



BLOOMSBURY CONSERVATION AREAS

Advisory Committee | Est. 1968

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2021/3837/P
2021/3228/L

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Objection to 2021/3837/P and 2021/3228/L regarding alterations to the steps at 29 Russell Square.

The Bloomsbury CAAC objects to the alterations to the steps at 29 Russell Square on the basis of a low level of less than substantial harm caused to the significance of the Grade II listed heritage asset and conservation area.

Raising of level

In our view the raising of the level of the top step upsets the proportions and architectural effect of the entrance. In particular the original step up to the door is obscured and the railings either side, when combined with the added upstand/plinth, become noticeably shorter than is typical for a building of this kind and the wider conservation area. This effect is particularly noticeable at the street frontage where the supplied visualisation shows the railings as being clearly encased due to their short resultant height. It is also noted that the increased build-up of the steps and upstand means the steps likely project out beyond the boundary of the site.

Materials

It is accepted that the existing materials are regrettable and reinstatement of historic materials would constitute a small heritage benefit. The exact details of the surfacing materials are not clear as Yorkstone is typically not available in dimensions specified by the drawings. In this situation it is more usual for Yorkstone to be applied in smaller 'tiles' affixed to the surface. This solution, while used widely outside of this area, is to be resisted as being of poor design quality. Resurfacing the steps with Portland stone would likely be a preferable option. If the application is to be approved, clarification on materials or approval of details should be secured.

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