

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2017

by Kenneth Stone BSc Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 10 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Y/16/3156811
9 Eaton Terrace, London SW1W 8EX

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Karan Thapar against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref 16/04526/LBC, dated 16 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2016.
 - The works proposed are described as 'retention of black marble floor tiles at ground floor level and mirrored ceiling panels with wooden beading in the ground floor front room'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for the retention of black marble floor tiles at ground floor level and mirrored ceiling panels with wooden beading in the ground floor front room at 9 Eaton Terrace, London SW1W 8EX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/04526/LBC, dated 16 May 2016 and the plans submitted with it.

Procedural matters

2. The appeal relates to a property that is a Grade II listed building and which is located within the Belgravia Conservation Area.
3. The mirrored ceiling panels with beading and the black marble floor tiles were in situ at the time of my site visit.
4. In the context of this appeal I have had regard to my statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, at section 16(2). This requires that I have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the works on any features of special architectural or historic interest which the building possesses.

Reasons

6. The property the subject of this appeal is a Mid C19 terraced townhouse, four storeys over a basement. It is listed Grade II as part of a group listing of the
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terrace No's 1 to 15. The property gains its significance as a good example of a late-Georgian stucco terraced town house, typical of its period. This significance is founded in the architectural and historical value of its façade and the group value of this elevation with the rest of the terrace in the group listing. The parties agree that significance is also derived from the internal plan form and the hierarchy of spaces within the building which are retained from its original layout.

7. There has been a history of alteration to the internal spaces and much of the original detail and fabric has been lost or altered.
8. The Council accept that the black marble floor replaced an existing modern floor covering and have not objected to these works. I agree that the marble flooring does not alter any features of special architectural or historic interest in the building. There is no evidence to suggest that original fabric has been damaged as a result of these works and the nature of the covering, although relatively modern in appearance, does not detract from the proportions of the spaces or other features that contribute to the significance of the building.
9. The ceiling is a modern installation that replaces a previous modern suspended ceiling which was the subject of action by the Council. The appellant has noted that the new ceiling was created at the original level and the mirrored panels affixed to the new ceiling. At that time a dental cornice was added and other works undertaken to introduce period features such as wall mouldings and skirtings, which whilst modern elements have a traditional profile.
10. The room proportions, layout and internal arrangement of the building has not been affected and therefore the contribution of these elements to the significance of the building has not been affected. The works are internal and therefore no external features that contribute to the significance of the building have been affected.
11. The nature of the ceiling finish is accepted by the appellant as not being typical of a building of this date but as the appellant points out the entire internal decoration scheme is a modern creation and does not contribute to the significance of this building. The mirrored ceiling and beading are applied to a modern ceiling that has been rebuilt. They do not therefore obscure or harm any original features of the building. Whilst they are more than temporary elements they are reversible. The appellant has provided a description of the installation and whilst the Council question this they provide no evidence to suggest that it is not as described.
12. The mirrored ceiling does reflect the room below and creates an impression of a larger space. However it is quite evident that this is a mirrored effect and the proportions of the room, its form and shape are readily apparent. There is no evidence that the mirrored ceiling directly affects historic fabric or obscures existing features. Those elements that contribute to the significance of the building namely the layout, room proportions, shape and layout are not affected by the works.
13. Overall I am therefore satisfied that the works do not affect any features of special historical or architectural interest, and therefore the significance, of the listed building.

14. Given these conclusions the works would not conflict with the development plan, policies S25 and S28 in Westminster's City Plan, or Policy DES 1 in the Unitary Development Plan, or the advice in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: Repairs and Alterations to listed buildings, or the National Planning Policy Framework.
15. Given that the works have already been carried out and no issues were raised with regards implementation there is no requirement for the imposition of any conditions. The works are detailed in the plans submitted with the application and these are referenced in the decision above.
16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Kenneth Stone

INSPECTOR