

From: Douglas Tuck
Sent: 09 May 2019 10:06
To: Young, Tony
Subject: Queen Court: Proposed Window Replacement

Dear Mr Young,

I am not even slightly persuaded of the need to replace any of the original historic windows to Queen Court.

The proposed work is both excessive and completely unnecessary. If implemented as planned, these works will significantly degrade the appearance of an important and historic building, one that makes a positive contribution to the urban environment.

A minority of windows do require some minor repair, and general maintenance and repainting is overdue. All this can be done in the same way it has been in the past.

There are two types of windows to Queen Court - the rather beautiful leaded windows to the primary façades of Guilford Street and Queen Square, and those to the middle part of the building in a somewhat plainer pattern. The windows to the primary facades of Queen Square and Guilford Street are of metal frames built directly into delicate narrow brick mullions. It is clear that a great deal of care and attention gone into the design and composition of these two façades, their proportions, and in particular their fenestration. There is a subtle nuance in the way light catches each individual piece of glass and their unique reflections in daylight. The overall effect is highly refined, graceful, and elegant. All this joy will be forever lost by their replacement. The removal of the windows to the primary façades would also run the certain risk of badly damaging the surrounding fine brickwork, which is of a delicate soft handmade stock with narrow tuck pointing.

In the past It was usual practice for the freeholder to arrange to scaffold the building every 5 years or so for the purposes of general exterior maintenance and upkeep. In recent years, with a change of management, this practice has been neglected.

The windows that do need some attention are mainly those with wooden sills. Some of these sills are showing signs of rot and need repair. These windows are located in the middle part of the building and do not form part of the primary façades of Queen Court.

Some discussion has been given to heat loss and noise. Many residents have already opted for secondary internal glazing which effectively mitigates this with minimal impact to the buildings external appearance. Also, the notion that window replacement will somehow reduce carbon emissions is quite bogus. Aside from the waste involved in scrapping perfectly good windows, the gross carbon expenditure in manufacture and install of metal and glass for new windows would far outweigh the payback. In effect the carbon footprint would be significantly enlarged.

Queen Court forms a cornerstone of Queen Square, a picturesque and historic garden square in the centre of Bloomsbury. It has great character. Elegant and quietly dignified, it takes its place amongst a highly eclectic mix of buildings that somehow creates a harmonious whole. Built in the 1920's as accommodation for medical professionals, it comprises some 45 modest apartments, and is a remarkably well preserved example of Queen Anne style domestic architecture. As such, Queen Court is an exemplary example of high density urban living, one that should be protected and preserved for the enjoyment of all. I do believe that serious consideration should be given to awarding Queen Court some kind of protected status by way of a listing and hopefully prevent any further future silliness.

Sincerely,

Douglas Tuck

Dip. Arch (Hons) Edin.