

Design and access statement: 2a Bekesbourne Lane CT3 1UY

This statement has been prepared to support a series of proposed alterations to the property. The purpose of these works is to address some legacy issues arising from the recent successful application to convert the building from a former public house into 2 semidetached dwellings.

See Planning application reference: 18/02475 and Listed building consent reference: 18/01658

'Proposed 2no. two-storey semi-detached dwellings and change of use of public house to 2no. semidetached dwellings, together with associated landscaping and parking.' 18/02475

'Application for listed building consent for internal and external alterations to public house to facilitate change of use to 2no. semi-detached dwellings.' 18/01658

The proposed changes are as follows;

1) Install a spiral staircase to improve access and use of the loft room.

The loft room is currently insulated, carpeted and has light, heating, a smoke alarm and a secondary means of escape via a window ladder. Aside from the difficulties in accessing it, it is a fully functional room. When the building was a pub the room was accessed via the original wooden staircase and is likely to have been in everyday use. However, in 2020 during the conversion of the property into a pair of semidetached dwellings, access to the loft room via the existing staircase was blocked. (The original staircase is still in situ and in use, but it now forms part of the adjacent property 2 Bekesbourne Lane).

During the conversion a new stud wall was created to form a landing area outside the bathroom and a doorway to the master bedroom. To overcome the lack of access to the loft room, at the time of the conversion, a small loft hatch was created (approx. 600mm x 600mm) above the landing and outside the bathroom door. However, this access option is very limiting, it requires a near vertical climb up a ladder and consequently everyday use of the loft room is severely hampered.

The proposal is to create a more usable access up to the loft room via a small spiral staircase (1200 x 1200mm). This will be achieved by closing the existing hatch and creating a new opening in the same ceiling above the first floor landing, just beyond the bathroom door.

The use of a spiral design has been chosen specifically because the opening will be much smaller than that required for a traditional stairwell. It is a compact design and therefore the loss of the historic fabric of the building will be reduced.

Since the spiral staircase will be sited at the current doorway into the master bedroom, that doorway will be blocked (the existing door will be removed and saved). A new entrance to the bedroom will be created in the recently created stud wall opposite the bathroom. The existing bedroom door will be rehung in this location.

To ensure that there is a designated route between the loft room and the landing and stairwell below, the new staircase will be fully enclosed with a stud wall. This will also ensure privacy within the master bedroom. All finishes will be in keeping with the original materials already within the property -eg lime plaster, breathable paints, skirting to match existing.

2) Install a conservation rooflight on the rear roof to improve the natural light in the ground floor kitchen.

During the recent conversion the pub's washroom facilities were converted into a kitchen. The change in purpose for this area has seemingly been implemented without taking account of the differing requirements of a kitchen and a washroom. For example, the need for an additional source of daylight and a direct exit from the kitchen to the garden. Consequently, the kitchen is dark, it has a small window unit that opens and one sealed glazed pane that faces the neighbour's wall. It has no exterior door, and at present there is insufficient daylight to make the room useable during the day without having to turn on lights. The proposal is to install a conservation rooflight onto the rear peg tile roof. To minimize the visual impact the rooflight will be slimline and set flush with the roofline. The maximum dimensions will be (w) 1000mm x (h) 800mm

The installation of the rooflight will necessitate trimming of vertical roof trusses, however the proposal seeks to address the lack of natural light in the kitchen with the minimum disruption to the historic fabric of the building by installing the rooflight where two original trusses (that were deemed to be rotten) were replaced during the conversion works in 2020 . This proposal also seeks to reduce reliance on electric lights during daylight hours which will have a positive impact on energy use and the environment. The rooflight will be located on the rear roof of the property that faces the newly created residents' car park, and as such is deemed to be a discreet location. The historic streetscape of the junction of the High Street and Bekesbourne Lane will be unaltered.

3) Install a dressing room area within the Master Bedroom

The bedroom is a generously proportioned room, approximately 5m x 5m. The proposal is to reduce the size of the bedroom by approx. 1.2m x 2.8m in order to create a dressing room area behind a stud partition wall, with a doorway between the dressing room and the bedroom. The area under consideration already forms a recess in the room and therefore partitioning it off will not adversely impact on the overall proportions of the room. The stud wall will be finished with a lime plaster to match existing materials in use within the bedroom.

In conclusion; the overall aim of this application is to respect the historic fabric of the building, through the design of the interventions and the materials used, whilst also enhancing use and enjoyment of the building by its occupant. Listed Building Consent is sought on the basis that these proposals and have been carefully considered and chosen because they balance respect for the building's history with the needs of 21st century living.