

Application for proposed conversion of 41 Hamilton Square - APP/25/01899

The application:

41 Hamilton Square, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 5BP - LBC/25/01887

Conversion of commercial building to 5 self contained apartments, with external parking and bin storage.

Summary

The proposal as submitted has number of issues listed below. As submitted, the proposal does not conform to Policy WD2 (A(2), (A (3) & (A (5) and Policy WD6 (A(12) for the reasons listed below, and therefore, **planning objection is raised to this application.**

Reasons for objection

Proposed changes that may compromise the structural integrity of this listed building.

The proposed Basement layout for a two-bed apartment shows that a significant structural wall for the central staircase is proposed to be pierced, to allow the provision of a shower room for the en-suite bathroom for the larger bedroom.

There is concern this may compromise the whole structure of this Grade 1 listed Georgian terraced building.

Redesign of the basement layout may resolve this situation, but as this is application is for Full Planning Approval, a Planning Condition seeking redesign of the Basement apartment may not protect the building adequately for the future.

Therefore, **Planning Objection** is raised to this proposal as submitted.

Inadequate access for waste management for Ground, 1st, and 2nd Floor apartments

The current commercial use allows for access to the rear of the building to bin storage via the Ground floor rear balcony and steps.

The proposal shows that the Ground Floor rear access to to be removed, thereby cutting access to the rear of the property for both bin storage and private car parking.

The other single apartments on the Second and Third floors appear to have no access to the rear bin storage area.

There is concern that this would encourage permanent domestic 'wheely' bin storage of 6 waste bins (3 x General waste & 3 x Recycled waste) at the front of the building in Hamilton Square, thus creating a significant visual intrusion to the heritage street scene of Hamilton Square.

Concern regarding Basement Apartment waste management

In addition, the Basement Apartment layout shows that Bin disposal has to go through the main bedroom to reach the rear bin store. This is considered to be unhygienic.

It is noted that the proposed kitchen for the Basement apartment is at the front of the building. Therefore, we are concerned that a more realistic waste disposal would be to the front of the building in Hamilton Square, rather than the rear of the building. Thus a further 2 wheely bin storage could be generated (1 x General waste and 1 x Recycled waste)

Resolution could be through redesign of the Basement Apartment. However, as this is application is for Full Planning Approval, a Planning Condition seeking redesign of the Basement apartment may not protect the building adequately for the future.

It is noted that the proposed Basement layout for No. 43, Hamilton Square (APP/25/01924) does appear to show a different Basement Apartment layout, which overcomes the waste removal concerns, which indicates that redesign would be possible.

Therefore, **Planning Objection is raised** to this Basement layout proposal as submitted.

Possible Planning Condition to Discourage Permanent domestic 'wheely' bin storage at the front of No.41, Hamilton Square.

To preserve the character and appearance of the Hamilton Square Conservation Area and the setting of its Grade I-Listed buildings we request a **Planning Condition** such as;

"Before development commences, a scheme for the storage and collection of domestic waste shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to first occupation of any of the flats hereby permitted and thereafter maintained for the lifetime of the development" Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Hamilton Square Conservation Area and the setting of its Grade I-Listed buildings."

Retaining of internal features of this listing building.

The provided photographs with the Application show the original internal door frames and other architectural features. (Example: Photo 9, Page 21, Heritage Statement) , which are important features of Georgian interior design.

We are concerned that original doorways to the common corridors appear to be shown to be infilled/closed and the original Georgian door frames removed. This leads to a loss of architectural integrity of this terraced Listed building.

We request a **Planning Condition** to ensure all the original door frames; original staircase balustrades; original skirting boards; and hidden decorative ceiling cornicing are retained to ensure no loss of architectural integrity of this terraced Listed building.

Suggestion for Improved Fire Safety in Listed buildings

The main means of escape for residents is via the original Georgian central staircase. It is understood that the underside of this staircase is of lath & plaster.

Although not directly a Planning matter, we believe that Listed buildings could benefit from the application of fireproof intumescent paint on lath & plaster surfaces, which is an approved upgrading solution by Building Control.

When attacked by fire, the intumescent material protects the integrity as well as the insulation of the coated surface. Moreover, offers over 1-hour fire protection to plasterboard. Thus this provides a suitable solution for protected and heritage buildings which do not currently meet revised contemporary fire standards.

We request that Building Control are informed of our suggestion for application of fireproof intumescent paint on lath & plaster surfaces for Listed and Registered Heritage buildings.

Conclusion

The proposed Basement apartment design adversely alters the structural integrity of this Grade 1 Listed building, and proposes domestic waste disposal through the main bedroom. Redesign would be required to overcome these issues.

Without a suitable enforceable Planning Condition, the proposal may lead to a proliferation of waste bins outside the front of the Grade 1 Listed Georgian terrace adversely affecting the heritage street screen of Hamilton Square.

Therefore **planning objection is raised to this application as submitted.**

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