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Mr Jonathan McClue
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8ND

Direct Dial: 020 7973 3763

Our ref: L00565853

6 June 2017

Dear Mr McClue

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015 & T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Application for Listed Building Consent: Revised Drawings or Information

**40 GREAT JAMES STREET , LONDON WC1N 3HB
Application No 2017/1789/L**

Thank you for your letter of 1 June 2017 enclosing revised drawings or information in respect of the application for listed building consent for works at the above address.

Historic England's Advice

As you know, Historic England has had extensive involvement at pre-application and application stage regarding the proposed refurbishment of the Grade II* listed 40 Great James Street, and I attach for your information our advice letter on the scheme as originally submitted.

At that stage, we raised a number of concerns, in particular regarding the proposed installation of a service riser through the original closet wing which would involve the concealing of original joinery and localised removal of floorboards and lath and plaster. We considered that intervention would cause unjustified harm and recommended that an external service riser, as previously approved, should be pursued.

We are very pleased to see that the application has reverted to the approved external service riser, and whilst some localised removal of fabric to the basement vaults and the rear wall would be required, we consider this alternative solution to be much more sensitive to highly significant internal fabric and room proportions.

We are also pleased to see that the scheme has been amended to retain the original ceiling joists at third floor level in line with our advice.

Regarding the proposed trench heaters, we previously recommended relocating the



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second floor front room heaters away from the windows to the opposite end of the room where floorboards have already been altered. However, we note that the proposed location of these heaters has not been amended as part of these revisions. Instead, it is now proposed to pull these boards away from the windows which should reduce the amount of floorboard removal required. We are pleased that the Applicant has sought to address our concerns regarding this issue, and whilst not best conservation practice, we no longer have significant concerns with this element of the scheme.

Finally, we welcome the provision of further details and justification regarding the proposed fire safety screen to the second floor hallway. Although we maintain that the visual and physical impact on the highly significant staircase would cause some harm to the significance of the building, it is reassuring to learn from the additional drawings that the interventions to significant fabric would be relatively minor and would be entirely reversible. We also continue to recognise this harm would be mitigated by the 'public benefits' from a fire safety perspective. We therefore have no significant concerns with this element of the scheme.

Recommendation

Historic England welcomes these proposed revisions to the scheme which we consider has significantly reduced the level of harm that would result from these proposals. We consider that the benefits of bringing the building back into habitable use, and the sensitive conservation work to its highly significant joinery to be of heritage-related public benefit which should help to mitigate the residual harm in accordance with Paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

We are now content for this application to be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and without our further involvement.

We have therefore drafted the necessary letter of authorisation (draft attached) for your Council to determine the application as you see fit and referred the case to National Planning Casework Unit. Subject to the Secretary of State not directing reference of the application to him, they will return the letter of authorisation to you. If your authority is minded to grant listed building consent, you will then be able to issue a formal decision. Please send us a copy of your Council's decision notice in due course.

Please note that this response relates to historic building matters only. If there are any archaeological implications to the proposals it is recommended that you contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for further advice (Tel: 020 7973 3712).





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Yours sincerely

Alasdair Young

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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Enc: Draft Letter of Authorisation



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