



Historic England

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Direct Dial: 020 7973 3763

Our ref: PA00593327

19 October 2017

Dear Mr Handforth

Pre-application Advice

35 TEMPLEWOOD AVENUE, CAMDEN, NW3 7UY

Thank you for engaging Historic England in pre-application discussions regarding the proposed relocating of the swimming pool at the Grade II listed Schreiber House in Hampstead, and for arranging the useful site visit on Tuesday with the development team and the Twentieth Century Society.

Significance of the Swimming Pool

The Schreiber House was designed by James Gowan in 1962 for the furniture manufacturer CS Schreiber, and is considered to be one of the most significant town houses of the post-war period. The swimming pool was added by Gowan in 1968 as a sunken feature within the landscape, in a similar fashion to his Dining Hall at the Brunswick Park Primary School in Southwark. In keeping with modernist principles, the glazed domed roof was designed to maximise the amount of natural light into the pool area, and effectively bring the outside inside. As with the house, the interior was finished in high quality materials, as if to temper the more austere characteristics of the exterior.

Planning permission was approved in the early 1990s for a residential scheme at the south east end of the garden. This involved the north-south subdivision of the plot which severs the house from the pool. Most, if not all, of the original landscaping has now been lost including grassed earth banks around the dome, and there is virtually no visual (or indeed physical) connection between the house and pool due to the high boundary wall. Moreover, the 1990s building was constructed in very close proximity to the swimming pool which significantly reduces the amount of natural light and its landscape presence.

Proposed Development

As was explained on site, the swimming pool has been leaking into both the garden and the adjacent house. A brief assessment by Barrett Mahony Consulting Engineers



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suggests that this could be a result of:

- Tree root activity;
- Water ingress through slab and wall joints;
- Structural settlement cracks caused by the construction of the adjacent 1990s house.

Further inspection by the engineers is required in order to reach a conclusion on the cause of the leak. In order to carry out these investigations, the engineers recommend that “the internal finishes will need to be completely removed”.

As a large percentage of original fabric would be removed as part of these investigations, the Applicant considers that this presents an opportunity to dismantle the swimming pool entirely and reconstruct it within the garden to the south. By moving the swimming pool away from the house, it is considered that the proposed work would also prevent any potential for leaks in the future, and improve its setting.

Historic England’s Position

The work would essentially constitute demolition of a key component of the listed Schreiber House, which under normal circumstances would warrant substantial concerns from Historic England. However, as the pool is annexed from the house and in separate ownership, we recognise that this is a complex case. We also recognise that the 1990s building presents a significantly harmful impact on the setting, and also potentially the structural integrity, of the listed pool.

Nonetheless, the proposed demolition and reconstructing of the pool would erode its authenticity, and reduce the legibility of Gowan’s geometric historic plan. We therefore consider that the principle of relocating the swimming pool would cause harm to the significance of the listed building.

Historic England does not consider the level of harm to be substantial. However, in accordance with Paragraph 132 of the NPPF, any future application must be supported by clear and convincing justification, which should include a more detailed and convincing structural assessment.

It is also very important that reassurances are provided, and sufficient safeguards in place, to ensure that a large percentage of original fabric can and will be salvaged and reused, to ensure that the pool retains a sense of authenticity. This should include the entire roof structure, the marble floor coverings, and external brickwork. Trials should be undertaken at an early stage to ensure that these elements can be successfully removed and reused without damage. A full methodology for the removal, storage and reinstatement should be provided with the application, or carefully conditioned as part



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of any approvals. Also, a full measured survey of the pool, toilet and shower rooms should be undertaken, as well as a detailed level of building recording, to ensure a like-for-like rebuild. We would resist replacement of historic coverings on the grounds of meeting warranties; however we are open to the principle of applying sealants to the finishes in order to improve their waterproofing.

In accordance with Paragraph 134 of the NPPF, it is also very important that generous amount of 'public benefits' are offered to mitigate the harm. As proposed in the pre-application submission, this can include heritage benefits such as the reinstating of the original mound, and improvements to its 'green' setting and quality of natural light by relocating away from the 1990s block. Internally, this can include the removal of the dropped ceiling and other later accretions, and the reinstating of the original lighting scheme. Replacement of the existing tiles, which are understood to have replaced an earlier pattern, could provide another opportunity to enhance. A greater level of analysis of available historic records should help inform these opportunities. Whilst georgian wired glass did for part of the original roof composition, we are content for the existing laminated glass to be retained and reused.

Finally, given the amount of below ground work proposed, we recommend that an archaeological desk based assessment is prepared should these proposals be taken forward. Further advice on any unscheduled archaeology in the area can be provided by our colleagues in the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service on 0207 973 3242.

Next Steps

I hope this advice is helpful, and please do contact me if you require any clarification on the points raised. This letter concludes our free pre-application advice service. Any further pre-application advice is sought, please note that this will be subject to a charge as part of our enhanced advisory services. Further information can be found at <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/enhanced-advisory-services/extended-pre-application-advice>.

Yours sincerely

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