

Application for proposed conversion of 43 Hamilton Square - APP/25/01924

The application:

43 Hamilton Square, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 5BP - APP/25/01924

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 the Local Plan Policy on Heritage Assets, 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 may compromise the integrity of this listed building.

The submitted drawing and Heritage Design statement do not show the existing layout accurately.

As stated in the adopted Local Plan (2020-2040), **Heritage Assets;**

***Paragraph 6.11:** Such heritage is vulnerable to change. Once lost or altered it cannot be adequately replaced and it is important that the most valuable sites and structures are not needlessly or thoughtlessly harmed. Policy WD 2, therefore, provides for Wirral's cultural heritage to be conserved having regard to the significance of the asset in line with national policy and seeks to ensure that the case for conservation and enhancement is fully considered when assessing all proposals for new development.*

Submitted Drawing 002 excludes the existing original Basement entrance from Hamilton Square, and indicates that this will be replaced with a window in the proposed Basement self-contained apartment. This is contravention of Policy WD2 (C).

Although there is no reference to these proposed Works within the Heritage Design Statement, in order to provide sufficient natural light to this proposed window, it could be inferred that the external wall supporting the original exterior steps to 43 Hamilton Square would be removed. This would significantly alter the external appearance, and possibly the structural integrity, of this Grade 1 Listed property.

There are also no exceptional circumstances given by the Applicant to clearly justify substantial harm or loss of the existing original Basement entrance doorway contrary to Local Plan Heritage Asset requirements.

It is also noted that the submitted Heritage Design Statement photographs (Page 24, Photo 21 and Photo 22) do not show the actual external Basement frontage of 43 Hamilton Square, but rather the exterior Basement frontage of No 42, Hamilton Square.

This suggests that the Heritage Design Statement submitted for the proposed alterations to No.43, Hamilton Square, is inaccurate and thus in breach of Policy WD2.

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.

Possible Planning Condition to Discourage Permanent domestic 'wheely' bin storage at the front of No.43, 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 24, Page 24, 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 appears to adversely alter the external appearance and structural integrity of this Grade 1 Listed building **against Policy WD2** .

There no exceptional circumstances given by the Applicant to clearly justify substantial harm or loss of the existing original Basement entrance doorway **contrary to Local Plan Heritage Asset** requirements.

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 **against Policy WD2**.

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

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