
From: Merlin Lewis <merlin.lewis@spab.org.uk>
Sent: 26 February 2025 21:42
To: Matthew Hall (City Dev)
Subject: 25/0072/LBC, 25 The Strand, Topsham, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0AX our ref. 203324

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25 The Strand, Topsham, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0AX

Roof and floor repairs. External masonry and wall repairs; re-building of parapet. Window repairs. Removal and repair of external wall cement rendering.

Dear Mr Hall,

Thank you for notifying the SPAB of this application for Listed Building Consent. We have reviewed the application and offer the following comments.

The need for structural repairs at the first and second floors in the south-west range is clear, and our preference for the works to the floor joists would be to employ steel angles. These offer a neater method by which to tie the floor joists to the walls when compared to the option utilising timber.

The need for repairs to the roof trusses in that range is also clear, but we have concerns about the proposed methods. The roof trusses may date to 1739 and are certainly C18, but it is not confirmed whether the ceiling joists are contemporary to the trusses or later additions. They are bolted to the truss chords at present but support a lath and plaster ceiling which invites further assessment: the ceiling joists are likely historic, if not original. The interventions as proposed would require the cutting back of these joists in, by our calculations, at least 32 locations. The trimmed joists would then be hung off joist hangers. This change is required as a direct result of the proposed interventions to stabilise the junction between the truss cords and the wallhead by encapsulating the ends of the chords in a timber boot. The boot would have the further negative impact of obscuring the chamfered edges of the cords (albeit within the attic space).

In our view that a more elegant solution is likely available which addresses the structural issues whilst requiring a less bulky and visually cumbersome addition and avoiding the need to cut away so much of the ceiling joists. We recommend that the applicant engages a CARE accredited engineer to advise in this matter, and that further investigation is made as to the age and significance of the ceiling joists.

Considering the 6 no. south-east facing windows at first floor level in the central Victorian range (sail loft), and the shutters and pelmets to the front elevation, we would have hoped to see a greater assessment of the age and significance of these elements within the application. As their significance has not been made clear, it is our view that the application has not yet satisfied paragraph 217 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires applicants 'to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected' by proposals. Additional information is required to address this.

The application confirms that repair of the windows is feasible, and so their replacement would not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that these are modern introductions. Regarding the shutters and pelmets, the significance and condition of these elements should be made clear, so that an assessment can be made as to whether their replacement is appropriate.

At present the Society cannot support the application, and we recommend that it be withdrawn so that the items introduced may be addressed. We would be grateful if you could renotify us as and when additional information or revisions become available.

020 8148 4863

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Merlin Lewis

Caseworker

020 8148 4863

Normal working days: Monday-Thursday

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY

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