

**11. 15/0904/LBC - Listed Building Consent: Installation of handrail to entrance steps at BASING HOUSE, 46 HIGH STREET, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE, WD3 1HP for Watford Borough Council (DCES)**

Parish: Non Parished

Ward: Rickmansworth Town

Expiry Statutory Period: 30 June 2015

Officer: Joanna Bowyer

Recommendation: That Listed Building Consent be granted.

This application is brought before the Committee as the land is owned by Three Rivers District Council.

**1. Relevant Planning History**

- 1.1 03/0452/LBC - Listed Building Consent: Fire damage repairs and removal of dormer window and replace with 2 velux windows – permitted 21.05.03.

**2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The application site is to the north side of High Street, Rickmansworth within the Rickmansworth Town Centre Conservation Area.

- 2.2 The building on the application site is a Grade II Listed Building which is described in the listing text as:

*Large house, now Council offices. C17 to rear, c.1740 front range. Remodelled c.1850-60, extended c.1885 and early C20. Timber frame to rear, rendered. Extended in red brick. Tiled roof, slate roofed additions. 2 parallel 5 bay ranges. 2 storeys and attics. Steps up to central entrance: 6 panelled C18 door, panelled reveals, pedimented doorcase with fluted Doric pilasters, traceried semi-circular fanlight. Flanking and first floor C19 sashes with flat arched heads, blind boxes. Plinth, plat band. Moulded brick cornice. Stone coped parapet returned at original gable ends with stacks with oversailing caps. Set back slightly at each end is a single bay late C19 extension in slightly darker brick but following the C18 model precisely. To rear: C17 range has some exposed framing with brick nogging. External end stacks with offsets. C20 windows. Left return: sashes to 2 storey early C20 block, now Council Chamber. Garden elevation: 2 ground floor French windows with margin lights, diamond leaded panes, segmental relieving arches. 4 bay ornate cast-iron verandah. 3 first floor sashes. End stacks. 2 span slate roofs. Right return steps down to lower rear block with hipped slate roof. 1 storey outshut to rear right and further additions not of special interest. Interior: jowled posts, windbraces in C17 roof. C19 staircase. Plaster ceiling in Council Chamber. From 1672-7 Basing House was William Penn's home in Rickmansworth. (RCHM Typescript).*

- 2.3 Part of the ground floor of the building is in use as the Three Rivers museum which is accessed from a centrally sited door in the south elevation of the building. There is a small pitched roof canopy entrance porch with two Doric pillars to the entrance and there are two small steps down from this entrance door to hardstanding at the south of the building which provides vehicular access and parking for Rickmansworth Library and Watersmeet theatre to the south of Basing House.

### 3. **Description of Proposed Development**

- 3.1 This application seeks Listed Building Consent for the installation of a handrail to the entrance steps to the Three Rivers Museum within the ground floor level of Basing House.
- 3.2 The handrail would be to the west of the entrance door and would splay to the south west of the building. The handrail would consist of metal tubing 48mm in diameter. There would be a 0.9m high support struts set 0.2m and 0.7m from the south elevation of Basing House which would support a handrail at a height of 1.2m from the adjacent ground level which would project to 1m forward of the elevation of Basing House.
- 3.3 The application form advises that the handrail would be galvanised steel finished in a black powder coating.
- 3.4 Amended plans have been submitted during the course of the application to reduce the proposal from a double to a single rail and to omit fixings directly to the elevation of Basing House which were initially proposed.

### 4. **Consultation**

#### 4.1. **Statutory Consultation**

- 4.1.1 Conservation Officer: *The property is a Grade II Listed Building. Following the revisions to the design, the impact on the setting of the heritage asset has been reduced. I understand that the installation is required to improve access to the Museum and consider that the proposal is now proportionate to both the accessibility need and the requirement of protecting the historic significance of the property.*

#### 4.2 **Public Consultation**

- 4.2.1 Number consulted: 6 No responses received: 0
- 4.2.2 Site Notice: posted 8 May 2015 and expired 29 May 2015.  
Press notice: published 15 May 2015 and expired 5 June 2015.

### 5. **Reason for Delay**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

### 6. **Relevant Planning Policy, Guidance and Legislation**

#### 6.1 The Three Rivers Local Plan

The Core Strategy was adopted on the 17 October 2011 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include Policies CP1, CP9 and CP12.

The Development Management Policies Local Development Document (LDD) was adopted on 26 July 2013 after the Inspector concluded that it was sound following Examination in Public which took place in March 2013. Relevant policies include DM3 and DM6.

#### 6.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

On 27 March 2012, the framework of government guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes was replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The application has been considered against the policies of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (adopted July 2013) and the Site Allocations Local Development Document (adopted November 2014) as well as government guidance. The policies of Three Rivers District Council reflect the content of the NPPF.

### 6.3 Other

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The growth and Infrastructure Act achieved Royal Assent on 25 April 2013.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Habitat Regulations 1994 may also be relevant.

## 7. **Planning Analysis**

### 7.1 Impact on Heritage Assets

7.1.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy seeks to promote buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design, the Council will expect development proposals to 'have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area' and 'conserve and enhance natural and heritage assets'.

7.1.2 Basing House is a Grade II Listed Building. Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies document sets out that applications will only be supported where they sustain, conserve, and where appropriate enhance the significance, character and setting of heritage assets and the surrounding historic environment and advises that in relation to Listed Buildings, development should not affect their character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, both internally or externally, or its wider setting.

7.1.3 The handrail would be visible from the hardstanding to the south of Basing House and there would also be views from the High Street which runs to the south. However, the handrail would be small in scale with a height of 1m and would only project up to 1m forward of the building.

7.1.4 The handrail would result in minimal intervention to the Listed Building, as it would not be directly fixed to the building with two support struts to the step and hardstanding adjacent to the south of the building. The handrail would be galvanised steel finished in a black powder coating and the materials proposed would not be detrimental to the character or the appearance of the Listed Building, in particular given the limited scale of the proposed handrail.

7.1.5 While the Conservation Officer initially raised concerns with the proposal, in relation to the amended plans the Conservation Officer has commented that the impact of the proposals on the setting of the Listed Building has been reduced and that the proposal is proportionate to the accessibility need and the requirement to protect the historic significance of the property.

7.1.6 Subject to the use of materials as specified in the application, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on the significance,

character or setting of the Listed Building and the development would be acceptable in accordance with Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP12 and Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies document.

## 7.2 Biodiversity

7.2.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This is further emphasised by regulation 3(4) of the Habitat Regulations 1994 which state that Councils must have regard to the strict protection for certain species required by the EC Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive places a legal duty on all public bodies to have regard to the habitats directive when carrying out their functions.

7.2.2 The protection of biodiversity and protected species is a material planning consideration in the assessment of this application in accordance with Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies document. Given the nature of the proposal and the application site, it is not considered that further surveying work would be necessary.

## 8. **Recommendation**

8.1 That LISTED BUILDING CONSENT BE GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

C1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

C2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: TRDC 16/1A, TRDC 16/2, TRDC 16/3

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to protect the integrity of the Grade II Listed Building and in the proper interests of planning in accordance with Policies CP1, CP9 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policies DM3 and DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

C3 The development shall not be carried out other than in the materials as have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority as stated at part 9 of the application form and no external materials shall be used other than those approved.

Reason: To ensure the historic and architectural character of the building is properly maintained, in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

## 8.2 **Informatives**

I1 With regard to implementing this permission, the applicant is advised as follows:

All relevant planning conditions must be discharged prior to the commencement of work. Requests to discharge conditions must be

made by application form; the relevant form is available on the Council's website ([www.threerivers.gov.uk](http://www.threerivers.gov.uk)). Fees are £97 per request (or £28 where the related permission is for extending or altering a dwellinghouse or other development in the curtilage of a dwellinghouse). Please note that requests made without the appropriate fee will be returned unanswered.

There may be a requirement for the approved development to comply with the Building Regulations. The Council's Building Control section can be contacted on telephone number 01923 727132 or at the website above for more information and application forms.

Where possible, energy saving and water harvesting measures should be incorporated. Information on this is also available from the Council's Building Control section. Any external changes to the building which may be subsequently required should be discussed with the Council's Development Management Section prior to the commencement of work.

- 12 The applicant is reminded that the Control of Pollution Act 1974 stipulates that construction activity (where work is audible at the site boundary) should be restricted to 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1300 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.