

[REDACTED]

2021/5551/P - No. 29 Great James Street

Importance: High

[REDACTED]

For the Urgent Attention of Jaspreet Chana

Planning Application No. 2021/5551/P – No. 29 Great James Street

Dear Jaspreet Chana

I write with reference to the planning application for 29 Great James Street. I am the owner of 31 Great James Street. [REDACTED] I saw the notice in the street about the application which said I had until the 12th February to comment. I am confused to see that that planning portal does not allow comments and says comments need to be in by 30th January. I assume this is an administrative error and I ask you to confirm by return that the contents of this email will be taken into account.

I have seen my neighbour, Mr Oakley's comprehensive and considered document and I would like to add my endorsement of everything in that document.

Whilst I welcome the return of this grade 2* listed building to a residential property and I particularly welcome the nine over six window plan for the piano nobile,

I OBJECT to some key elements of this application very strongly on heritage grounds. In particular I object to

1. The filling in of the whole of the rear courtyard;
2. Adding windows into the side elevation of the closet wing;
3. The structure at the rear of the property at first floor level.

English Heritage's document Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) splits the value which an asset may have into four component parts: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal Value. No.29 is a key part of a terrace of uniform houses and thus of high heritage value. Uniformity is a key characteristic of building developments of this period, as well as the Bloomsbury area in which the building is located.

Whilst the rear of the west side of Great James Street is not as important as the front in terms of heritage, it is nevertheless important. The gradual return to residential of the street over the 8 years I have owned my house has been very welcome. To me, returning them to residential respects the heritage, but filling in the whole rear does not. Adding windows to the closet wing and first floor structures, most certainly does not. These houses need to be loved, protected, and lived in and with ownership comes a responsibility to treat them well. I think all, or almost all, of the residential properties on the west side have courtyards and some have separate one storey additions carefully separated from the building, from which the building can be admired. To completely fill in the rear and then build on top of it denies the heritage value of the property. It feels very inconsistent to on the one hand return the building to residential and on the other scar the back of it with completely filling in. If the owners wish to have a garden

accessible from the house, that opportunity is open to them by retaining the courtyard as all their residential neighbours have done and that would be in keeping with the original residential arrangement.

When we designed our own house (which was highly commended by the Georgian Group for a refurbishment of a Georgian town house and win a triennial award from the Worshipful Company of Tyllers and Bricklayers) , our architect was very clear that the rear of the building needed to stand alone and separate from the original house. Our extension is lightweight simple and set away from the rear of the building so that it has minimum impact on it. Attaching an entire extension to the rear and filling in the courtyard fails to respect the uniformity or heritage value of the property.

Adding windows to the side of the closet wing is entirely out of keeping with the heritage of the building and will result in overlooking. I am not aware of any other closet wings with large windows added down the side. It will take away from the uniformity of the rear of the terrace.

The proposed structure at first floor level will result in overlooking neighbours and will be visible from most of my rear windows. I am not aware of any other properties on the west side of Great James Street with structures at that level and I would consider permitting this a very unwelcome precedent. It invades privacy for neighbours and is not appropriate for a heritage asset in a conservation area.

I hope the applicants are able to rethink their application, ditch the extra windows, and keep the courtyard, thereby respecting the beautiful building they are lucky enough to own.

Yours

Katherine William-Powlett

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