

Hazelton, Laura

Subject: FW: Planning Application: 7 St Paul's Mews, NW1 9TZ ref: 2015/5896/P

From: Flea Keeble [mailto:]
Sent: 08 November 2015 12:08
To: Hazelton, Laura
Cc: Planning; John Keeble
Subject: Planning Application: 7 St Paul's Mews, NW1 9TZ ref: 2015/5896/P

Dear Laura Hazelton,

Planning Application: 7 St Paul's Mews, NW1 9TZ ref: 2015/5896/P

Proposal – includes a new window to front elevation at second floor

We write to object to the proposal to add a new window to the front elevation at 2nd floor of 7 St Paul's Mews. Lynas Smith's Design and Access Statement (p7) suggests erroneously that it is possible to "reinstate a window" in the front façade "as original intent". Camden Planning need to be aware that this is a factual inaccuracy and if approved would have a significant negative impact on the terrace as a whole.

For context, St Paul's Mews sits within the Camden Square Conservation Area and as such is designated by Camden Council as "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or historic interest of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

St Paul's Mews was designed by renowned architect Piers Gough (CZWG) and deemed worthy of inclusion in Pevsner's 'North London'. The mews consists of 28 terraced houses that share a linear single sweep of slate roofline.

Blind windows are an architectural detail of the original development and a decorative element. The mock windows are part of Piers Gough's original design intent, as a rhythmic punctuation that 'read' on the front elevation. They are not and have never been windows, and consequently have never been 'bricked up'. They are a stylistic device used to balance the aesthetics of the fenestration and add interest to the elevation that would otherwise be unbalanced.

Mock bricked-up window openings are a design trick to preserve the symmetry of a façade where, for example, the external proportions demanded a window, but the position coincided with an internal wall, as is the case here.

The mock window clearly straddles two properties. If a window were to be 'reinstated' it would reveal the dividing wall between 7 & 8 St Paul's Mews. The domestic boilers are housed behind the mock window, and as the attached photograph shows, the outflow pipe and vents from both properties are clearly visible. The window alignment is clearly different to that shown in the inaccurate drawing on p7 of the Design & Access Statement.

This architectural detail is repeated 8 times at the lower end of the mews. The proposed alteration does not take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings (CPG1 Design 4 key message). It should be noted that the current lease forbids any alterations to the front elevations of St Paul's Mews in order to retain a harmonious uniformity of design.

CPG1 Camden Planning Guidance | Design | Roofs states the main considerations of good design should:

2.9 ...positively enhance the character, history, archaeology and nature of existing buildings on the site... This is particularly important in conservation areas;

3.5 Conservation area designation is a way to recognise the importance of the quality of an area as well as giving some protection to individual buildings within it;

4.7 Alterations (to residential facades) should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings;

Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (March 2011) says:

5.6 Erosion of original details – works which do not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, specifically includes “the removal of ... desirable original details”.

7.7 The appearance of characterful buildings within the conservation area is harmed by the removal or loss of original architectural features. In all cases the Council will expect original architectural features and detailing to be retained;

7.7.5 Decorative details are very important to the character of the Camden Square Conservation Area and should be preserved.

To summarise, the dummy architectural device of the blind window were never intended as anything other than mock windows and have never been “previously bricked up” as claimed; therefore a window that never existed cannot be reinstated as suggested in the Design & Access Statement. The drawing on p7 is at best disingenuous and at worst factually inaccurate.

We would strongly urge you to reject this element of the planning application.

Yours sincerely,

Flea & John Keeble

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