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# Grange Court High Road Chigwell

## *An Addendum:*

*to the Heritage Appraisal of the Building & the  
Possible Impact of Revised Proposals as an Addition to  
the Original Appraisal dated December 2016*

*November 2019*

# 1 Purpose of this Appraisal Addendum

1.01 This appraisal Addendum should be read alongside the original heritage appraisal produced for the conversion and extension of Grange Court (**A Heritage Appraisal of the Building and the Possible Impact of the Proposed Works December 2016**). That heritage appraisal accompanied the applications for planning permission and listed building consent which were granted on 24 April 2018. The original heritage appraisal describes the buildings history, heritage significance and the possible impact of the now-approved proposals.

1.02 Throughout the one-and-a-half-year period following the granting of planning permission and listed building consent, subsequent removal of modern claddings and other modern interventions have demonstrated the alarming extent of decay in this important building as well as revealing original features of interest previously concealed which can now be retained and included in the restoration and conversion of the building.

1.03 It is now a matter of urgency that the currently proposed revisions to the consented scheme are agreed so that the building can be restored and brought back to a viable and sustainable life.

1.04 From the heritage perspective, the revisions to the consented proposals can be summarised under four main headings:

(i) Amended roof treatment including a concealed terrace

(ii) The incorporation of an internal lift within the building.

(iii) Some modification of the approved internal conversion proposals, mostly in consequence of a revised proposed lift location.

(iv) Some modification of the approved design of the proposed extension building.

## 2 Commentary

### 2.01 PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF THE ROOF STOREY

The original heritage appraisal identified the second-floor roof storey as an area of low heritage significance (see section 7.11). The photograph on the cover of the original heritage appraisal from 1918 shows a multi-gabled parapet on the garden elevation. This parapet and the associated dormer windows are now of a different form with a flat parapet, indicating the high level of change to the roof storey and its form, which was confirmed by examination of the internal fabric.

The heritage significance that remains to be associated with the roof storey resides in its external profile as a typically neo-classical “M” shaped mansard roof. It is important, therefore, that any proposals retain and restore this characteristic profile.

The revised proposals for the roof envisage a roof terrace which is completely contained within the surrounding restored roof slopes. This terrace will not be visible from the surrounding views of Grange Court and will not cause the loss of any historic fabric. The impact on the heritage significance of the building would be minimal.

### 2.02 PROPOSED LIFT

There have been extensive discussions regarding this proposal (especially with Matthew Crook, conservation officer EFDC). The principle of a lift provision was accepted but there was a debate concerning its location within the building. The currently revised proposed location was agreed as one which would be least intrusive into important areas and result in least disruption of historic fabric.

It is worth revisiting the conservation good practice and policy context concerning the provision of the lift in this case. Firstly, in the approved scheme, the interior of Grange Court has been divided into a few large apartments in order to minimise the disruption or subdivision of historic rooms. This inevitably leads to large

apartments providing for family accommodation. Access to the upper floors can present problems for parents with small children or the elderly. Historic England's guidance in "Easy Access to Historic Buildings (2015) states in the introductory summery;

*While the needs of disabled people must be a priority, we also know that easier access will benefit almost all of us at some stage in our lives. Whether during pregnancy, as a parent pushing a buggy or an older person who is finding steps a bit harder to manage, we all value thoughtful and effective design for our access needs.*

Further guidance concerning lifts is given on page 34;

### *Lifts*

*The best way to provide accessible circulation between different floors of a building is to install an integrated and suitably sized passenger lift. As well as helping wheelchair users it can also be of benefit to ambulant people, older people and people with push chairs. A passenger lift is more likely to be feasible in larger buildings.....*

The provision of a lift in the location proposed will greatly aid full access and sustainable use and what the NPPF Practice Guidance calls Heritage public benefits;

- *Reducing or removing risks to the heritage asset*
- *Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation.*

The provision of a suitably sized and located passenger lift unquestionably assists the usability for all and long-term conservation of Grange Court.

It is also important that interventions into historic buildings such as a lift must be well-designed in their own right. Historic England's policy guidance "Conservation Principles - Policies and Guidance states;

*Page 47, paragraph 101*

*However, places should not be rendered incapable of a sustainable use simply because of a reluctance to make modest but irreversible changes. It is also unreasonable to take the idea of reversibility to a point that intervention in*

*significant places diminish their aesthetic values by appearing contrived, awkward or ugly, in order to ensure that it can be undone.*

The provision of a lift is an important asset to ensuring the future full, viable and sustainable use of Grange Court. This can be achieved, (as discussed with the conservation officer Matthew Crook), by an appropriately located lift which will be a “heritage public benefit”, causing minimal disruption to the historic fabric and plan form.

## 2.03 MODIFICATION OF THE APPROVED INTERNAL CONVERSION

The location of the lift has produced some minor changes to the internal conversion works that do not raise any significant heritage issues. It is also proposed to reinstate the partition wall in the ground floor front room to form an entrance hall as had existed for approximately seventy years. Although this wall was always a later intervention, it’s reinstatement will mean that the legibility of the building plan will be reinforced by the main historic front door continuing to be the main entrance with direct and visible access to the lift at the rear.

## 2.04 MODIFICATION OF THE APPROVED DESIGN FOR THE REAR EXTENSION

The approved rear extension would be modified in detail by the proposed revisions. These revisions would have a minimal effect on the listed building and it’s setting.

# 3 Conclusion

3.01 The first priority in this case should be resolving the discussions and consultations concerning the relatively minor nature of the proposed revisions. These discussions have been the subject of lengthy and protracted exchanges. It is of the utmost importance that works of restoration and conversion should begin as soon as possible to arrest the decay and uncertainty over this important Grade II Star building; a heritage asset clearly at risk.

3.02 The major principles concerned in this project are already resolved by the permission of 24 April 2018. None of the proposed revisions described above

constitute major departures from the intent of the original scheme. No major intrusion into a significant heritage room is proposed nor the loss of any significant historic fabric.

3.03 The historic form and covering of the much-altered roof will be restored in terms of the external view from all sides of the house, and the carefully-positioned lift will contribute in a major way to the viability and sustainability of the converted building.