

25C FITZROY SQUARE, LONDON, W1T 6ER .

Re. Listed Building consent

- Application No: 2021/0574/L

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/viewplans>

Planning officer: Rose Todd. (Tel: 0207 974 3109)

Email: rose.todd@camden.gov.uk

Consultation period expiry: 2/4/21 (on lamp post 10/4/21)

CAMDEN COUNCIL - LISTED BUILDING HERITAGE STATEMENT

- Regulations which protect the historical and architectural significance
- Of special interest Grade 2 * treated the same as Grade 1 Listed buildings
- To protect the decoration and craftsmanship
- Close historical association with important people i.e. architect 'Robert Adam'.
- Preserve setting and features of architect and historical interest
- Observe the original plan form, layout, or structural integrity or it will diminish the historical value
- Least harm to the interior and exterior of the building
- sensitive alteration - to repair not replace.

Dear Rose Todd,

I am writing regarding the proposed works to the maisonette flat on 1st and 2nd floor at 25C Fitzroy Square. It is one of 5 converted residential flats in a Grade 2 * Listed terraced house by Robert Adam.

There are many internal historical and original features to the main house including cornicing, ceiling rose, skirting, a central staircase with wrought iron railings and stone steps.

DWELLINGS

All 5 converted flats are in close proximity to each other (25C is centrally placed within the house) the fragile nature of Lathe & Plaster walls and ceilings allow noise to be easily transmitted between dwellings.

For 6 months, residents will be heavily impacted by major noisy and dusty building works with continual traffic and disruption by contractors coming and going through the common parts of the house. Especially affected is the 1 bed flat 25B immediately below 25C and the top flat 25D immediately above 25C. Not to mention the terrace house next door No 24 with shared party walls. 25C is a flat, not a single occupancy freehold property where disruption and noise is less likely to impact on other flat owners and tenants. For those now living and working from home there will be no escape from these invasive works.

Observations

The proposed works are significant and yet are referred to as '*internal adjustments*' and "*minor enhancements*"

I would suggest these are not adjustments nor minor enhancements, but major changes that will affect all occupants in the house. The entire first floor will be gutted in order to connect the two rooms to allow volume through to the rear of the house.

- **Re-position entrance door to flat.** Demolishing existing front door and wall and building a new door in another location, inappropriately positioned at the top of a flight of stairs and puncturing the original fabric of the building, impacting on the common area of the house.

- **Demolish and removal an existing internal mezzanine staircase** and re-instating a larger staircase. Creating a bigger hallway by subdivision of rooms (smaller kitchen)
- **Re-open original opening between front and rear rooms** on 1st floor. A pocket door in its proposed location is not historically correct for a major historical room and is unlikely to be sited within the original opening.
- **Demolish and removal if existing internal kitchen wall** moved to a new position
- **Original cornicing** proposed replacement
- **Cloakroom/WC being re-located 5 metres away** to the opposite side of the flat. New soil pipe run between joists over dry areas.

Inaccurate assumptions

Quote: "all original materials and elements will be retained".

My concerns are that the original fabric of this house circa 1835, will be irreversibly damaged if permission is allowed for many of these works to go ahead. It appears that inaccurate assumptions have been made with regard to the existing historical fabric, as in the statement *"that there are only very minor original features and fabric remaining"*.

COMMENTS & OBJECTIONS

While I am not opposed to the opening up and re-connection between the two front and rear rooms (front and back) on the first floor, I wish to object to some of the proposals that do not observe the original integrity or sensitivity of the house and consequently will have a negative and detrimental impact on the historic fabric of the building.

Main Objections:

1. RE-POSITION ENTRANCE DOOR TO FLAT - re-position of a new front door puncturing the original lathe & plaster wall. This is not a sensitive alteration and can be harmful to the property.

Quote: "sensitive intervention without removing any original elements of being detrimental to plan form"

PUNCTURING ORIGINAL LATHE & PLASTER WALL

Proposal to remove 25C existing front door and the wall. A new door will be repositioned on the adjacent wall of the shared common parts landing, immediately above a flight of stairs. It will puncture the original Lathe & Plaster wall by creating a new opening (no evidence of an original doorway here). The width of the proposed door appears narrower and therefore less visually impressive than the current door which is centrally positioned to the staircase on the landing and appears to sit comfortably and in proportion with the architectural elements and high ceilings. The newly proposed side door will detrimentally impact the orientation of the common parts hallway and dimensions of the landing will be altered. It does not meet the original plan form or layout of the house. The house is fragile and has been prone to structural cracks in the past, we cannot risk further problems by breaking into historical fabric. The proposed door encroaches too close to the stairs and could be potentially dangerous. Proportionally it would look out of keeping in balance and scale compared to the position of the current door which is centrally positioned to the landing. There is also part of an original cornice above this wall and the stair skirting is mostly original.

2. NEW CORNICING - Removing original cornicing to the main front living room and other areas in the flat.

Quote: *"Finally we propose to replacement & uprating of cornices on 1st floor. The existing ones are all modern and would seek to propose something better on tone of scale and historic content"* .

The existing cornice in the living room is not modern but original to the house and historically correct. It was restored some 20 years ago by the previous owner who can verify that each rosette was individually removed and restored. Ditto original cornice restored in the main house hallway and also seen in other flats. The central living room ceiling rose is not original but there are other examples in the house. The Kitchen cornice is above the false ceiling (dropped ceiling for a reason - noise above).

The original cornice is likely to be simple and plain (as on the ground floor Flat B). Elsewhere all original plaster detail should be restored, not replaced. These elements were not on a grand scale for this house as proven with original cornicing which can be seen intact.

The houses on this west side of the square had charming but modest cornice and ceiling rose detail, unlike the the grander scale of the Grade 1 houses on the south and east side of Fitzroy Square.

Replacement of the original cornicing will cause irreparable harm to the original grade 2 * status fabric of the house. Example of original cornice seen in 2nd floor high cupboard above the staircase.

3. FLOOR BOARDS - check if plywood as stated and conserve existing original boards.

Quote: *"The original floorboards are no longer present and beneath the current carpets is plywood. We propose to replace this with new engineered timber floorboards"*

The original wooden planks/floorboards are part of the historic fabric of the building. The boards with the supporting joists below form the structural divide between flats and part of the shared Freehold of the building.

Original boards should be re-instated as they form the fabric of the building.

Replacing carpet/underlay for wooden floors throughout the 1st floor and wooden stairs Removing the existing fitted carpet/underlay and replacing all the floors with timber boards and non carpeted staircase will have a detrimental impact on the flat immediately below Flat C due to a greatly increased noise levels. In addition the additional impact and airborne sound levels increased from footfall on timber boards will be much greater than the existing carpeted stairs arises from will create increased impact and airborne sound into other dwellings The Lease should be observed.

4. CLOAKROOM /WC - Moving the location of the cloakroom/WC to approx. 5 metres away from the soil stack which serves other flats.

Running a soil pipe along joists in the void under the floor and above the ceiling between dwellings. New position located over the ceiling in the common areas hallway. This will create wet areas over dry areas and may cause mechanical and noise issues in soil pipe run between the joists. Any potential leaks from the bathroom (it happened previously) will penetrate the ceiling of the common parts of the house or the ceiling the flat below.

5. INTERNAL ENTRANCE HALL AND STAIRCASE -

The new internal staircase - is not *"an internal adjustment"*. The existing staircase will be ripped out and removed in its entirety and the proposed replacement is on a more expansive scale. Thus a

larger hall space is proposed (achieved by moving the existing kitchen wall and front door to the flat).

The proposal to enlarge the existing footprint of the internal wooden staircase seems somewhat excessive for a flat of this size and the noise impact will have during and after the building works.

Noise - airborne and impact sound from footfall on timber boards will be much greater than the existing carpeted stairs. Together with the wooden floors throughout the 1st floor, the hard surfaces will create an echo chamber in which conversation will be heard from flats above and below.

Although the house is central to a unique Robert Adam Square, the house itself is quite a simple understated 1835 terrace with lathe & plaster walls and ceilings which requires a gentle touch and sensitive approach.

Inaccuracies ref. Fitzroy Square Garden

- Garden designer was John Brooks, not Alan Brooks
- Garden sculpture (1977) is by Naomi Black, not Henry Moore

I should like to point out that Camden did not inform individual flats or local residences that an application had been submitted and there was a deadline in which to reply.

FYI

I attach the Planning application notice on a lamppost which states comments until **Saturday 10th April 2021**. I trust you will honour this date.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.
Please kindly inform me of your decision.

Yours sincerely,

Kitty Edwards-Jones
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