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Betterton Street Limited
9 Bonhill Street, London, EC2A 4DJ

14/2/22

Dear Camden Council Planning Department

Design and Access Statement & Heritage Statement

Site address: 33 Betterton Street, London, WC2H 9BQ

Description of the layout of the proposed development

Both elements of the application relate to the communal entrance hallway. The works affect the ground floor only. The fire alarm is located by the door, and the cupboard is located in the stairwell at the rear of the building. The replacement cable will run between these two areas. Photographs are included for reference.

Description of the existing property or site

This application is made by the enfranchisement company for 33 Betterton Street, of which all long leaseholders of the building are also participants. The application is made as part of ongoing and routine management and not as part of a commercial development project. The building is residential. All leaseholders are aware of the application.

The property is Grade II listed. The listing mentions the hallway panelling and stair newel posts. Neither of these features will be affected by the proposed works.

33 Betterton Street is a terraced building, built in the mid 1730's, and is in a mixed-use urban street.

Reason for the proposed works

We have been informed at a recent electrical test that the cable for the fire alarm is not compliant with current standards and is required to be upgraded. The cable runs through the ceiling of the communal hall, and is also encased in the plaster of the hallway. The fire alarm is located inside of the communal front door.

The fire alarm was fitted recently, and was authorised by application 2018/3687/L, which was a retrospective application made by the previous freeholder. The date of commissioning of the fire alarm was . The fire alarm is relatively new and clearly not of historic interest. As part of the construction of the ground floor and basement flat the hallway ceiling was removed and replaced with modern plasterboard with modern cornicing. Due to this recent replacement, none of the specific parts of the building affected by this part of the application are historic, or created using historic construction methods.

The electrician has stated that it could be possible to access the wires by removing the upper floor, but as this would create significant disruption for the occupant, and this part of the building is historic, this method has been discounted.

It is expected that the plaster and other materials, would be replaced like for like after the work.

The reason for the application is to ensure the continued safety of the residents, visitors and neighbours. The work is necessary as a legal requirement.

Having discussed the matter with the council planning department, we have been informed that a listed building application is needed, as this falls outside of the definition of a repair.

The second element of the application relates to the cupboard, also constructed within the application 2018/3687/L. The cupboard houses the electrical equipment – meters etc. At present the top part of the cupboard has opening doors, but the bottom section does not. At the same electrical test it was pointed out that the bottom half of the cupboard contains electrical equipment that in an emergency would need to be accessible to emergency personnel, and should also be accessible for the safety of any persons carrying out electrical work. We have also been advised in a recent fire assessment that a lock on the electrical cupboard is considered to be good practice. The second element of the application seeks permission to alter the cupboard to provide these elements. The cupboard is constructed of MDF, and it is intended that the bottom section is simply halved and mounted on hinges with drilling on the front for the installation of a lock.

Explanation of the design principles and concepts behind the proposed development

The work is to be carried out with a view to the hallway looking the same after the replacement of the ceiling cable as before. In terms of the cupboard, the changes will be minimal visually. These are minor alterations. The existing materials, which are modern, will be replaced by equally modern materials.

Description of the layout of the proposed development

There will be no change to the layout of the hallway after the works, or how it is accessed and used.

Details of the proposed access to the development site. How equal and convenient vehicle and disabled access to buildings, spaces and public transport is ensured and maintained.

The work will be accessed via the main ground floor front door. The work is minor in scale, and so it is not anticipated that this will adversely affect access to any persons, other than for a very short period of time. Whilst there is no direct vehicle access to the site other than the public road, this will not be affected by the proposal, and neither will the availability of public transport. The ground floor is accessible to disabled people, and the improved access to the electrical equipment in the cupboard would benefit emergency and other workers, including those with disabilities. The ability to pass the electrical test will increase the safety of residents and visitors, who may have a disability.

Explanation of how the historical and architectural importance of the listed building has been considered when designing the development. In particular its physical features and setting.

As above, the methodology of access through the ceiling, rather than through the floor above, is intended to minimise the impact of works on the historic fabric of the building as the ceiling is new, and it is the less disruptive way of accessing the cable.

The works will not be externally visible, so there should be no effect on the setting of the building or in its neighbours. The features of the hallway noted by the listing, will not be altered by the proposal. The visual impact of the changes will be minimal.

Heritage statement

Listing

Extracts:

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1244499

Date first listed: 15-Jan-1973

Statutory Address 1: 33, BETTERTON STREET

District: Camden (London Borough)

National Grid Reference: TQ 30251 81187

CAMDEN

TQ3081SW BETTERTON STREET 798-1/105/92 (South side) 15/01/73 No.33

GV II

Terraced house with later shopfront. Early C18, refaced early C19. Yellow stock brick. 4 storeys and basement. 2 windows. C20 shopfront. 1st and 2nd floors with gauged reddened brick arches to recessed casement windows. Rebuilt parapet. INTERIOR: has good early C18 staircase to top of house with closed, moulded string, square newels and twisted balusters. Moulded dado and some original doorcases. Hall with arched opening, some panelling and boxed out cornice. Included for interior.

Listing NGR: TQ3025181187

Please note – there is no longer a shopfront. The building is now fully residential.

Justification of the proposal under the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 'Conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment' is particularly relevant to listed buildings.

The proposal is made to ensure that the building complies with current residential electrical standards and best practice enabling the continued use of listed buildings. Para 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework states the 'desirability of **sustaining** and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and **putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation**' (bold added). As the upper floors have been residential since construction, the provision of quality accommodation conforming to current safety standards, is clearly within the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The significance of the heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by its setting.

The works will not be externally visible, so there should be no effect on the setting of the building. The features of the hallway noted by the listing, will not be altered by the proposal. The visual impact of the changes will be minimal.

The building is Grade II listed. Although the building is much loved, and makes a positive contribution to the area, it is not of national importance architecturally, and is not a Blue Plaque building.

The justification for the proposed works

As above, the work is needed to conform to current safety standards. In Chapter 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 'Achieving Sustainable Development' a key aim is the provision of safe places to live.

The impact of the proposal on the significance of a heritage asset

The proposal is a minor alteration to a new part or feature of the building. No historic fabric will be affected, and there will be little visual or historic impact.

The sources considered

The building's publicly available listing has been consulted, and extracts of this are copied above. I have lived in the building for over 15 years, and it is my permanent home. During my time here I have researched the building and its previous occupants and uses. The ground floor has been a shop and a launderette, and the building has been the residence of a picture liner and a Japanner. Whilst not a grand house, the residents have reflected the social trends of the eras they lived in, and the building has always been in use. Ensuring that the building is consistent with current standards will ensure the use of the building into the future.

I have also lived in the house whilst the original works on the hallway were carried out, and have seen the construction material which are modern sheet boarding for the ceiling, skimmed with plaster. The walls are plaster, with later addition modern wallpaper as decoration.

The steps that have been taken to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the significance of the asset.

The method of access to the cable that needs to be replaced, ie via the modern ceiling, has been chosen to minimise any adverse impact as the other method of access would be to remove the upper floor which would be more disruptive and has more potential for historic harm.