space is 'acoustically challenged', as any noise reverberates. Even a normal conversation in the courtyard can be heard by occupants of buildings with their windows closed, depending upon where the source is and which walls the sound is bouncing off. This is tolerable during the day, but doesn't work for people at night when the courtyard</p> |

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is otherwise dead quiet.

Since the house at 23 Mercer Street could be used for noisy activity such as parties in a potentially open basement, this is a serious concern. The applicants have told their neighbours that they are, however, happy to offer a planning condition not to leave the roof open beyond 21:00. This matches the condition on the other openable living space in Ching Court, on the flat at the top of the office building in the South West corner of Ching Court (application ref. 2014/4870/P - please refer to condition number 10). It also matches the rules of Ching Court about keeping things quiet outside after 21:00. If you are minded to grant permission for a sliding roof then it would be important to add a planning condition that “the sliding glazed panel to the basement roof shall remain closed between 21:00 hours and 07:30 hours” in addition to the familiar conditions relating to music and noise breakout.

Secondly, in terms of materials, we have not seen a detailed drawing yet. However, we would like to note that the glazed roof frame must be sympathetic to the important character of Ching Court - using either wood or iron painted black to match other materials in Ching Court. The side walls should either be brick or rendered white, again to match other materials in Ching Court.

Please keep us updated, as the documentation relating to this application progresses
