



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 January 2018

by Claire Searson MSc PGDip BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th February 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/Y/17/3179216

Flat 19 Washington House, Marlborough Drive, Bushey, WD23 2RN

- 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 Simon Golz against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/0720/LBC, dated 7 April 2017, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2017.
 - The works proposed are described as "*the installation of a (through the wall) style air conditioner. To be installed to the interior of proposed property with only external features being 2x 160mm tubes.*"
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for the installation of an air conditioning unit to dining room with 2 extraction tubes to exterior elevation at Flat 19 Washington House, Marlborough Drive, Bushey, WD23 2RN in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 17/0720/LBC dated 7 April 2017 subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:-
 - Site and Location Plan 1:500.
 - Elevations 1:100
 - Location Plan 1:1250 Streetwise
 - Location Plan 1:1250 OS
 - Floor Plans
 - Internal Elevation
 - Air conditioning Data Brochure
 - Image showing external vents
 - Site Map 1 1:200
 - Plan of Dining Room

Procedural Matter

2. In my decision, I have taken the description of development from the Councils decision notice, as this is more precise than the description given in the original application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the grade II listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

4. The appeal property forms part of a grade II listed former International University complex. This was originally built in 1899-1902 as the Royal Masonic Institute for Boys and was designed by Gordon, Lowther and Gunton in the Tudor Gothic style with red brick, stone dressings and slate roofs.
5. The buildings are 2-3 storeys in height and are arranged around a cloistered quadrangle with square corner towers. The main front range comprises of a symmetrical block with tall central clock tower. The school also had a number of later phases of alteration and development. I consider that the significance of the former school complex is derived from its design, architecture and plan form as evidence of the workings of a large educational institution in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
6. The buildings have recently been converted to residential flats and a number of new build dwellings are also currently being constructed within the grounds. The appeal property forms a 2nd floor flat within Washington House, to the NE corner of the main quadrangle. This property has large 6-light stone mullion and transom windows which face out into the quadrangle. Flat 19 is accessed via a narrow link into one of the corner towers which houses a lift shaft and staircase. Internally the flat has a modern character which includes the insertion of a mezzanine floor to the roof and open-plan form to the main living areas.
7. The proposal relates to the addition of an air conditioning unit to the dining area of Flat 19. This would entail the addition of a box unit internally, and the external installation of 2No. 160mm vent pipes. These would be located just below the eaves of the NE flank wall.
8. The conversion in general has been sensitively undertaken and services for individual apartments have been installed in a conscientious manner. For example I saw that heating vents are small scale and have been sited in discrete locations, where practicable.
9. I consider that the proposed vents would be similar to that of the approved heating vents across the complex and given their positioning within a recessed area, they would be similarly unobtrusive entailing only a very minimal loss of historic brickwork. The internal box unit would be consistent with the modern character of the converted interior of the building and would not interfere with any historic detailing.
10. I have considered the Council's argument that the proposals would set a precedent for similar works in the wider complex and I accept that there may be cases where cumulative effects of such works could harm the special interest of a listed building.
11. However, the appellant requires air conditioning units due to the orientation of the property and the large expanses of glazing creating excessive heat gain internally. This would not be the case for many of the other flats within the

complex with different orientations and layouts. Each application and appeal must be determined on its individual merits and given the scale and the nature of the complex there may be cases whereby harm could be identified through conspicuous positioning of such units or other harm. As such I am satisfied that in allowing the appeal based on the particular circumstances at Flat 19 Washington House, an irresistible precedent would not be established.

12. The Council considers that the same manufacturer of the units has a wholly internal system for use in sensitive locations and claims that the manufacturer would not consider the proposed unit to be fit for purpose in respect of listed buildings. However, no evidence of any such correspondence has been provided or any details of the alternative system. In determining the appeal proposals as put before me I have found that there would be no harm to the listed building.
13. Overall, taking into account the particular circumstances and having carefully considered all the evidence, I conclude that the works would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building. As such I find no conflict with Policy CS17 of the Hertsmere Core Strategy (2013) which seeks to preserve or enhance the historic environment and Policies SADM29 and SADM20 of the Hertsmere Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) which require high quality design and state that consent will not be granted for alterations that would be detrimental to the special architectural or historic character of a listed building. There would also be no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conditions

14. Conditions are required in respect of timescales for the works and compliance with the submitted plans and accompanying information for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

C Searson

INSPECTOR