
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2025

by **G Bayliss BA (Hons) MA MA MRTPI IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/Y/24/3358005

21-22 George Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 4ES

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Marc Trinder, Trinder Hair Studio, against the decision of St Albans City Council.
 - The application Ref is 5/2024/1439.
 - The works proposed are reinstatement of a pre-existing opening in west party wall and creation of 3 steps on ground floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for the reinstatement of a pre-existing opening in west party wall and creation of 3 steps on ground floor at 21-22 George Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 4ES in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 5/2024/1439 and the plans submitted with it subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether or not the works would preserve two Grade II listed buildings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess, and whether their significance as heritage assets is preserved.

Reasons

4. The appeal affects two adjoining listed buildings located on the north side of George Street. No.21 (listed as 20A and 21 George Street, Ref 1173133) is described in the list description as dating to circa 1500, and of two storeys, constructed in timber framing, with a rendered façade, overhanging first floor and a high-pitched tiled roof. It mentions that it has a three-window front with sash windows in projecting box frames and has 19th century shopfronts on the ground floor. No.22 George Street (Ref.1103124) is similarly described, although it notes that the timber framing to the first floor is exposed. Despite their similarities, the evidence indicates that the two properties were constructed independently, further

evidenced by their differing floor levels and the stepping up of No.22 following the slope of the street.

5. From the evidence before me, including their similar list descriptions and my own observations, I consider that the special interest and significance of the listed buildings, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is predominantly derived from their age, historic fabric, their individual plan form and architectural features. The evidence indicates that there have been some interventions to the lower floors associated with various uses, including the insertions of the shopfronts. I viewed some of these on site, including from the cellar of No.22. Nevertheless, despite these adaptations over time, the ground floor historic floorplan of the two separate buildings can clearly be read and understood. Their significance can be experienced and appreciated from within the building and from George Street where they form part of a high quality, historic streetscape and have group value.
6. During my visit, I inspected what appears to have been an opening between the two properties in the position of the proposed connecting doorway. Within No.22 the plaster has been removed to expose a timber lintel, and the brickwork sides of a former opening could clearly be seen. The opening had been infilled in two brick skins of stretcher-bond brickwork with an apparent void between them. Within No.21, a smaller area of removed plaster appeared to identify the same timber lintel. The Council's Conservation Officer comments that on the balance of probabilities the evidence suggests that these details indicate an historic opening between the two properties. I agree with this view and given its proportions and edging, and the brickwork skin infill, it suggests to me that this opening ultimately became a doorway and possibly with a step between the two properties to take account of the change in levels.
7. It is not clear when this opening existed or when it was infilled. The appellant suggests that for some of the time the buildings were in the same ownership and operated as a furniture dealer. However, whilst the opening may or may not have been present at the date of listing, the crucial matter is whether forming the doorway in this location would have any detrimental effect on the special interest and significance of the listed buildings. In this case, the fact that in all probability a door opening previously existed means that intervention within the buildings would be minimal. There is little evidence to suggest that the infill brickwork is particularly historic, and it does not appear unusual or particularly special or distinctive in any way. Nor is there any adequate suggestion that the works would disturb any early timber framing. Furthermore, this would be a relatively discrete doorway between the properties and the overall historic floorplan of each would remain clearly legible. It would not in any way confuse the understanding of these two buildings as separate entities. The opening could also be infilled in the future should it return to two separate units. Therefore, taking all matters raised into account, the works would cause no harm to the two Grade II listed buildings and their features of special architectural or historic interest, and their significance as heritage assets would be preserved. It would comply with the Act and Framework, and Policy 86 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review (1994) insofar as this is relevant.

Conditions

8. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council and considered them against the Act, the advice in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. A

standard time commencement condition is necessary. A condition is also required to secure compliance with the submitted plans and details and to provide certainty as to what has been permitted. I have also added a pre-commencement condition to ensure that details of the opening are agreed with the Council prior to fabrication to ensure an appropriate appearance to respect the listed buildings. Conditions are also required to ensure that works respect the surrounding fabric and building features.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given and subject to conditions, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

G Bayliss

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The works hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with Site Location Plan 626/1, Proposed Plans 626/3, Block Plan TQRQM23192124220309.
- 3) The works hereby permitted shall not be commenced until larger scale detailed plans and drawings, at a scale of 1:10, showing the new steps and any associated handrails and balustrades between the two buildings and the methodology for attaching the steps to the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include a specification for the material for the steps. The works shall not be carried out except as in accordance with details so approved.
- 4) All new internal works and finishes and works of making good shall match existing original work adjacent in respect of materials used, detailed execution and finished appearance, except where indicated otherwise on the approved drawings hereby approved or as required by any conditions attached to this consent.
- 5) All existing ornamental features including chimney pieces, plasterwork, architraves, panelling, doors and staircase balustrading shall remain undisturbed in their existing position and shall be fully protected during the course of works on site, unless otherwise specifically authorised on the approved drawings hereby approved.