

Head of Planning
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant
PO9 2AX

My Ref: 14132/RC/EM

Date: 20 December 2019

Dear Sirs

Site: Manor House, Edward Gardens, Havant

Proposal: Part retrospective & part proposed application for listed building consent to include repairs, reinstatements, retention of new floor/ceiling. Additional alterations to include under floor heating; wood burners x 2; partial removal of walling to GF north range; revealing and restoration of box frame and covered C20th century window opening; removal of modern stair screen, insertion of new post below truss member, new newel and glass balustrade; new screen, stair and partitions to first and attic floors of south range.

Following a succession of Listed Building and Planning Applications, the owner/applicant has now reached the stage of being in a position to progress proposals for the reinstatement and alteration of the listed Manor House. This follows a detailed pre-application submission setting out proposals room-by-room and floor-by-floor which was generally well received by the Council's Conservation Officer.

The applicant/owner accepts that certain works that have been carried out did require Listed Building Consent under s7 of the PLBCAA 1990. However, it is also the position that some works can be said to have affected the special architectural or historic interest of the whole listed building.¹ In other words, its significance.

The same duty is set out in PLBCAA s.16(2) where a local planning authority has a statutory duty when considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works. S.16(2) and s.66(1) are clear that the statutory duty is one of "desirability" of preserving a listed building. That desirability which in turn does not lead one along the path of 'preserve all not matter what' approach instigated in the late 19th century. It accepts that there will be change and therefore the test is harm to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

¹ Mynors, C & Hewitson, N (2018) 'Listed Buildings and other heritage assets' 5th Ed, para 12-026, 12-031

As Mynors and Hewitson (2017) point out "Listing' a building therefore in theory means precisely that - merely including it in a list, as an aide memoire to all concerned to ensure that it is not demolished or damaged by unsuitable alterations without careful thought being given to its preservation." With that a local planning authority should also take into account that the PLBCAA including the following:

"any listed building consent (except in so far as it otherwise provides) should enure for the benefit of the building and of all persons for the time being interested in it."²

At this present moment in time the main person who has an interest in the building is the current owner. Indeed, the succession of applications submitted and approved to date demonstrate the owner/applicant's commitment to reversing the ills of the past and bring the building back into use as a single dwellinghouse - the use for which it was originally intended.

It is accepted that the local planning authority has an interest in the building in so far as ensuring the 'desirability' to 'preserve' and not to harm the special architectural or historic interest of the building on the List. At the same time, it is acknowledged that former owners may retain an interest in the building particularly those owners who were successful in securing its listing on 21st July 1975 when it was under threat of demolition.

That said, it is accepted that a significant amount of change occurred to the building prior to its listing and there was a limit to works/alterations that could be controlled. Indeed, it is unlikely that there were many controls in place during the Victorian period.

And moving forward, it is arguable that the removal of modern partitions, modern wall and ceiling finishes, bathroom facilities fitted into an inglenook did not 'affect the character' of the listed building or its significance and did not, therefore, need listed building consent on the basis that the significance of the building as a whole was not affected or harmed by such works.

Now devoid of many wall coverings, the exposed nature of the building opens up questions as to the 'original' extent of the post transitional timber framed building - whether it was a three-bay, three and a half bay, four-bay plan form and whether or not it had a later cross-wing. The exposed nature of the building also revealed what can only be described as a shoddy Victorian workmanship where the rear box frame was savagely cut (including mid rail, rails and the wall plate) only for the rising three storey bay to be 'planted' on to the rear with little in the way of integrating and structural tying, apart from at roof level.

The crude extensions to the joists did not provide sufficient vertical restraint and it was clear that signs of pulling away were camouflaged by cementitious mortar applied to the junction between the bay and the main frame. This in itself caused issues for the frame as it trapped moisture inside the fabric of the building and led to rot.

It was also discovered that alterations during the Victorian period, not only resulted in gentrification but the erosion of early features such as bay windows to the ground and first floor of the main front elevation, the removal of or consuming earlier fabric including a rudimentary agri-utilitarian building to the north side.

² PLBCAA 1990, S16(3)

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We now are aware that works during both the mid to late 19th century and 20th century effectively concealed areas that required repair or poor patch repairs were carried out as well 'fakery'. The timber box frame to the rear was found to be in a poor condition and included parts of the faux framing to comprise cement painted black. The interior revealed a pattern of change that involved removing and introducing floors to increase room heights to various ground floor rooms.

Prior to the change of use to a retirement home, the changes arising, including the 1960s extension and various works during the time that the building was used as a boarding house, along with a separate 'residence' at the northern end, were not particularly respectful of the building. It was also put to use as a retirement home which resulted in the internal plan form being altered to accommodate more residents, meet health care requirements, Fire Regulations.

Having examined available records and limited photographs available, it would appear that there were further changes post listing that can hardly be said to have respected the significance of the listed building such as inserting an ensuite into the main inglenook. It is also clear therefore that the applicant/owner inherited the ills of the past including some work that may not have benefitted from listed building consent.

Moving forward, the applicant/owner is seeking to collaborate with the local planning authority in a positive manner in order to regularise matters, reinstate former partitions, carry out essential repairs to previously concealed parts of the building, recover walls where appropriate and ceilings. At the same time, it should be accepted that the approach to the building needs to be pragmatic, realistic and balanced. Its thermal performance is in need of upgrading and this includes the introduction of appropriate heating systems and insulation. The windows have already been upgraded to single glazing high thermal performance Histoglass RT+ and with the high spec, there are associated high costs. As with the

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2019) makes it clear that in cases where it is considered that less than substantial harm may arise to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed in the balance against public benefits including, securing its optimal viable use. Although it may be the case that the benefits are not 'public' but private, this does not over rule the need for a heritage balance to be considered, particularly given the unknowns that were associated with the condition of the building and the additional costs associated with expensive repairs and use of high quality materials, products and skilled craftsmen. It is also appropriate to acknowledge that all parts of the building do not hold the same level of special interest or significance.

One is reminded that the listing of a building does not mean preservation in aspic and no change. It means ensuring that it is not demolished or damaged by unsuitable alterations without careful thought being given to its preservation. And with that, it is clear that this building has been the subject of successive change over its lifetime. The latest proposals represent another layer/period in its evolution, reflecting current living standards but in a balanced manner that does not affect the understanding of the building and change over time.

This submission is accompanied by a supporting heritage statement; appropriate plans depicting the proposals; a schedule of works including areas where repairs are required; and appropriate photographs to assist with the reading of the building and areas in need of attention. A revised phasing plan and photographic sheets will follow separately.

Should additional information be required, it is requested that the local planning authority are pragmatic and practical and engage with the applicant/owner and his agent, to facilitate such provision, either during the processing of the application or through appropriately-worded conditions that are not unduly onerous or obstructive when it comes to enabling works to be progressed.

Yours sincerely

Ms Eimear Murphy

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Cc Mr Richard Carlton – applicant/owner