

Amended Design and Access and Heritage Statement in Support of Proposed Alterations and Extension of 60 High Street Glastonbury.

PREAMBLE

The property is the right side of this pair below



This Statement is amended in response to the Conservation Officer's comments on, and objection to, the original application, as a consequence of which we withdrew that application and are submitting a much-reduced scheme, and submitting additional information, as requested.

Within this submission, the local repair work to the upper floor ceiling rafters and floor joists damaged irrecoverably by water damage was given prior approval by the Pre-application Case Officer, without requiring the submission of details of the work. However, details of the consequent repair work was submitted to that Officer and the Local Authority before and while it was being carried out, without comment in return. The consulting Conservation Officer on the withdrawn application has requested a record of this repair work, as described.



INTRODUCTION

60 High Street is an ashlar stone faced building forming a Listed pair with the adjacent 62 High Street. The stone frontage rises as a parapet concealing a hidden gutter also shared with the adjacent property. The detailing to the façade has weathered so that some of the features here have lost the clarity of their original shape.

The property comprises two abutting buildings (henceforth referred to as the front and rear building), with differing floor, ceiling and ridge heights, and with a hidden gutter between their respective roof slopes, and with rear single storey outbuildings. There is also a modern conservatory infill in poor repair.

The property has been kept in poor repair over some decades, prior to the applicant's purchase, most seriously allowing unchecked the ingress of rainwater within the building behind the High Street façade. This in turn has led to water damage to the inner face of the external wall, and severe wet rot to the roof timbers and first floor joists.

These have now been repaired following consultation with the LPA Conservation Officer, and the hidden gutter replaced, and loose tiles reset, to stop further water ingress. The success of this work is still being monitored, but may be adversely affected by the state of the adjacent property, which is in separate ownership.

The existing use of the property is residential, and the proposed use is a mix of commercial (café) at ground floor, and residential on the upper floors, with the garden split between the commercial and residential uses, and the existing dilapidated building at the southern end of the garden replaced with a new studio serving the continued residential use.

INTERNAL CHANGES PROPOSED

In order to allow a commercial use at ground floor, it is proposed to separate the commercial and residential accesses internally within the ground floor.

To make the commercial use viable, it is proposed to widen an existing infilled door opening between the front and rear rooms (to allow adequate circulation and supervision), to provide outdoor seating with temporary cover (e.g. parasols), and to build an external disabled access WC (to bring these outbuildings functionally into the commercial use, and to provide adequate seating for the café). This is a compromise of the withdrawn application in terms of number of customers that can be served in adverse weather.

To allow the widening of the existing opening between front and rear rooms, it is proposed to move the stairs further to one side, at the same time allowing a less steep stair angle and levelling the top landing with the first floor of the rear building (which presently has a small inconvenient step up). This has been accepted in principle by the consulting Conservation Officer.

It is proposed to remove the modern conservatory extension, which is in poor repair, and replace it with an extension of the same approximate footprint and form.

There were two door openings into the front building first floor room with fanlights over, one closed off, and door removed. It is proposed to close off the open door opening and re-open the closed door opening, matching the existing door, which will be retained in situ, as requested by the Conservation Officer. This is to allow an amended kitchen and better functionality of this room.

At second floor in the rear building, it is proposed to form a bathroom to serve the two bedrooms here, necessitating the removal of part of the partitioning to form the access door. This is to provide adequate bathroom facilities within the residential part of the building.

REPAIRS

As alluded to above, repairs have been carried out to the front building roof and hidden gutter, in line with consultations with the LPA conservation officer, in order to stop ongoing damage to the building fabric, and the damaged timber structures (ceiling and floor) have been repaired in situ, with minimised structural intervention and loss of historic fabric.



FIRE COMPARTMENTATION

While the roof void was exposed, a 1 hour minimum fire partition has been formed between 60 and 62 High Street roof voids, which was absent and presented a serious fire risk. This comprised a 100x50 softwood frame faced 1 hour fire board.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

DESIGN

The rear outbuildings will be retained as they are, with an opening formed in the recess where the existing Aga stands, to allow a store and wash-up area adjacent the Kitchen, without having to exit and re-enter the outbuildings constantly.

The rude tin-clad building at the south end of the garden will be replaced with a timber structure forming a residential studio. This will have a pitched roof and be offset from adjacent boundaries.

A disabled-standard WC is proposed separate from but adjacent the existing line of outbuildings, with a monopitch roof to match the existing adjacent forms and allow sufficient headroom internally.

SCALE AND AMOUNT

The WC building will be 1.5x2.m internally in line with disabled access requirements.

LAYOUT

The internal uses are separated simply by the insertion of a door into the proposed café, and relocating the existing internal door to allow this. The internal layout is otherwise substantially unchanged, save the introduction of a second bathroom at top floor level. The studio outbuilding will be offset from adjacent boundaries to allow construction and separation, and the new WC building will be in relatively easy reach of customers without affecting the existing historic layout.

ACCESS

The entrance to the building comprises an approximately 12cm step adjacent the sloping pavement and does not allow for any improvement. The change of use is from residential to residential and commercial, so that the commercial unit will need to provide a temporary solution for disabled access, using e.g. a ramp. However, this issue is typical of the sloping High Street and historic frontages, and any changes to it would be detrimental to the conservation area and Listed Building.

Given the existing residential use and the nature of the proposed commercial use, there is no requirement for the provision of parking spaces within the building curtilage.

LANDSCAPING

The immediate rear courtyard comprises blue lias paving laid at a gentle slope. It is proposed retain these. All trees will be retained within the café garden.

It is proposed to form a paved courtyard at the far end of the garden (which is presently partly hard landscaped) adjacent the proposed replacement residential studio.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Here is the Listing for 60 and 62 High Street (LN 1167912):

HIGH STREET 1. 1133 (South Side) Nos 60 and 62 ST 5038 8/154 II GV 2. C19 Gothic front, probably to earlier cottages. 2 storeys. Ashlar. Cornice and parapet. 3 square-headed Gothic windows to 1st floor, 3 and 4 lights each with stone mullions, rectangular hoodmoulds and head-stops. Another similar 3 light window to right on ground floor. 2 central doorways with chamfered surrounds, continuous hood over on brackets. Paterae in hood mouldings, 2 grotesques and one figure carved on brackets. Small shop-front to left. Nos 60 to 66 (even) form a group.

This 'drive-by' Listing makes no reference to the taller, second, rear building. It is uncertain which of the two buildings came first. The presence of a door opening (since filled in) between front and rear buildings points to them being built at different times. It is most likely that (as intimated by the Listing) there were two earlier pre-Victorian buildings adjacent the High Street, which were refaced in the 19th Century, while the rear building is quite clearly Victorian. The height of the ground floor ceiling at the front may point to an earlier commercial use.

The mouldings and figures on the façade have weathered badly and the stone may be porous.



Due to a long-term lack of maintenance by the previous owner, water has ingressed from the failed hidden gutter behind the parapet, and to a lesser extent through slipped tiles and deteriorated cement haunching at its edge. The hidden gutter is shared with 62 High Street, where the downpipe is located. The overall integrity of the fabric relies on good maintenance by both property owners.

A pre-application consultation took place (2023/1548/LPA) with the LPA Conservation Officer, the response issued 26th January 2024. Within this it was agreed that the 'roof is in urgent need of repair and it is understood that can commence, without planning consent if materials are used as the originals'. This work was carried out at the end of 2024, using timber joists of the same depth in the floor, and framed out in timber in the ceiling where a far greater amount of damage occurred, and this work is itemised on the current planning application drawings for information. These details were confirmed to the LPA prior and during the works, with no return comments.

The pre-application proposals showed a complete relocation of the stairs, which the Officer did not like, and instead we have shown them remaining in substantially the same location as existing, but moved eastward to allow the proposed internal café layout to work, to ease the angle of the stairs, and to resolve one of the awkward first floor level differences. The stairs have proven not to be original, which was a concern of the Officer. Two independent builders have confirmed that these stairs date to circa 1970 using a softwood consistent with that date. The filled in door opening between front and rear ground floor rooms also appears to conflict with the existing stair position.



Existing stairs---

The preapplication advice accepted the removal and replacement of the rear lean-to. V



< The open (nearest) and closed (furthest) door openings at first floor. The closest door will be retained closed. The furthest will be re-opened with door to match the existing.





Regarding the proposed ground floor opening between the front and rear rooms, the advice was that a small new opening may be acceptable here. In fact, there is *already* an existing historic opening here which has been partially filled with boarding, and the proposal is to re-open it and make it wider towards the proper function of the café. The reinstatement of an opening here would be at the original position and serve as a reminder of its earlier existence. It seems reasonable, where a completely new opening was considered acceptable in the preapplication advice, that a historic opening be re-opened and widened instead.

< Existing opening with later stair soffite over.

The formation of a café would require separated access to it and the retained residential use, and this was suggested within the preapplication submission. The response was that forming a separate café entrance within the building (as proposed here) would need justification against the loss of fabric arising. Put simply, there is no feasible alternative to achieve this separation – the important building frontage would not allow a separate entrance off the High Street, and the location of a café entrance further into the building would give rise to an interrupted circulation and necessarily a narrower entrance door to both the café and the residential volumes – with a door swing that would conflict with the stair position. The proposal instead would give a better, more immediate, access for the café (particularly in terms of disabled and pram access widths) and allow the existing inner door to be kept (relocated as shown on the floor plan).

As the Officer commented, the NPPF states (Para 208): *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing optimal viable use'*. The proposed provision of a café, and associated changes to allow this, falls squarely within this clause. The proposed loss of historic fabric was assessed by the same Officer as leading to *'less than substantial harm'*.

This proposal allows a commercial use which would be a valuable community addition, and would fall within the officer's *'broadly supportive'* view of the proposed works, *'to bring the property back into a good state of repair after a period of neglect'*. She further stated that *'the public benefit of the scheme must outweigh the level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset'*, which would be the case here, and that *'The site is within a Primary Shopping Area, and therefore these additional town centre uses are supported'*.

The Officer recognised that the outbuildings needed to be brought into a good state of repair. For these to work functionally as spaces brought into the commercial use they will need to be repaired and become waterproof. This will be done using the same materials and roof coverings as existing.

Rear outbuilding roofs, and garden →

There is one further internal change proposed, which is to form a bathroom at second floor level. In order to do this, there would necessarily be a loss of timber partitioning to form a doorway. This would be a minimal loss against the retention of substantial internal timber partitioning and cladding, and the proposed doorway would be identical to the existing ledged and boarded doors, and the separating partition would be identical to the existing ledged and boarded partitions at this level.



V Proposed shared bathroom location v



The existing solitary outbuilding at the end of the garden, of basic construction with a flat tin roof and tin cladding over, is proposed to be replaced with a timber clad clay-tiled pitched roof.

V Tin outbuilding and neighbouring building v

