

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242156
Site Address:	11 The Terrace, Wokingham, RG40 1BP
Expiry Date:	23 October 2024
Advert Publication Date:	28 August 2024
Site Notice Date:	15/09/2024
Site Visit Date:	15/09/2024
Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed internal alterations to form a new doorway.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Grade 2 Listed building.
- Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area.

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets (where site is within a Conservation Area)

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
231545	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed first floor bedroom 3 to be converted to a dressing room and ensuite shower and a door opening is to be made into the room from bedroom 1.	Refused, 14/02/2024
231544	Householder application for the proposed internal alterations the first floor bedroom 3 to be converted to a dressing room and ensuite shower room, with a door opening to be made into the room from bedroom 1.	Application Withdrawn, 14/02/2024
230825	Listed Building Consent application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension. Following demolition of existing rear extension and internal changes.	Application Withdrawn, 19/06/2023
230824	Householder application for the proposed	Application

	erection of a single storey rear extension. Following demolition of existing rear extension and internal alterations.	Withdrawn, 19/06/2023
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Conservation	Objects to the proposed development.
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REPRESENTATIONS

The Wokingham Town Council P&T Committee – No comments.

APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed Development:

11 The Terrace is two storey building of 16th century origin altered and extended in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The property is listed at Grade II as St Clements and lies within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area within which are located several listed buildings.

The proposals can be broadly summarised as follows:

- New connection between 16th core and 19th century element as to facilitate a doorway and subsequent creation of a dressing room and en-suite.
- Related to this, the removal and blocking up of a 19th century door with a new stud partition within the room currently known as 'Bedroom 3'.
- Further removal of partition walling in the current bathroom.

The current application follows the withdrawal of planning application 231544 and refusal of the accompanying listed building consent 231545.

Assessment:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that Planning permission will be granted for development proposals have no detrimental impact upon important heritage features.

Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires that works affecting the setting of heritage assets at least conserve and where possible enhance the important character of the heritage assets. The policy further adds *that 'proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme'*

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (whether through alteration, destruction, or development within its setting) must be clearly and convincingly justified. This includes substantial harm to, or loss of, Grade II listed buildings.

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF highlights that when a development proposal results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this

harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where applicable, securing its optimum viable use.

The council's Built Heritage officer has reviewed this application and has stated the following:

Concern is raised over the potential loss of historic fabric as result of the opening between Bedrooms 1 and 3. Whilst some exploratory work has been undertaken, this is not sufficient as to fully understand the nature of the underlying fabric and thus appropriately assess its significance. As a 16th century structure, presumably mostly timber framed, there may well be timbers in this walling, with the area of concern perfectly placed for a wind brace to be located and thus a doorway in this position may cut directly across this, and other possible timbers. If timbers framing is located in this area, then alteration or removal as to facilitate the proposed opening would be entirely inappropriate. To further assess the impact upon the fabric would require more invasive exploratory works, which in themselves would require separate consent. Until such time as to the exact nature of all the fabric to be impacted can be understood, the principle of an opening here would not be supported.

Further to the potential impact upon historic fabric from connecting Bedrooms 1 and 3, the proposed loss/blocking up of the doorway between the Bedroom 3 and the bathroom lobby raises concern. The loss of the apparent 19th century door and associated frame and joinery would seek to erode the significance of the legibility of the evolution the building. Even if the doorway was retained and simply 'locked' shut, it is uncertain as to how practical this would be given the proposed siting and orientation of the en-suite bathroom.

Notwithstanding the above primary concerns over the loss of historic fabric is the impact upon the plan form. The area in question appears to be an addition of the 1870s as to provide an entrance hall and additional bedroom above, but has always had the linear route pattern 'front to back' on both ground and first floors. This evolved planform, which is apparently unchanged from the 19th century, allows for the clear separation of the 16th century single celled element. Which being effectively separated from the later addition can clearly be read and thus understood, contributing to the building's significance.

In conclusion, the proposed alterations would result in erosion to the planform and would seek to dilute and thus undermine the legibility of this sensitive building. Combined with this, the proposed loss of fabric would, and has the potential to, fundamentally and permanently impact the building's special interest. As such, the as proposed alterations would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the identified heritage asset. This harm would arise through the loss of historic fabric and erosion to the planform resulting in dilution to the special interest. No public benefits have been identified that would outweigh this harm (Section 16, NPPF).

As established by the Built Heritage Officer, the proposed development would result in a loss of historic fabric and erosion of the plan form, failing to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building - a designated heritage

asset that the LPA has a duty to preserve or enhance when making decisions on applications affecting it. Given the identified harm above, the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy, as well as Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and section 16 of the NPPF.

The submitted Heritage Statement also identified an impact to the significance of the heritage asset. Although the statement considered the impact to be minor and not of such a magnitude as to affect the overall significance of the Listed Building. However, the identified impact to the significance of the listed building has not been 'clearly and convincingly justified', as required by Paragraph 206 of the NPPF. Moreover, the test at para 208 of the NPPF is whether the harm is outweighed by any public benefits. Considering the works provide an access between a dressing and bedroom, there are no tangible public benefits that outweigh the harm to the heritage asset. The proposal is therefore recommended for refusal.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refusal
Date:	23 October 2024
Earliest date for decision:	23 September 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	23.10.2024