



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2026

by William Cooper BA (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/Y/25/3361841

32 The Green, Richmond TW9 1LX

- 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 Mr S Browne against the decision of Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref is 24/2888/LBC.
 - The works proposed are Internal works to reinstate walls, ceiling and heritage panels including structural interventions to stabilise the existing property.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I take the scheme that is illustrated in drawings listed in the decision notice to be the application scheme. A subsequent revised scheme includes addition and deletion of various proposed door openings and doors in the listed building, and additional partition walling. Compared to the application scheme, the revised scheme thus takes a different approach to some fundamental historic building fabric and form aspects in this case. In the context of the advice¹ that the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme, I take the application scheme, and not the revised scheme, to be the proposed works.
3. As the proposal relates to a listed building in a conservation area, I have had special regard to section 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. None of the parties expresses a view that the proposal would harm the character or appearance of the Richmond Green Conservation Area (CA). In the CA, the proposed internal works would be focused inside the one appeal building and not be more widely noticeable. Thus, in this case I am satisfied that the character and appearance of the CA would be preserved.
5. Since the Council's decision, the new Richmond upon Thames Local Plan 2024 to 2039 (the LP) was adopted in October 2025. The parties have had opportunity to comment on the implications of this new Local Plan insofar as is relevant to this appeal, and so will not be disadvantaged by my consideration of it.

¹ As set out in the Procedural Guide: Planning Appeals - England.

Main Issue

6. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II* listed building '32, Richmond Green', or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

The listed building and its context

7. The listed building is a townhouse in a prominent corner location in the CA, with its ornate entrance doorway facing towards Richmond Green's elegant public open space. Dating from around the end of the seventeenth century, the listed building is part of the Old Palace Terrace row of fine townhouses.
8. I observe from the plans, appeal statements and my site visit that the listed building is in a state of flux, with various works to its interior, either authorised or unauthorised, having been undertaken over a number of years. For example, structural steelwork has been previously installed, and a number of visible cracks in the building's brickwork have been the subject of further structural investigation. Also, some of the historic interior wooden wall panelling has been removed from various parts of the building and is stacked in the property or has had timber stud work installed in front of it. The building appears to be an active construction site. Also, since the Council's decision, the building has been added to England's Heritage at Risk Register. Thus, the state of the listed building is a complex picture.
9. That said, the following is clearly perceptible. With three storeys and a basement, the building is four bays wide to each frontage. It has a red brick facade with flush framed sash windows, typical of its period. Inside, a zig zag staircase leads from the ground floor to second floor attic level, with rooms arranged around the stairwell. Wooden wall panelling is a historically distinctive characteristic of various rooms within the house. And the ceiling height at second floor level is lower than at first floor and ground floor, reflecting the historically lower status of bedrooms or servants' accommodation at top floor level. Accordingly, the listed building has historic, evidential and aesthetic value.
10. Given the above, I find the special interest of the listed building, insofar as relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with its identity as a late seventeenth century townhouse, including the presence and legibility of its historic architectural fabric, form and room hierarchy.

Impact on special interest

11. The proposed removal of timber stud work from in front of some historic timber panelling at ground and first floor levels would remove a distracting addition from some of the panelling, and so make it more visible. This would have a positive effect on the special interest of the listed building.
12. Original internal doors are not present in the listed building, which is apparently connected, at least in part, to previous presence of modern fire doors associated with previous office use in past decades. Within this context of evolved door provision in the house, absence of original doors in the proposed scheme would have a neutral effect on the special interest of the listed building.

13. Proposed introduction of double door openings between various rooms at ground floor and first floor would reduce the amount of historic wall panelling to be reinstated or retained in the listed building. Also, while it is proposed to reclad some areas of wall with reinstated or replacement panelling, even with the wall panels method statement there is a lack of clear quantification and condition survey of historic panelling in situ on the walls, or stored at the appeal property. And it is not clearly shown which of the panelling illustrated in the proposed scheme drawings would be reinstated original panelling, and which would be new panelling.
14. In the absence of this clarity of information, I have no certainty that the proposal would retain and reinstate the maximum viable amount of authentic timber wall panelling at ground floor and first floor levels. Thus, the proposal risks diminishing the presence and legibility of a distinctive part of the listed building's historic architectural fabric and identity. Together, these panelling aspects of the proposal would negatively impact on the special interest of the listed building.
15. The proposed installation of free-standing kitchen units in alcoves in ground floor room G1 would obscure, but not obviously harm part of the decorative fabric of the this room. The previous approval of such as approach in this room further points to the neutral effect of this part of the proposal on the special interest of the listed building.
16. The proposed layer of spray lime plaster between some interior panelling and exterior walling would introduce a new insulating layer that has is not historically present. This would dilute the authenticity of the building's fabric, and so negatively impact on its special interest.
17. On the second floor, the proposed semi-open wall treatment between room S3 and the stairwell would fail to respect the original compartmentalisation of room spaces within the listed townhouse. This would undermine the legibility of the historic form and room hierarchy of the listed building, and thus negatively impact on its special interest.
18. Proposed works to the second floor ceiling would entail some modest replacement and strengthening of decayed rafters. It would also involve raising of joists, in order to level the ceiling, to facilitate installation of fire-retardant board and. The increase in ceiling height would be proportionally modest, and the rooms at this second floor level would still noticeably have the lowest floor-to-ceiling heights. As such, the historically lower status of rooms at top floor level would remain legible, and the repair of decayed timbers would facilitate retention, albeit in slightly raised and levelled configuration, of second floor ceiling fabric. Thus, the proposed second floor ceiling works would have a broadly neutral effect on the special interest of the listed building.
19. The proposed introduction of structural steels at second floor level to the two hipped corners, the wall by the stairwell and to the purlin to room S1 would help prevent future structural decline of the listed building. As such, they would have a positive effect on its special interest.
20. Together, those elements of the proposal which are identified above as having a negative impact on the listed building would undermine and erode the listed building's identity as a late seventeenth century townhouse. Therefore, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest and significance of the listed building. I give this harm considerable importance and weight.

21. Paragraph 212 of National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of the asset, and that this should have a clear and convincing justification.
22. Given the substance of the proposed works, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance and towards the middle of that scale, but nonetheless of considerable importance and weight.
23. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate any contribution to securing optimal viable use of the listed building.

Harm and benefits balance

24. The proposal would improve damp proofing and utility of the basement. Structural interventions would help prevent structural decline of the property. The lime plaster would improve the building's thermal efficiency. The fireboarding in the second floor ceiling would help improve fire safety of the listed building and its host row. The refurbishment of the property would help encourage future residential occupation of the building, with associated maintenance benefits. Also, the proposal would rectify some unauthorised alterations, albeit their previously unauthorised nature reduces the weight that I can attach to them as a public benefit. This combination of benefits of proposed works to this listed townhouse carries moderate weight.
25. I have identified harm to, and lack of certain outcome for, the listed building's distinctive timber wall panelling, and other harm to its fabric and form. Accordingly, I find that the public benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the great weight given to the conservation of designated heritage asset and the less than substantial harm to its significance which I have identified.
26. Given the above, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the Grade II* listed building. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 202 of the Framework. Also, it would conflict with Policy 29 of the LP which seeks to ensure that proposals conserve Richmond's historic environment, by avoiding harm to elements which contribute to the significance of listed buildings.

Conclusion

27. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

William Cooper

INSPECTOR