

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		16/03/2009	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		N/a	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Charlie Rose				2008/5767/L			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
73 - 75 Gower Street London WC1E 6HJ				Refer to Decision Notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Internal alterations to install en-suite shower rooms throughout, installation of reception desk at ground floor of no.75 Gower Street, installation of partition walls at basement level of no. 73 and erection of internal partition at second floor level of no. 73 Gower Street to create an additional bedroom.							
Recommendation(s):		Grant approval					
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:		N/a					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		N/a					

Site Description

73-75 Gower Street are two mid-terrace Georgian townhouses built c.1787 located on the east side of Gower Street which have been laterally converted and currently used as a hotel. The buildings are grade II listed and within Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

N/a

Relevant policies

B6

Assessment

Retrospective consent is sought for internal alterations to install en-suite shower rooms to every lettable room, as well as the installation of a reception desk to the ground floor front room of no.75 Gower Street, the installation of partition walls at basement level of no. 73 and erection of internal partition at second floor level of no. 73 Gower Street to create an additional bedroom.

Evidence suggests that the properties have been in use as a hotel/boarding house since approximately 1975 when the buildings became unified and after the building was listed in 1969. Internally the buildings retain much of their historic features of interest although the front rooms on all floors of both properties have been subdivided, to provide for a continuous corridor through each building and additional rooms to let, which significantly harms the historic plan form. Consent appears to have been granted for the in 1975 for the 'formation of openings in the party walls at basement, first and second floor levels and the erection of partitions to form corridors,' (refHN789).

In this regard the introduction of additional bathrooms and the erection of a new partition at second floor level of no. 73 Gower Street to create an additional bedroom, within the original front rooms are not considered to unduly harm the special interest of these spaces.

The installation of the bathrooms in the rear rooms has more impact on the historic plan form than those in the front rooms because the original size and proportions of the rooms are intact. However the ability to recognise the original layout has historically been reduced by entering the rooms in a non-historic position from the new central corridor approved in 1975. The new en-suite bathrooms have been inserted with sensitivity to the special interest of the listed building; the partitions are not full height on the principal floors – allowing the floor to ceiling height and proportion of the rooms to still be appreciated; the cornices have been retained where they existed; the service routes are concealed from view and have resulted in a minimal loss of fabric by stacking the locations of the new en-suites and; the chimney breasts have not been cut across and any fireplaces have been retained.

The subdivision of the spaces on the upper (mansard) floor and basement, are considered to be able to accommodate a greater level of subdivision, especially the upper floor which had large rooms and would have traditionally had a greater level of subdivision.

Moreover paragraph 3.12-3.13 of PPG15 confirms that where listed buildings are in already well-established uses, such as these, it is important to balance the effect of any changes on the special interest of the listed building against the viability of the use. Given the level of alteration that has already taken place to the plan form along with the considerate insertion of the en-suites in relation to architectural detailing it is considered that the buildings can accommodate the works to help continue the establish use.

Furthermore at the request of the Council the applicants have agreed to mitigate the impact of the works by proposing to insert two non-opening doors at first and second floor level of no.73 in original positions. This will complete the historic appearance and plan form of the stair compartments of each building and improve the ability to recognise and appreciate the special historic character and appearance of the grade II listed buildings. A method statement and design for the new doors has been provided.

Recommendation

Approve subject to maximum time period condition for inserting the new doors.

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