

HISTORIC BUILDINGS CONSULTANTS
8 DOUGHTY MEWS WC12 NPC

CM/AM/000

Friday 9th October 2015

Mr N Baxter,
Planning Department
London Borough Camden
Judd Street
WC1H 9JE

RE: 24, Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BU

We are in receipt of a letter dated 27th March 2015 addressed to your department from the Covent Garden Community Association.
This outlines comments regarding the current building application for the above address. We note that the chair of the CGCA is Elizabeth Bac who happens to be the previous owner of 24 Betterton street. As such there is a conflict of interest which has not been declared and Camden Council should exclude this letter and its content.

In the meantime we feel it important to respond to the points raised as follows.

1.0 CGCA's first paragraph

It is important to highlight that many of the original features within the property have been removed and replaced over the past century.
All plaster work within the building without exception is modern gypsum plaster with no original lime plaster remaining.
The top floor of the property was added in the nineteenth century and altered again in the twentieth century and therefore retains no original structural elements.
There are some original elements in the form of existing floor boards, some wall panelling (although many have been altered and replaced) and the rear staircase.
Most of the windows have been replaced over the years and window shutters have been lost during this process.
All fireplaces throughout the property have been replaced with 'modern' reproduction ones.
Without exception, all original features which do still exist within the property are being retained and preserved.

2.0 CGCA's second paragraph

Some 252 drawings have been submitted as part of this application.
Every internal wall elevation has been drawn at a scale of 1-20 in addition to floor plans at the same scale. General arrangements, plans, sections and elevations are at a scale of 1-50.
This is full compliance of the requirements of a listed building application and illustrates the changes in great depth.
In fact the conservation officer, Mr N Baxter, has commented that there are too many drawings!
The drawings are far from misleading and in fact are very clear and precise as to the proposed alternations for every wall within this listed building.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS CONSULTANTS 8 DOUGHTY MEWS WC12 NPG

3.0 CGCA's third paragraph

Since the letter was written by CGCA, during the consultation process with the local authority, new openings between rooms have been reduced in number.

The remaining the door openings between rooms either already exist, or as in the case of the kitchen and breakfast room, have been reduced to a modest single door opening to replace the non-original double door set.

Such alterations reflect the desire by the applicant to be sympathetic to the listed building.

All materials are to match the existing.

This is all stated on the drawn information.

The comment regarding an alcove within the bathroom refers to a recess being within the chimney stack within what was once the roof space. This area forms what is now a more recent floor addition.

This is not an original feature.

4.0 Ground Floor

4.1 The installation of a fireplace surround is within the existing chimney where the openings already exist.

No new openings are proposed within the existing chimney stack.

4.2 The current door within the lobby is a non-original door and a modern addition. This is simply being replaced for a more sympathetic door to match the adjacent mouldings and panelling.

The existing door is thought to have been installed in *circa* 1980.

4.3 The existing door way to the living room is being retained but screwed shut.

This is a reversible treatment.

This is not an original door opening as the original one would have been off the main hallway which is being proposed for reinstatement.

4.4 The new shutters are in keeping with the listed building and are exact copies of the original.

It must be pointed out that at this level there are no existing shutters remaining except for one single window reveal within the living room.

This is being used as a basis to reproduce the missing ones.

5.0 Stairway

The proposal is to replace the second floor rear elevation window on the staircase to match the window below.

Externally there is currently a brick recess suggesting strongly that this window was larger than it currently is.

The proposal is to reinstate the window into the existing brick opening.

This is clearly demonstrated from the rear elevation drawings.

6.0 First Floor

HISTORIC BUILDINGS CONSULTANTS
8 DOUGHTY MEWS WC12 NPG

- 6.1 The proposed cupboard has been well-designed and is an appropriate addition.
- 6.2 It is my opinion that the stripped pine chimneypieces with miscellaneous iron grates have been introduced relatively recently. (They look like a miscellaneous collection of salvage).
- 6.3 The existing non-original double door sliding set between the kitchen and breakfast room is being replaced with a modest single door way. This is seen as a positive alteration to replace this larger non-original feature.
- 6.4 Only the fireplace opening is original and a suitably designed new chimneypiece will incorporate it.

7.0 Second Floor

- 7.1 The partition walls have modern plaster and the proposed alterations will not disturb significant fabric.
- 7.2 The doorway to the rear dressing room is existing and is not a new opening.
- 7.3 The original doorway from the rear dressing room to the landing is being retained but screwed shut.
This is fully reversible for the future.
- 7.4 The existing door to the bathroom from the landing is being retained but screwed shut.
This is fully reversible for the future.

8.0 Third floor

- 8.1 The alcove is a blocked opening which is being re-opened.
- 8.2 No features are being removed or replaced. Indeed the bathroom at this level which is not original is being replaced for a dressing room instead.
This move is seen as being non-aggressive to the existing listed elements.

9.0 CGCA's final two paragraphs

The local authority conservation officer is satisfied that sufficient information and clarity exist with this application and through a long and direct consultation, all areas of the building have been fully discussed and details clarified to the officers satisfaction.

We trust that the above will assist in clarifying that the proposal alterations are minor in content and are 100% sympathetic to the listed status of the building.

Yours sincerely



John Martin Robinson
MA, D. Phil, D.Litt, FSA