

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		13/05/2010	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		05/05/2010	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Hannah Walker				2010/0406/L			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
8 Southampton Place London WC1A 2EA				Refer to decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
The creation of a new opening through the party wall between nos. 7 and 8 Southampton Place							
Recommendation(s):		Refuse Listed Building Consent					
Application Type:		Listed Building Consent					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		Site notice – no responses. English Heritage have not granted flexible authorisation due to various concerns regarding the impact of the proposals on the plan form and internal appearance of the listed building (see attached letter).					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		N/A					

Site Description

This Grade II* listed building forms part of a terrace of 8 houses dating from c.1755-63 and built under the direction of Henry Flitcroft. The building is of 3 storeys with a basement and two levels of accommodation contained within the mansard, the 4th floor of which has no external expression on the front roof slope.

Relevant History

Listed Building Consent (2007/1443/L) was **granted** on 26 March 2008 for "Insertion of structural ties to secure side wall."

Listed Building Consent (2007/2541/L) was **granted** on 24 July 2007 for "Underpinning foundation to wall adjoining 9 Southampton place."

Listed Building Consent (2007/4794/L) was **granted** on 4 December 2007 for "Introduction of ties to repair fractures in side/party wall and construction of chimney."

Listed Building Consent (2008/2905/L) was **granted** on 30 June 2009 for "Masonry infilling to 3 no. toilet windows and provision of mechanical ventilation system with low level weathered roof terminal. Installation of new ductwork with lined studwork to match the internal walls including new balanced boiler flue and roof vent through flat roof."

Planning permission (2009/3016/P) was **granted** on 28 September 2009 for "Change of use of basement, ground, first, second and third floors from office (Class B1) to dual use office (Class B1) and non-residential institution (Class D1)."

Listed Building Consent (2009/4809/L) was **granted** on 2 December 2009 for "Refurbishment and repair of Grade II* listed building (dual use Class B1 and D1) and removal of partition at 1st floor level."

Planning permission (2009/5058/P) and Listed Building Consent (2009/5060/L) were **refused** on 24 December 2009 for the "Erection of two dormer windows in upper front slope of mansard roof, internal alterations including removal of existing timber partitions at fourth floor level and installation of new timber partition and doors, and creation of new opening in party wall at fourth floor level to link to No. 7."

Listed Building Consent (2010/0348/L) was **granted** on 17 March 2010 for "Internal alterations including removal of existing timber partitions at fourth floor level and installation of new timber partition and doors, and creation of new opening in party wall at fourth floor level to link to No. 7."

Relevant policies

Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006 – B6 (Listed Buildings)

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

As the draft LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents have now been published, they are material planning considerations. However, as a matter of law, limited weight should be attached to them at this stage.

Assessment

This application is for the creation of an opening through the party wall between nos. 7 and 8 Southampton Place, both of which are Grade II* listed buildings.

An opening at 4th floor level between the two properties (a 20th century modern floor inserted within the modified mansard roof) was consented in 2010. Lateral openings through the party wall between nos. 7 and 6 Southampton Place already exist at basement, ground, 3rd and 4th floor levels.

The proposed opening would be formed between the hallway of no.8 and the rear room of no.7, located in the recess adjacent to the chimney breast. A timber 6 panelled door would be installed within the opening.

Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5) requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets. 8 Southampton Place is Grade II* listed and dates from the mid 18th century. The building has a traditional two room deep plan, accessed at each floor level from the main staircase which rises in the centre of the building. This building is a fine, and early example of its type and its internal arrangement is essential to an understanding of the historic planning and functioning of the building, as well as its spatial quality and integrity.

Policy HE 7.2 of PPS 5 outlines that "...local planning authorities should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for this and future generations." Policy HE 9.1 is clear that "There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets.." and that "Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification." Section 182 of the Practice Guide states that "The plan form of a building is frequently one of its most important characteristics and internal partitions.....are likely to form part of its significance. Indeed they may be its most significant feature."

English Heritage's guidance 'London Terrace Houses 1660-1860' outlines that "lateral conversion of two or more houses is normally unacceptable, particularly where this involves the removal of staircases or the plan form of principal rooms, but a simple door opening between adjacent buildings in areas of limited interest is often acceptable.."

Although the door represents only a small physical intervention, in my view, the breaching of the party wall would detract from the integrity of the listed building and the significance of its vertical arrangement and hierarchy. Furthermore, given the existing openings between nos. 6 and 7 this would result in the lateral linking of three properties, further eroding the primacy of the vertical circulation pattern. The opening is at principal floor level and due to the differing floor plans between nos. 7 and 8, will impact unacceptably on the appearance and character of the rear ground floor room to no.7 by introducing a door in a non traditional position adjacent to the chimneybreast.

Section 87 of the PPS 5 Practice Guide does make provision for balancing harm to heritage assets against any other public benefits the scheme may bring, including possibly the realisation of the optimal viable use of the asset. I appreciate that the creation of a lateral link would allow the two buildings to be used more flexibly and would likely improve the marketability of the building to prospective tenants. However, in my view this does not outweigh the harm to the integrity and character of the Grade II* listed buildings. Furthermore, the a party wall opening has already been consented at 4th floor level, and lesser steps could be taken to link the buildings elsewhere – for example at ground floor level through the non original rear addition of no.8.

An opening between the properties, through the chimneybreast of the rear room to no.7 has existed in the past, but has been blocked up. The reinstatement of this opening is not desirable in listed terms and its reversal has enhanced the special interest of the listed building. The applicant has indicated that the newly proposed opening is reversible. However, section 180 of the PPS 5 Practice Guide is clear that "...reversibility alone does not justify alteration."

As such, the proposed alterations are considered unacceptable and would harm the special

architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings. Recommend refusal.

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