

Heritage Statement Addendum

59 Ham Street, Ham

Introduction

1. A planning application has been submitted (15/4780/FUL) for the demolition and redevelopment of the site at 59 Ham Street. The building is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. It is not locally listed/ a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM). A planning application submitted and approved for the demolition of a very similar neighbouring house (No.57) last year provided awareness of the building and it was still not considered the building was of BTM status. It has also not been identified as a positive contributor in the Ham House Conservation Area Appraisal and is at best a neutral contributor to the conservation area.
2. This Heritage Statement Addendum follows a site visit by the Design and Conservation Officer and the Planning Officer and addresses comments made on site regarding the contribution of the current building to the conservation area.

The principal of demolition of 59 Ham Street

3. 59 Ham Street is a post war building dating to the early 1950s. It was designed by Stefan Búzas as one of a pair of houses on adjoining plots. No.57 was built with the intention of being the family home of Búzas. No.59 was not occupied by Búzas. The buildings were both of a single storey flat roofed Modernist construction. There was some interest in their association as a pair of designed buildings but following the demolition of No. 57 last year this association and understanding has been lost. The remaining building is now incongruous with the built form in the local vicinity and wider conservation area.
4. No objection was raised by the Council to the demolition of No.57, Búzas' own house, when a planning application was submitted in 2014 despite this building being of arguably more historic interest given its association as the family home of Búzas. In the committee report for the planning application it was argued the building was not worthy of local listing as it had been altered and this detracted from its interest.

5. No.59 has also undergone alteration since it was originally built. Internally alterations were made to the kitchen area and front rooms after a fire started in this area. The front porch area has also been rebuilt in recent years and double glazing has been added to some windows. All this has changed the original aesthetic, design and thus interest of the building.
6. It is also relevant that the building has not aged well, and that the quality of the materials used at the time has not stood the test of time. The fascia's – if these are the original ones - are peeling and so are the rendered walls. The clean lines and crisp look of the original building as originally intended have faded and it is now a gloomy building that has outlived its useful lifespan. It is not difficult to appreciate why the building has never been identified as a positive contributor, or a locally listed building/BTM – it clearly does not have merit – and indeed why it is subject to a redevelopment proposal. The photos below show a comparison between Búzas' own house at No. 57 in 1955, and the equivalent facade of No.59. The stark contrast is plain to see as is the self-evident and unfortunate way in which No.59 has aged.





7. Because of this, and because No. 59 was best understood as one of a pair of houses in a similar style and design with No.57 (now demolished) No.59 now stands isolated and out of keeping with the built form of anything else within the conservation area. It can at best be considered a neutral contributor.
8. There are no less than 32 locally listed buildings, or BTMs on Ham Street. Clearly some care has been taken in compiling the local list in this area and No.59 has not been included. The reason for this is plain to see: the building does not have sufficient quality or interest to warrant inclusion.

The contribution of the application site to the conservation area

9. No 59 Ham Street is not locally listed or identified as a positive contributor to the conservation area and therefore is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. Similar to No. 57 the building has been altered and with the loss of the association as a pair with No. 57 the building is now incongruous with the built form within the conservation area. In its present state – and this is the result of both alterations and the use of low quality materials – the building detracts from the quality and character of the area although this is at least to some extent ameliorated by the fact that it is not very prominent.
10. The character and appearance of the conservation area is centred on the grade I listed Ham House and its influence on the development and popularity of the area with the aristocracy. This has led to a mixture of building types but predominately large Georgian Mansions interspersed with more modest housing of two storey terrace developments.

11. Within the Ham Street sub-area the buildings are predominately two storeys of brick with slate or tile roofs. Some properties are stuccoed and some have painted brick elevations but generally there is uniformity to the materials and predominance of traditional forms.
12. The conservation area is also characterised by its semi-rural setting. This is comprised from its green open spaces and substantial tree planting within the local area.
13. No. 59 Ham Street does not contribute to these aspects of the character and appearance of the conservation area. Its modern and simplistic aesthetic represents a post-war infill development that is not in keeping with the grander and traditional appearance of the other buildings in the street and the wider conservation area. The building is at best a neutral contributor, especially given the loss of No.57 Ham Street which provided the building with at least some degree of context as part of a contemporary pair.
14. No. 59 Ham Street is not of any special architectural quality or historic interest. The building has been altered, it is in a poor state of repair and it has lost its association as a pair of houses originally designed by Búzas.

Conclusion

15. The demolition of No.57 Ham Street has removed the historic association of the pair of contemporary houses designed by Stefan Búzas. Without the pairing of the houses the historic contextual association of No.59 Ham Street has been lost. Even before the demolition of No.57 both would have been considered as part of the survey that identified no less than 32 locally listed buildings on the same street. It is telling that the pair of buildings were omitted and the reason for the exclusion of No.59 is plain to see; the building has been altered and survives in a poor state. It clearly does not have sufficient quality or interest to warrant local listing.
16. The principle of demolition for No. 57 Ham Street was based upon the alteration the building had undergone. It has been demonstrated that No. 59 has also undergone change to its original design due to fire and the alteration to the front porch. The building is not a particularly well preserved or intact example of post-war architecture and it is a neutral contributor at best to the conservation area.

17. The proposed new buildings have been carefully designed referencing the surrounding architecture to complement and enhance Ham House Conservation Area and would provide a more positive presence in the street scene when compared with the existing building.