



LU/68/20/L

Listed building consent for the replacement of 2 No. windows & 1 No. door with PVCu Heritage Flush type to rear elevation & removal of walls in upper second floor for open kitchen plan & replace boxing with enclosure in lower hallway & reinstatement of handrail to match existing

The building has been listed as Grade II and is one of the terraced houses constructed in the 1860's by Robert Bushby, who was a local builder. As identified in the Listing description it is part of a terrace of reflected pairs, 3 storey stuccoed. 3 sash windows each, 2 contained in semi-circular full height bows. String course above each floor and still course on 1st floor. Bedmould to cornice, parapet. Round headed doorways with semi-circular fanlights, keystones and dripstones over. Nos 35 to 38 faced in cement. Nos 30 to 47 (consecutive) form a group. It is of architectural and historic significance.

The building is also located within a conservation area, which contains a number of attractive terraced houses, some of which are statutorily listed.

The application covers two elements:

- replacement of 2 No. windows & 1 No. door with PVCu Heritage Flush type to rear elevation
- removal of walls in upper second floor for open kitchen plan & replace boxing with enclosure in lower hallway & reinstatement of handrail to match existing

These shall be discussed in turn

replacement of 2 No. windows & 1 No. door with PVCu Heritage Flush type to rear elevation

The proposal is for two replacement windows and a door to the apartment. The existing windows and door which are the subject of this application do not appear to be original to the building.

Windows are an important part of a building's history and can be invaluable to our understanding of historic properties. They can tell us not only of changing architectural taste but social hierarchy, building economics, technical advances and social history through taxation of windows and building materials. Above all, windows are a key part of the architectural composition of a building and help to establish the character of the building and sometimes a whole area.

I note that the application seeks permission for the replacement of windows constructed from UPVC. UPVC is not a traditional, vernacular material and is unsuitable for use in historic buildings. The location of the windows does not detract from the impact that they have upon the building. In fact supporting windows constructed from this material in the proposed location could be seen as support for this type of window more generally.

I should also point out that UPVC windows are also unsustainable; it is tricky to repair them, with often the only viable option being to replace them in their entirety. In addition, they require continuous cleaning to prevent discolouration from dirt and ultra violet light, and regular maintenance.

removal of walls in upper second floor for open kitchen plan & replace boxing with enclosure in lower hallway & reinstatement of handrail to match existing

This element of the proposal relates to purely internal works related to the staircase and removal of internal walls.

Works to the stairs: The concept of replacing the existing boxing around the entrance to the flat and replacing it with an enclosure in the lower hallway seems to be acceptable, as it would result in the removal of a modern enclosure of inappropriate design, whilst also allowing part of the staircase to be revealed. It is also noted that the proposal is to reinstate the handrail to match that already in the building. Again, such a proposal is acceptable. It would be helpful to understand if the new handrail will be provided down the section of the stairs to be enclosed with plasterboard.

It is recommended that details of the proposed new 'front door' be provided, along with that of how the existing handrail on the first-floor lower landing will be treated where it meets the new section of walling.

Removal of internal walls: the layout of a building is one of its most important characteristics; it tells the history of how the house was used when first built, and how it might have changed over time, because of fashion and as living standards improved. Some types of plan were popular during particular periods in the past, and if they have not been altered, these can be both interesting and important. Some houses, like those in town terraces, have fairly standardised plans. The existing floor plan of the upper floor may be replicated on the neighbouring buildings in the terrace.

The proposal is to remove two of the walls at the upper level in order to create an open plan living and kitchen area. This would alter the existing layout, whilst also allowing the applicant to take advantage of the views toward the sea. It is assumed that this approach is compliant with building regulations as the space would open out on to the landing/main point of escape?

Normally, if the removal of walls are considered to be acceptable, it is on the basis that a small nib of the walling remains. This allows for the previous floor plan to be understood. On that basis, it would be preferred if some form of nib could be introduced on the plans. If this were to happen, there would be no objection to the proposed alteration.

Conclusion

At present some of the proposal is considered to be acceptable, and some of it harmful. If the harmful elements of the proposal were to be removed, the other elements could be supported.

Therefore, at present, it is concluded that the proposals, when taken in full, are harmful to the heritage asset. The level of harm is considered to be less than substantial in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2019). As such, you will also need to consider the public benefits that the development may achieve as part of your assessment of the application, along with the contents of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

For your information, the Planning Practice Guidance states that public benefits include:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

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