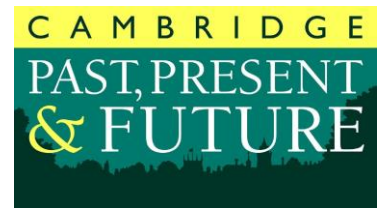


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By email to:

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tom.gray@greatercambridgeplanning.org

20/10/2021

Dear Tom

**Response to 21/04188/FUL: Conversion and extension to provide seven flats at 3-4 Market Hill
Cambridge CB2 3NJ**

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxton Watermill.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future welcome this proposal which will bring the upper floors of an interesting and historically and historically important buildings back into beneficial use. However, it is considered that there are significant errors in the assessment and understanding of the heritage assets and their significance, and a major opportunity to help secure the future of the adjacent Grade I listed building has been missed.

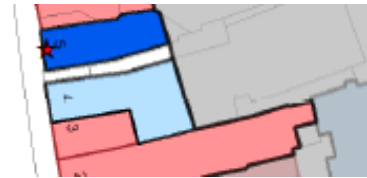
- The proposals are very welcome in principle. They will bring all the upper floors of nos 3, 4, and 4a into beneficial use. The flat-roofed extension to the rear of 4A will have no wider impacts on the Conservation Area or listed buildings.
- There are errors in the heritage statements which need to be corrected.
- There are issues in relation to fire escape and means of access to the upper floors; *this urgently needs detailed assessment, to include the possibility of enabling escape from upper floors of no 5.*
- The cycle ramps appear steep and impractical for all but the most able-bodied. Has any consideration been given to trying to incorporate a lift to enable more inclusive access? This would require taking a small part of the shop footprint: *this also needs to be pursued urgently, before new tenants come into the shop.*
- Further uncovering works need to be carried to establish the presence (or not) of the c16 ceiling in the ground floor of no 3: *this also needs to be pursued urgently, before new tenants come into the shop.*

- All historic features will require particularly special care, notably in the panelled room, to avoid damage or visual intrusion from pipes and other services.

1. Paras 1.3 and 1.10 of the Heritage Statement are incorrect: the rear building no 4a is not “entirely concealed”. It is visible in the iconic public view from Great St Mary’s tower.

2. Paras 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.4, 4.6 and 5.10 of the Heritage Statement are incorrect:

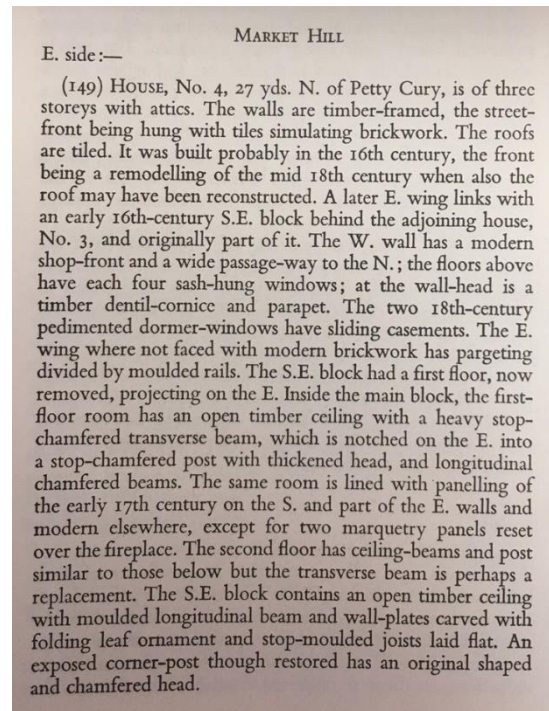
a) Crucially, the heritage statement omits that the present no 3 includes part of the listed building, which is L-shaped (see plan from Historic Core Appraisal);



b) Not all heritage features may have been removed from the ground floor. The reason for L-shape is clear in the RCHM description which notes the presence of a C16 ceiling in the SE block behind no 3. It is believed that this ceiling survives, hidden above the suspended ceiling in the shop. This ceiling needs to be investigated (it did not feature in the 2019 opening-up works), and safeguarded if it survives;

c) The potential presence of this ceiling in what is now no 3 invalidates the claim that “This building is not internally of special interest”

d) Para 5.10 incorrectly claims that “the rear structure is not a heritage asset”, when it is an undesignated heritage asset, of considerable historic significance for the Cambridge phenomenon (as the birthplace of Acorn computers).



3. The site is in a city centre block with a variety of ownerships, all non-College apart from no 2. A key issue in past proposals was Fire Safety: there was, and presumably remains, a complex network of fire escape routes in which 4 Market Hill provides an escape route from the upper floors of properties on Petty Cury.

4. Para 1.10 of the Heritage Statement says that the adjacent Grade I listed building 5 Market Hill “will not be affected by proposals” – but fails to notice that it is in poor condition, currently to let, with a short-term ground floor shop use, and empty and deteriorating upper floors. There is a very important plaster ceiling at first floor level, reputedly by the Doogood Brothers who worked for Wren. This is a highly significant listed building which urgently needs beneficial use at all levels, but there is no secondary means of escape from its upper floors (which used to be 2 flats). The sheer blank wall of M&S blocks what used to be the designated escape route from these flats. The current application offers a clear (and possibly the only) opportunity to add no 5 into the network of fire escape routes via no 4. *This is a vital opportunity for the Council as planning authority to promote beneficial use of the whole of no 5 Market Hill; it should not be missed.*

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely
Sarah Nicholas
Principal Planning Officer