

Mr Innes and Lesley Thomson

Planning application: Internal and external alterations: 17 Kingsborough Gardens, Glasgow, G12 9NH

Planning statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement is prepared in support of a planning application for internal and external alterations at 17 Kingsborough Gardens. The application is being submitted given the outcome of the related listed building consent appeal.

2. Background

- 2.1 Applications for planning permission (No.20/02249/FUL) and listed building consent (No.20/02248/LBA) for internal and external alterations were refused on 16 June 2021.
- 2.2 An appeal to Scottish Ministers against the Council's refusal of listed building consent was allowed, on 28 October 2021. A copy of the decision is appended.

3. Consideration of the Reporter's decision

- 3.1 The Reporter concluded (paras.8 and 9) in respect of the internal alterations that, subject to a condition, that the proposals respect the original layout and plan form and do not result in the loss of important fixtures and fittings. They will have no effect on the building's special interest.
- 3.2 The Reporter noted (para.14) that SG9 presumes against an external garden access from the first or second floor. The application proposes access from the upper to lower ground floor.
- 3.3 The Reporter concluded (paras.18 and 19) given the numerous additions and alterations to the rear aspect of the terrace, as well as the proposed minimalist design, that the proposed external changes would not materially detract from the special architectural / historic interest, or the cultural significance of the listed building.
- 3.4 The Reporter concluded (paras.23-26) that the proposals do not introduce a prominent feature and would not be noticeable given the varied appearance of the properties when viewed from the lane. The character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved.
- 3.5 The Reporter concluded (paras. 27-29) that the proposals would satisfy Policy CDP9's and SG9's objectives of the City Development Plan.

4. Conclusion

4.1 It is therefore requested that this application be approved.

**Bryce Associates Ltd
DJB/1679
25 November 2021**



Decision by David Buylla, a Reporter appointed by the Scottish Ministers

- Listed building consent appeal reference: LBA-260-2066
- Site address: 17 Kingsborough Gardens, Glasgow, G12 9NH
- Appeal by Mr and Mrs I Thomson against the decision by Glasgow City Council
- Application for listed building consent 20/02248/LBA dated 3 September 2020 refused by notice dated 16 June 2021
- The works proposed: internal and external alterations
- Application drawings: DW20/51/002A, 010A, 011, 012, 012, 013 and 015
- Date of site visit by Reporter: 22 October 2021

Date of appeal decision: 28 October 2021

Decision

I allow the appeal and grant listed building consent subject to the following condition.

1. Prior to works commencing, large scale drawings detailing the design and construction details of how the wall panelling in the living room will be adapted to accept the proposed wall opening, of the proposed steps between the living room and the proposed kitchen / dining area, and of the proposed doors onto the balcony from the kitchen / dining area, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. Works shall then only proceed in strict accordance with the details so approved.

(Reason: to ensure that the proposals hereby approved are as sympathetic as possible to the listed building's special character and appearance.

Attention is also drawn to the advisory note at the end of this notice.

Reasoning

1. Internal and external alterations are proposed to be made to a category B listed early 20th century mid-terrace townhouse. The building lies within the Glasgow West conservation area.

2. In accordance with sections 14(2) and 64(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the determining issues in this appeal are the effect the proposals would have on the listed building and surrounding conservation area, having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and paying special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.



Effects on the listed building

3. A number of internal alterations are proposed, the most significant of which would be the formation of an opening between the front and rear ground floor reception rooms (currently a living room and dining room) to enable the rear room to be used as a kitchen / dining area (relocating the kitchen from its existing lower ground floor location). The proposed kitchen / dining area would also be extended into what is currently a pantry by removing another section of dividing wall.

4. The existence of separate reception rooms on the principal floor of a house of this age is an important part of its special historic interest – acting as a reminder of the very different way in which the property would have been used when first built. Removal of the physical and functional separation between these two living spaces would have been unthinkable to the building's original occupiers. Therefore, any such alteration has the potential to diminish the building's special historic interest.

5. The proposed opening between the rooms is wider than a double door opening and I agree with Friends of Glasgow West and The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland that a narrower opening would have been likely to better preserve the building's original plan form. However, I am satisfied that the proposed 2.4 metre wide by 2.2 metre high opening (well below cornice level) would retain enough of the original building fabric for it to remain possible for anyone using the spaces to understand how they were once separate and to appreciate this aspect of the building's social history. The floor level difference between the two rooms, which would require steps up into the rear room would also serve as a reminder of the historic separation of the spaces.

6. Both ground floor reception rooms retain many of their original features. The living room is particularly impressive, having decorative timber panelling to all four walls. The opening would necessitate the removal / modification of a small section of that panelling. However, subject to care being taken in how it was modified to accommodate the opening, I am content that this important contributor to the building's special architectural interest would not be materially harmed. Precise details of this aspect of the proposal could be secured by a condition.

7. The proposed removal of the pantry and its incorporation into the proposed kitchen / dining area would also affect the building's special architectural and historic interest. The width of the proposed opening – 3.5 metres – is not particularly conservative of the original plan form, but by limiting its height to 2.2 metres and by retaining nibs of the original walls, I find, on balance, that sufficient evidence of the building's original plan form would remain for it to be considered respectful of the original plan form.

8. The council's supplementary guidance on the historic environment (SG 9) expects proposals affecting a listed building to respect its original layout and plan form and not to result in the loss of important fixtures and fittings. Subject to the aforementioned condition, I am satisfied that the manner in which the proposed alterations are proposed would satisfy these expectations.

9. I am satisfied that other proposed changes to the building's interior would have no material effect on its special interest.

10. The appellant has referred me to non-statutory guidance issued by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) - *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings* (2019). This explains how historic buildings can be adapted to better meet modern needs. However, this is aimed primarily at buildings with an uncertain future, where a more relaxed attitude to alteration may be the only alternative to dereliction. This well-maintained house in a desirable area does not fall within that category. Nevertheless, I agree that some regard has to be had to modern lifestyle expectations. I also note that HES has raised no objections to the proposal, subject to care being taken with the living room panelling.

11. External changes would include the replacement of a modern casement window in the side elevation of the existing lower ground floor kitchen and the formation of a means of access to the garden from the ground floor proposed kitchen / dining area via a new balcony and staircase.

12. The replacement window would be an all glass “pop-out” oriel window with a slightly lower cill line to enable the inclusion of a window seat in what would become a playroom. This part of the building is a visually subordinate off-shot of lower architectural quality than the main house. This factor, and the fact that the existing window is of poor quality, mean the proposed oriel window would cause no material harm to the building’s special architectural or historic interest. I note that the council has no objection to this element of the proposal.

13. The proposed balcony and steps down to the garden would be formed of black coated steel. All balustrading would be in frameless glass so as to reduce its impact on the appearance of the rear of the building. The existing pair of windows in the dining room would have their cills lowered to create doors of matching design. The lower section of the windows would have a solid timber panel up to the height of the original cill in order to reflect the windows’ existing proportions. The existing stone mullion would be extended down to match.

14. The council’s SG 9 presumes against the formation of an external garden access from the first or second floor and states that a balcony is unlikely to be an acceptable addition to a listed building.

15. What is proposed here is to take access from the (upper) ground floor of the property, rather than from the first or second floors as is referred to in SG 9. However, the justification behind the guidance remains relevant.

16. Having a direct access route between the building’s principal floor and its rear garden is not something the building’s original occupants would have seen a need for and represents a radical departure from how the original architect designed the terrace. Again, this reflects the very different lifestyles of current and former residents.

17. At my site inspection I noted that the rear façades of most properties in the terrace have been altered over the years, but I saw no other instance of access to the rear garden / yard being taken from anything other than the lower ground floor level. Therefore, I can understand the council’s concern that this element of the proposal has the potential not only to affect the appearance of the terrace on its own but also to encourage other property owners to propose similar alterations that might be difficult to resist.

18. Set against those concerns is the fact that the rear aspect of the terrace has had numerous additions and alterations to it over the years which have reduced the contribution it makes to the terrace's cultural significance when compared with its essentially unaltered front façade. The appellant has proposed a modern, minimalist design that would not attempt to make its own architectural statement but would aim for maximum transparency. I am satisfied that this design solution should achieve the appellants' objectives in a way that minimizes the extent of alterations to the building's original fabric and has the lowest possible level of visual impact.

19. Taking all factors into account, I am satisfied that the proposed external changes would not materially detract from the special architectural or historic interest or the cultural significance of the listed building.

Effects on the conservation area

20. The property lies within the Dowanhill character area of the Glasgow West conservation area. The conservation area appraisal of 2011 provides a useful summary of the character and appearance of the various character areas within the conservation area, to which I have had regard when considering whether this proposal would preserve or enhance that character or appearance.

21. Clearly, the concern with regard to the conservation area is with those elements of the proposal that would be visible from the exterior of the property – the proposed window alterations and the new balcony and staircase.

22. The appellant provided photographs and other details of other external staircases within the Dowanhill character area of the conservation area. However, my inspection of the area revealed these to be very much the exception to its established character and appearance rather than an established characteristic with which the current proposal would be in keeping.

23. The council's reason for refusal of listed building consent describes the proposal as introducing a "prominent feature". I do not agree with that description. There is a lane to the rear of the terrace that provides a limited opportunity to view the rear of the properties. Almost all rear gardens are enclosed by timber fencing of approximately 1.8 metre height. This is likely to obscure any view of the proposed oriel window. The proposed doors onto the balcony, the balcony itself and the upper part of the staircase would be visible above the fence from certain locations along the lane, but would not be prominent features and I believe this is not a thoroughfare that is likely to attract many visitors.

24. The varied appearance of the properties that present a rear wall onto the lane, along with the variety of fencing styles that can be seen, give it a rather disharmonious but not unattractive character. In this very varied visual context, I doubt that the proposed external alterations, including the proposed balcony and staircase, would be noticed unless one was searching for them.

25. The rear lane from where elements of the proposed works would be seen is, in any event, a much less important contributor to the character and appearance of the conservation area than the formally laid out streets nearby that were designed from the outset to define the character of the neighbourhood.

26. Taking all matters into account, I am confident that both the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved.

Conclusions

27. The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland 2019 (HEPS) recognises that some change to the historic environment is inevitable and that decision-making on matters affecting this, has to be sufficiently flexible and adaptable to deal with wide-ranging and ongoing changes in society and the environment. However, as a finite resource, decision makers must ensure that nothing from the historic environment is lost without considering its value and exploring options for avoiding its loss.

28. City development plan policy CDP 9 and the accompanying SG 9 set out the council's approach to protecting, enhancing and conserving the historic environment in line with the HEPS. The policy confirms that the council will assess the impact of proposed developments and support high quality design that respects and complements the character and appearance of the historic environment and the special architectural or historic interest of, among other things, its listed buildings and conservation areas.

29. For the reasons I have set out, I am satisfied that the proposal is compatible with the HEPS and would satisfy these objectives of the City Plan.

David Buyla

Principal Reporter

Advisory note

The length of the consent: This listed building consent will last only for three years from the date of this decision notice, unless the works have been started within that period. (See section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended))