

Monmouth Planning Limited

33-34 Great Queen Street
London
WC2B 5AA

Heritage Statement



Introduction

This Heritage Statement seeks to describe the heritage significance of 34 Great Queen Street a Listed Grade II* building. It is proposed to carry out works to the listed building and this appraisal seeks to establish the level and extent of the heritage significance and whether any works have an unacceptably detrimental impact on the historic interest of the two buildings.

The possible impact of the works proposed on the building's significance will be judged in the context of the relevant planning policies for managing change in the historic environment.

The Building and Designations

Nos 33 and 34 Great Queen Street form part of a group of buildings which includes 33,34 and 35 Great Queen Street. The buildings are listed Grade II* and lie within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.

The list description describes the site as follows:

TQ3081SW GREAT QUEEN STREET 798-1/105/677 (North West side) 24/10/51 Nos.33, 34 AND 35

GV II*

Terrace of 3 houses. c1710. Brown brick with red brick cornices below parapets. Moulded brick band at 2nd floor. Tiled roofs (No.33 slated) with dormers. 3 storeys and attics. 3 windows each. Red brick dressings and segmental arches to flush frame windows (Nos 34 & 35 C20). C20 shopfronts. No.33: C20 reproduction of original earlier C19 bow fronted shopfront. House doorway with fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: has good panelling. Staircase with closed string, turned balusters, column newels and moulded handrail.

33 and 34 Great Queen Street are occupied by two separate tenants, 33 is occupied by a barber shop and 34 by a café, both units have been updated to meet the needs of the users within each building.

Despite 33 and 34 Great Queen Street being Grade II* listed it is clear the properties have been heavily altered in the past to accommodate their current uses with the plan form having been changed to accommodate the café use at 34 Great Queen Street.

SEVEN DIALS (COVENT GARDENT) CONSERVATION AREA

The conservation area lies to the south of the Borough. The special character of the Conservation Area is formed in the range and mix of building types and use and the street layout. The character is not dominated by one particular period or style of building but rather it is their combination that is of special interest.

Most buildings appear to spring from the footway without physical front boundaries or basement areas. In this tightly contained streetscape, changes of road width, building form and land-use give dramatic character variation, narrow alleys and hidden yards provide unforeseen interest and the few open spaces provide relief and a chance to pause and take stock of one's surroundings. Apart from Seven Dials there are no formal open spaces, but some significant informal spaces occur in the form of yards and street junctions.

The Proposal

The aim of this application is to create a new WC unit within the modern part of the building at 33 Great Queen Street. The additional WC is required following the approval of listed building consent to create additional dining space for the café at 34 Great Queen Street within 33 Great Queen Street. Both properties are in Class E use. There will be no external alterations and none of the works will be visible from street view.

The interior possesses very little interest other than the general plan form although even this has been eroded due to the removal of the spine wall. All the original paneling has been removed and replaced in the 1980's with a non-historical design.

The works proposed concern the partition wall between the corridor of the ground floor premises between No 34 into No 33 Great Queen Street and the installation of a new WC. The rear part of 33 Great Queen Street appears to be a modern infill of what would have been an open courtyard.

A very small element of the historic fabric will be removed to provide the opening, but this will outweigh the fact that this will provide much needed sanitary facilities for the extended café use and ensure the long-term use of the premises. The proposals are also reversible, and the legibility of the original plan form will be retained as the opening will only be a single door width.

Relevant Planning history

Listed Building consent LPA reference 2023/3950/L was granted on 5th January 2024 for the formation of an opening at ground floor level to connect 33 and 34 Great Queen Street.

Listed building consent LPA reference 2024/0413/L was granted on 9th April 2024 for the Variation of condition 2 (approved drawings) of listed building consent reference 2023/3950/L granted 5/1/2024 for the formation of opening at ground floor level to connect 33 and 34 Great Queen Street. Amendment is for enlarged opening.

Heritage significance

The heritage significance of these two properties is recognised by their inclusion on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, Grade II*. More widely, the heritage significance of the buildings and their contribution to the historic environment is recognised by their inclusion within the Seven Dials Conservation Area.

Although both buildings are altered from their original domestic use by the 19th century ground floor shop conversion, the original plan form does not survive internally at ground floor level with many of the original features having been removed.

Policy Context

Any proposed changes to No's 33 and 34 Great Queen Street that affect its character needs to be reviewed in terms of the impact upon these listed buildings and the setting of the Seven Dials conservation areas. Government guidance regarding managing change in the historic environment, including proposals that impact on setting of heritage assets, is given in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Government guidance on managing change in the historic environment is given in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Section 16 "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraph 192 states that

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

An informed and balanced judgement must be made concerning the judgement of whether an alteration to a heritage asset is acceptable or not, particularly where the alteration may lead to less than substantial harm;

Paragraph 196 states that:

Where a development 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, including where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.

Historic England has produced helpful policy guidance on this point; *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*

Page 2 states that:

8 Understanding the nature of the significance is important to understanding the need for and best means of conservation.....

9 Understanding the extent of that significance is also important because this can, among other things, lead to a better understanding of how adaptable the asset may be.....

10 Understanding the level of significance is important as it provides the essential guide to how policies should be applied.....

Assessment

The alterations to these buildings internal only ; and seek to remove a small area of the partition wall between the rear ground corridor between 33 and 34 Great Queen Street. This area appears to have been erected much later. Please refer to the photos.

As internal works, these changes would have no impact on the heritage significance of the Seven Dials Conservation Area.

Both houses were originally domestic properties brick-faced ground floor elevations with sash windows and panelled front doors.

These two houses have been a café and retail use for some many years. The long-term sustainable viability of the buildings depends on attractive and spacious cafe dining space. The works proposed will ensure the long-term viability of the café use.

This is a case of two houses, long altered. The proposed alterations that form the works in this application do not have an unacceptably detrimental effect on these buildings, due to the historic changes that have already markedly altered the houses. None of the surviving historic fabric or features will be harmed or removed.

It is considered that the minor changes proposed by this application are barely even “less than substantial harm” (NPPF) and must be weighed against the positive impact on the café use, facilitating more flexibility and thereby securing the optimum use for these listed buildings, long converted for commercial use.

The veracity of this conclusion is further underscored by the Historic England advice on managing decision

taking in the historic environment. The executed works respect the “nature, level and extent” of the heritage asset and its significance, without causing further harmful change.

Conclusion

The works referred to in this application comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and the conservation policies of Camden Council.