

From:
To: Crescent House, Golden Lane Estate - Applications 23/00466/FULL and 23/00650/LBC
Cc: 17 July 2023 17:15:05
Subject:
Date:

THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL

Dear Janey Lin Zhao,
On behalf of the Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association I would like to OBJECT to the above applications.

While it is essential that work is carried out to repair the existing windows which have not been maintained for over 20 years and improve the thermal efficiency of the block as a whole there are several issues with the current application. These are:

1. The works are described as *repairs and minor alterations to the existing windows and window framing at first, second and third floor levels of Crescent House, including: stripping, repairing and redecorating existing window frames; replacement of existing single-glazing with vacuum glazing panels; insulation works to the main concrete vaulted roof and first floor concrete soffit; and associated works*. As the works replacing the glazing with vacuum double-glazing, the addition of metal drips and the extra thickness of roof insulation that will be visible from the light wells with change the appearance of the block the phrase "minor alterations" is not an accurate description of the works. This is especially evident in the reglazing as the change from single to double glazing would not be permitted in, for instance, a Georgian listed building because of the change to its appearance and although it is desirable here it should be properly acknowledged that it will have a major impact.
2. It is premature to submit this application until the pilot project is complete and its findings have been analysed. The pilot project was sold to residents as essential to investigate the construction of the windows and test how they can be made thermally efficient, water-proof and less prone to damage. Residents have accepted this and were reassured that the problems with the Great Arthur House recladding might be avoided. We are now being told that a design has been decided on before this work has been completed and residents left with no confidence that the mistakes made at Great Arthur House will not be made again.
3. The new soffit insulation (as shown in Detail 15) will have a major impact on the appearance of the block as the existing concept of a flat slab sitting on circular columns will be compromised by the proposed changes in ceiling level and the the new upstand along the edge of the insulation fronting Goswell Road and the tennis courts to the East. I would also note that the detail as drawn is unlikely to be successful as the existing slab, as it passes beyond the insulation, will be cold and this cold-bridge, passing back along the slab is likely to lead to interstitial condensation in the insulated zone. If this happens mineral wool insulation is a poor choice of material as it will become sodden and lose its insulative properties.
4. Heating. In the 1980s the Estates communal heating system was transferred to individual flat systems by, in Crescent House either gas boilers or electric heating. Where gas boilers are present the flues pass through widows to vent. Provision is being made for flues where they exit through bathroom windows but in cases where they exit through the windows on the main facades there is no provision and no detail of how this will be progressed. We understand that the proposal to reinstate the communal heating is on hold.
5. Repainting the existing sapele timber frames. It is not clear what these are to be repainted with but we would ask that it be conditioned that a suitable varnish be used

- and that the manufacturer's details be submitted for approval.
6. The glass spandrel panels. It is proposed that the new panels be painted externally. This is a long term maintenance issue and also why is glass being used if it is to be painted. The spandrel panels on the estate have been much altered over the years with a plasticised coating being applied to the ones in the maisonette blocks and only Great Arthur House, which has been re-clad, shows the original intention. We would ask that further research be carried out to find out the original finish and this be reinstated as far as is possible using current materials. Again could it be conditioned that the material used be submitted for approval.
 7. It is usual with listed buildings applications that a proper schedule of works is submitted with the application so that it is evident what is being conserved and what is being replaced. This has not been submitted so we would ask that the submission of a schedule of works be conditioned before works begin.

We should emphasise that we do not want to delay this very necessary project but believe that by putting in place the essential research and by reviewing the solutions to the issues that become apparent through this research the delays and over-spend of the Great Arthur House project can be avoided. We understand that there is a delay before the project can be tendered and we would encourage the applicants to use that time to complete and analyse the pilot project and use the information gained to amend the proposals.

Regards,

Tim Godsmark
Chair Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association



Emailed to: Amy.Williams@cityoflondon.gov.uk

16 November 2023

Dear Amy Williams

SITE: Crescent House, Golden Lane Estate, London, EC1Y 0SL

REF: 23/00466/FULL & 23/00650/LBC

Thank you for consulting the Society on the above application for repairs and alterations to the windows of Crescent House on the Golden Lane Estate.

Completed in 1962 by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon, Crescent House on the Golden Lane Estate is of exceptional heritage significance, which is recognised in its listing at Grade II*. It also falls within the Barbican and Golden Lane Conservation Area.

Policy

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority [...] shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.” Section 72 requests that local authorities pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) includes paragraph 199 which states that “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight

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should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)". Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, significance should require clear and convincing justification.

Past involvement

The Society has been involved in pre-application discussions since 2021 regarding proposals to renew the building's elevations. The intention is to improve the building's U-values and sound insulation and carry out repairs to the fabric. A pilot project was initiated at flat 347 to test ways to approach the project. After an on-site meeting with the project team in summer 2022 to flat 347, we raised concerns about early proposals to install triple-glazed units which would necessitate the removal of the original timber frames as well as glazing.

Summary of proposals

Our most recent visit to site was held on 2 November '23 when we inspected the work that has now been completed to flat 347. The project team now propose to retain the original Sapele hardwood and softwood window frames and repair these frames through a combination of resin application, splicing and replacement (to be determined on a case-by-case basis based on the extent of deterioration to the component parts). Frames would be restored to closer match their original finish (the paint and stain would be stripped from the hardwood and it would be oiled). Aluminium casement windows would be retained and re-treated. The existing single-glazing to windows would be replaced with vacuum glazing. Window ironmongery would be retained if in sound condition or replaced where beyond repair or missing (again on a like-for-like basis). White glazed spandrel panels would be replaced with a new panel – the applicants are hoping to match the original in appearance. The applicant would conserve the mosaic panels, replacing any missing tiles like-for-like.

Comments

We welcome the change in approach, brought about as a result of thorough research and investigation into the original and existing condition of the various components of the elevations, and into potential approaches to repair and fabric improvements. The project team have

demonstrated a good understanding of the building's significance, its tolerance and opportunities for change. The proposed approach would see the greater retention of significant original fabric and would ensure that the character and appearance of this exceptional Grade II* building is conserved. We welcome the applicant's holistic approach to the project – while investigating potential improvements to the performance of the windows, the project team have also identified opportunities for insulation and ventilation (through the Demand Controlled Ventilation system).

The project team's discoveries made during the project and their reasons for adopting the proposed approach should be captured and detailed in updated listed building management guidelines. This could then inform maintenance work and any changes proposed to the building in the future. The current guidelines date from 2013 and would benefit from revision.

In response to specific details discussed on site, we recommend that the aluminium window frames are anodised rather than powder-coated – the former results in a more honest, less polished appearance. We also recommend more testing concerning the replacement of the panel beneath the bookshelf – this was originally opaque but has been replaced with clear glass in the mock-up flat. Ideally, the glass here would be a closer match to the original finish. At our site visit, the project team also presented options for the replacement of the spandrel panels. We would ideally like to see the chosen finish in-person once it is decided upon. We would also welcome the opportunity to inspect the proposed replacement mosaic tiles when these are ready on site.

For the reasons outlined here, we are broadly supportive of the proposed window renewal scheme, believing it will allow for the necessary improvements to residents' living conditions and to the building's environmental credentials while conserving the significance of the Grade II* building.

We hope that these comments are of use to you.

Yours sincerely



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Remit: The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in *ODPM Circular 09/2005*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.

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Historic England

Ms Amy Williams
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Direct Dial: 020 7973 3765

Our ref: L01567948

16 November 2023

Dear Ms Williams

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021

CRESCENT HOUSE GOLDEN LANE ESTATE LONDON EC1Y 0SL Application No. 23/00650/LBC

Thank you for your letter of 30 October 2023 regarding the above application for listed building consent made by your authority. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

Historic England have been involved in the pre-application discussions since 2019, including the development of the pilot project which I reviewed on site on 2 November.

Significance of Crescent House

The Golden Lane Estate is an important part of the City of London's post-war architectural legacy. Developed just after the end of WWII, its development was the City's response to the significant decline in its residential population since the early 20th century. Chamberlin, Powell and Bon (CPB) were appointed as architects after winning a design competition and work began in 1952. The Estate is characterised by a series of rectilinear residential blocks and a community centre set in a carefully designed hard landscape. The structures themselves used innovative curtain wall systems and pioneered new approaches to the planning of post-war housing in Britain.

Crescent House was designed as a separate, later phase of the Estate on land subsequently acquired by the City of London. Constructed in 1962, it shows the transition in the architectural approach of CPB, particularly the influence of Le Corbusier and Brutalism on their design philosophy.

The Goswell Road elevation is of high significance and is a distinctive marker of the City's eastern boundary due to its stepped profile along the curved façade. The



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exposed concrete aggregate, hardwood tilting windows and mosaic tile clad pilotis at ground level were all a departure from their earlier designs. In contrast, the inner courtyard elevation took a much simpler form. The flat interiors were carefully planned to maximise the use of space and light within compact residential units.

Crescent House is widely admired as an attractive and innovative post-war building. It illustrates the emerging approach CPB as they moved towards Brutalism. This is highly significant given their key role in the evolution of post-war architecture in Britain, particularly at the neighbouring Barbican Estate. Its status as a Grade II* listed building reflects this. It also falls within the Barbican and Golden Lane Conservation Area in 2018.

Proposals and their impact

The proposals seek to repair and renew the windows and glazing in all the residential units, with the aim of improving the U-values and sound insulation within each of the flats as well as addressing much needed repairs to its fabric. The approach builds on the work that has been done to develop a pilot project at flat number 347 (22/00322/FULL). It has also been informed by the works to the façade of Great Arthur House.

Due to the nature of its construction, particularly on the Goswell Road elevation, this work is comprehensive. The existing hardwood windows will be stripped for repair and single glazing replaced with vacuum glazing panels. These consist of two panes of 4mm glass separated by a vacuum cavity of approximately 0.3mm which requires a slight adjustment to the rebates of the frame. They will appear slightly darker than the existing, but the profile change will be minimal. Given that these changes will be made to all windows on the façade, the visual impact will be limited. The nature of the repairs will require repairs to the ironmongery (and replacement like-for-like where necessary), the mosaic tiles, bookshelves and to the white glazed spandrel panels.

The works will also necessitate some alterations to the building. This includes new profiles to address areas that are particularly prone to weathering, insulation, and some alterations to the ventilation system. Whilst there will be some visual impact from aspects of this work, any harm will be at the lower end of less than substantial.

Relevant Planning Policies

Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and their settings. Section 72 requires planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.



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Government guidance on how to carry out those duties is found in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, September 2023). At the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development' of which protecting and enhancing the historic environment in a manner appropriate to its significance is established as an environmental objective.

The NPPF states that the significance of a heritage asset should be described to a level that is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on this significance (paragraph 194). It also sets out that great weight should be given to the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset (paragraph 199), that any harm to this significance should be clearly and convincingly justified (paragraph 200), and that any harm must be outweighed by public benefits (paragraph 202).

The Golden Lane Listed Building Management Guidelines were adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in 2013. They provide a detailed assessment of the significance of the estate and guidance on alterations and repairs. Historic England sat the original working party which drew up the guidelines in 2007 and the review process in 2013.

Historic England's Position

Historic England welcomes the repair of the Grade II* building and appreciates the need improve its thermal and acoustic performance.

Given the high significance of the building and the extensive nature of the repairs required, the attached draft authorisation to the Planning Casework Unit includes a requirement to consult Historic England on the discharge of some conditions. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this important project. I attach the draft authorisation letter for the Listed Building Consent for your information.

Given the considerable research that has been undertaken to inform these proposals, I strongly recommend that the Listed Building Management Guidelines SPD is updated to reflect the great understanding of the building and the approach to repair. This will be important to inform maintenance of the building and any future changes.

There may also be some cross-over with the Barbican Estate as the window system there is similar to that of the principal façade of Crescent House. Careful consideration should also be given to how best to update the Listed Building Management Guidelines for the Barbican and to incorporate the learning from this work.

This response relates to designated heritage asset matters only. If the proposals meet



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Historic England

the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service's published consultation criteria we recommend that you seek their view as specialist archaeological adviser to the local planning authority.

The full GLAAS consultation criteria are on our webpage at the following link:

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/our-advice/>

Yours sincerely

Breda Daly

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: [REDACTED]

cc The 20th Century Society



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