

Heritage Statement

196 & 197 Parrock Street

Gravesend

DA12 1EW



Significance of the Asset

The building is Grade II listed and both because of its unique design and construction and because of its town centre location, the building is undoubtedly important to the character, appearance and chronicle of Gravesend. It is situated in the King Street Conservation Area opposite St John's Catholic Church. Furthermore, it is on the one way system. Unusually in the country and perhaps uniquely, in Gravesend, it has curved glass bay windows making it a landmark building to anyone familiar with the Gravesend one way system.

The Property

The property one of a pair of semi-detached houses, forms part of a row of attached properties on the west side of Parrock Street. The bay curved glass windows are mirrored in the adjoining property to the north (195 Parrock Street), accentuating their impact. The date of construction is not known.

It was converted to use as office accommodation prior to being given its grade II listing in 1975 and aside from the general layout, there is little evidence of residential use remaining. It has been vacant for five or more years and is falling into disrepair.

The property has four floors, plus basement, the layout on each floor being a front and back room leading off from the stair on the first three floors. The stairs to the top floor go between the front and back rooms.

The first floor is combined with 197 Parrock Street providing an additional front and back room, the front room currently split into two.. The staircase and door positions indicate that this was always the case with the exception of the split of the front room.

On the second floor there is a small room above the front door, perhaps built for architectural congruency..

There is a dormer window built into the loft which is not mirrored in 195 Parrock Street and is probably an addition. There is currently no access to the loft except through the ceiling hatch but the ceiling is of plasterboard, so there was probably access at some earlier date.

At the rear of the property, there are w.c.s. off the landings between ground and first floors, and first and second floors. With a flat roof, these appear to have been an addition to the building.

The bay window continues to the basement, evidently having been bricked up and the land in front filled in.

Doors

All internal doors and the back are fire doors, none of them original.

Windows

All the external windows are original with the exception of the rear window on the ground floor which is upvc and a steel Critall window on the top floor. There is deterioration particularly to the front windows which require attention. The ground floor front bay window was made with curved glass. Three of the eight curved panes are missing.

Ceilings

All ceilings are plasterboard

Current Condition

The roof needs attention. Water is penetrating into the top front room and buddleia can be seen growing from the parapet. Five of the curved glass panes are missing and have been replaced with poly carbonate.

The internal condition would be serviceable for office use, subject to redecoration and attention to the roof.

The proposal

The building is currently designated as office accommodation and the proposal is to return it to residential use, with one flat on each floor.

The proposal includes removing the soil infilled in the front of the building, re-instatement of the basement window, door and wrought iron railings.

The basement door shown on the drawings follows our understanding of what was the original door at 195 Parrock Street. The design will be altered if a different configuration is found on excavation.

The missing curved glass window panes will be replaced.

Justification for the proposed works

The building is unoccupied, and has been for at least five years. There is little or no demand for the type of office accommodation which it offers and no alternative use is apparent.

Conversion to residential flats is proposed as the best use for the building. The only identifiable alternative is a House of Multiple Occupation, which indeed might be more financially viable, but would require more extensive alterations and offer less hope of being valued and cared for. Without use the building will deteriorate and eventually fall down.

Architectural Assets

There will be no change to the existing footprint of the building or to the outside of the building except reinstatement of the basement bay window and railings as described and installation of escape window to the rear of the basement.

All internal doors are fire doors and all ceilings are plasterboard. This was probably done for fireproofing purposes on conversion to offices.

Original features that do remain are:

- the cornices on the ceilings on the ground floor and the front rooms on the first floor
- a dado rail in the rear room to 196 on the first floor
- the stairs and balustrade up to, but not including, the second floor.

All these will be retained. Any fire protection or partitioning required will be done without damage to the above features.

The sash windows will be reconditioned and retained.

The stairs to the basement will be retained as requested.

Structural Work

Conversion of the building to office accommodation did not involve any structural work, and no structural work is proposed in the conversion back to residential use.

Proposals and their affect on the significance of the asset.

The proposals have been made to minimise effects to the significance of the asset.

Fire protection around balustrades is only required on the second floor landing and these balustrades are not original – but, in any case, the fire protection will be placed around the balustrades without causing any damage.

To the exterior, the only changes will be to reinstate the front basement window and door, the front railings and replace the missing curved glass panes. There will also be an escape window to the rear of the basement.

Internal room sizes will remain unchanged except in where bathrooms and escape passages are necessary. All of the existing internal walls will remain.

The staircase between the ground floor and basement will be retained as requested.

No fire surrounds remain in the building.

Communal Value

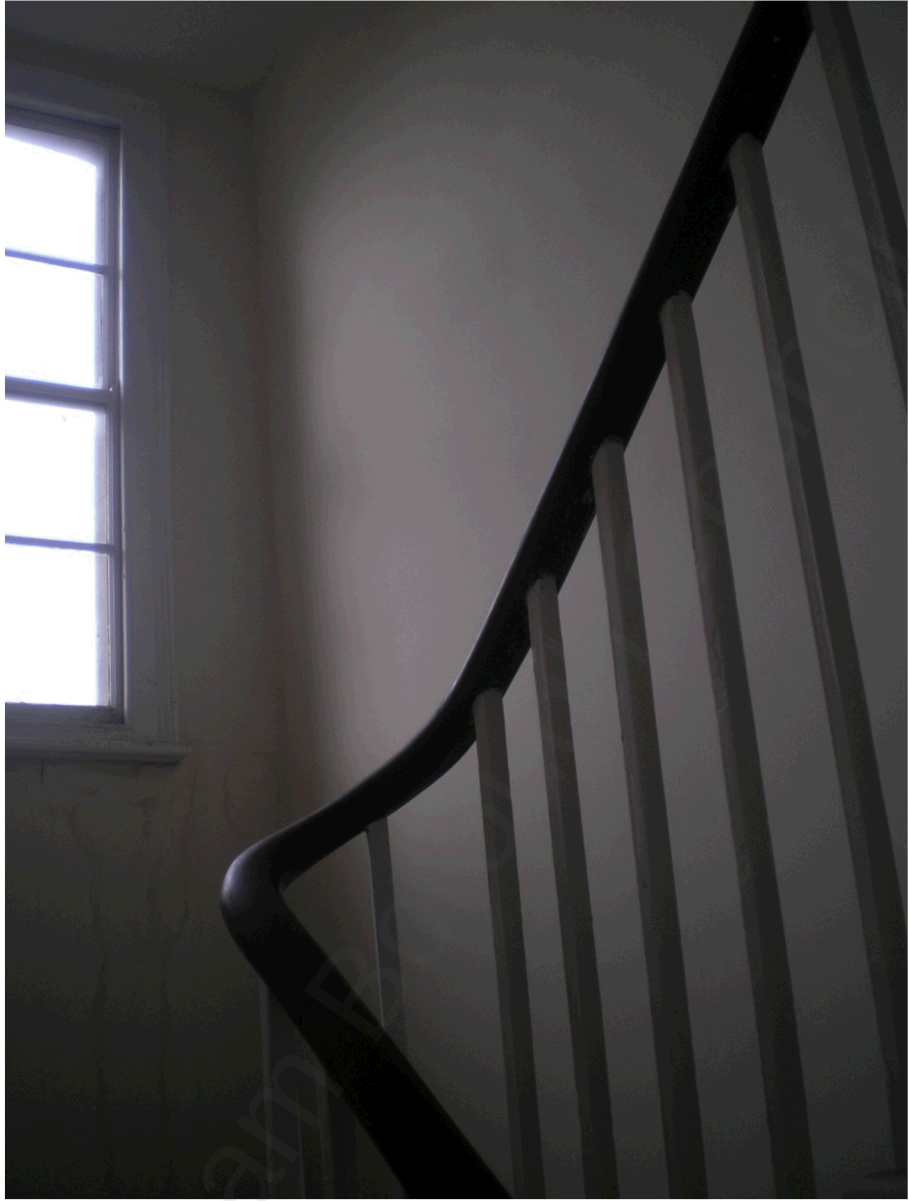
Since the building has no public function, indeed no current function, it has no current communal value.

Gravesham Borough Council











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