

From: [Edward Freedman](#)
To: [Harriet Frank](#)
Cc: [Planning](#)
Subject: NYM/2018/0091/LB
Date: 03 April 2018 19:39:07

Dear Harriet

Please find Building Conservation comments on this application below.

King's Head Cottages is a former single house, now two maisonettes, said to be of late seventeenth or early eighteenth century origins. Its current character is that of a later eighteenth or early nineteenth century cottage, and hence it is likely to contain within the structure residual fabric reflecting its earlier origins. Its name also suggests a former use as an inn. Consequently, the building possesses multiple heritage values encompassing evidential, historical illustrative, aesthetic design and fortuitous and communal values reflecting its layered building fabric, layout, design and history of use.

The application proposes a number of works to bring the maisonette back into use as a one-bedroomed dwelling. These works would affect the architectural or historic character of the building in the following terms:

- removal of wall between two ground floor rooms
- removal of wall between kitchen and passage
- installation of new staircase between the smaller cells of the two floors
- replacement of timber wall beam to basement and lifting door height with concrete lintel between two cells
- replacement of historic reused timber ceiling beams
- concreting of silt covered floor (what lies below the silt?) Effect on permeability
- damp proofing and lining the basement walls
- construction of sealed glazed compartment around historic stone staircase
- alteration of the boarded door to the basement to form stable door with limited light via vent slits and infilling of lower doorway to provide water-proof barrier from seawater surges down sloping passageway

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes upon local planning authorities a "General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions" which requires it "In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

The sections of wall proposed for removal would be detrimental to the architectural and historic character of the building due to the loss of cellular plan form. The current layout possibly retains fabric of original divisions and certainly retains the legibility of historic arrangements as the two ground floor rooms largely retain their evident historic cellular forms. The smaller room occupies the full-height "outshut" referred to in the list description and has therefore always been a separate room, the dividing wall continuing up from the masonry wall below. Unfixed historic doors are also evident in the building, and should be re-fixed in historic doorways. It is possible that the current kitchen 'bay' to the rear of the larger room and at higher level originally housed a winder staircase, this may be determinable by investigation of the upper floors. The application does not

include a full historic buildings appraisal by a buildings archaeologist which might clarify historic arrangements, therefore there is insufficient information to understand the full impact of the proposals with certainty.

The proposed scheme is premised on removing the dividing wall between the upper rooms, as the installation of a new staircase as proposed would reduce the small second room to a useless space if the wall were retained. The small room below would be more severely circumscribed by the retention of the historic stone staircase in addition to the new staircase. Consequently, I would strongly recommend revising the proposals to retain the existing arrangements as a one-bedroomed flat, with unconverted basement below, and including a full specification of works for the refurbishment of this unit.

Secondary concerns with the proposed scheme relate to the treatment of the basement, the conversion of which would fundamentally alter its character by necessitating the construction of a damp-proofed and insulated box within the existing cells. This would wholly obscure the evidence for multiple building phases visible within the exposed masonry walls, obscuring its cellar character and evidence for the historical development of the building. Alterations proposed would entail unnecessary loss and alteration of historic fabric, and damp-proofing treatments to make the space habitable that are currently unspecified but I am sceptical would be effective due to the seriously damp subterranean conditions. The installation of an impermeable concrete floor for example is likely to increase damp levels in the wall masonry, and the reduction in ventilation from sealing and dry-lining the space liable to encourage mould and decay. The treatment of the stone staircase would likely not be satisfactory due to the continuing permeability of the stone which would have high water saturation and result in condensation forming in contact with the glass.

I consider that the proposed scheme is incompatible with the LPA's duty to have regard to the preservation of features of special architectural or historic interest which the building possesses. In accordance with para.132 of the NPPF, there is no clear and convincing justification for the harm identified and consequently I would recommend refusal of this application or its amendment on the lines suggested above.

Thanks

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Please note: my usual working days are Monday to Wednesday