

Response to Conservation Officer's Comments – 20 Harmer Street, Gravesend (Refs: 20250833 & 20250842)

Following the Conservation Officer's comments, please find below a point-by-point response, supported by both historical and recent internal photographs of the property.

General Overview

The internal works appear to have been completed with great care and respect for the building's historic character. From reviewing both historic and current photographs, it is evident that all recent works have been purely cosmetic, including general redecoration and maintenance.

1. Chimney Breasts

Conservation Officer comment: "The chimney breasts on each floor have been entirely removed."

This is not the case. All chimney breasts remain fully intact throughout the building. The recent works have been carefully carried out around the original chimney structures, ensuring that no alteration or removal has occurred. This is clearly visible in the submitted photographs.

2. Central Partition Walls

Conservation Officer comment: "The central partition wall that would have divided the principal front and rear rooms has been removed."

No internal walls have been removed. Every original partition wall remains in place and intact from top to bottom. The current photographs confirm the original layout remains unchanged.

3. Balustrading and Staircase

Conservation Officer comment: "The landing to each floor has had balustrading removed to allow for the creation of lobbies."

This is not the case. The original handrail and spindles remain in place throughout the stairwell. The balustrade design appears original, and no alteration or removal has occurred. The photographs clearly show this continuity across all levels.

4. Internal Panelled Doors

Conservation Officer comment: “No information has been submitted to establish if internal panelled doors have been replaced with fire doors, this being likely.”

Some internal doors may have been upgraded to fire-rated doors, but this has been done sensitively and only where necessary for safety compliance. Should the Conservation Officer require, the applicant is happy to review these elements and make any minor adjustments needed to ensure both heritage and safety standards are met.

5. Internal Architectural Features (Skirtings, Architraves, Cornices, etc.)

Conservation Officer comment: “No information has been submitted to establish if internal architectural features have been replaced, such as skirting boards, architraves and ceiling cornices.”

From the photographs, it is clear that original architectural features have been retained throughout the property. Where new partitions were introduced, a clear effort has been made to match existing detailing, ensuring continuity and respect for the building’s character.

The following features remain visible and in good condition:

- Paneling beneath sash windows
- Traditional boxing around window reveals
- Original skirting boards and architraves
- Decorative picture rails and cornices

These details demonstrate that the interior fabric of the listed building has been preserved to a high standard.

6. Overall Heritage Impact

Conservation Officer comment: “This application offers an opportunity to reverse some of the harm caused to the internal appearance of the listed building...”

Based on the current and historic evidence, there has been no harm caused to the listed building. All original structural and architectural elements remain intact, and the works undertaken have been limited to cosmetic improvements such as painting, decorating, and general upkeep.

The property continues to retain its historic integrity and architectural character, with visible respect for its heritage value.

Conclusion

The accompanying photographs confirm that:

- No original structural elements have been altered or removed,
- The key architectural features remain intact, and
- All recent works have been minor and sympathetic.

This demonstrates that the property has been maintained with due care and sensitivity to its listed status and conservation area setting.

Appendix: Photographic Evidence



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