

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 24/1639/HOT

Address: 8 Montpelier Row Twickenham TW1 2NQ

Proposal: Proposed replacement of existing roof, repairs to the existing roof structure, repointing and repairs to the existing roof parapet, roof dormer and chimney.

Comments Made By

Name: Mr. Robert Fitzpatrick

Address: 9 Montpelier Row Twickenham TW1 2NQ

Comments

Type of comment: Make a general observation

Comment: We support the long-overdue proposed replacement of the roof and related works to 8 Montpelier Row, but with several major caveats.

No 8 is in the centre of a terrace of 300-year-old early Georgian grade 2* listed houses. After 20 years of neglect, it has been abandoned for over 10 years and is now in a dangerous state of decay and dilapidation - damaging the character of this otherwise carefully preserved historic terrace, and more importantly threatening the structural integrity of the adjoining listed properties.

We have lived next door at 9 Montpelier Row since 1995 and witnessed the neglect of no 8 first hand, as we share a party wall on all four floors. Following a catastrophic flood within the rear of no 8 in 2015, our property suffered serious damage as water and damp came through the party walls and parts of our original wall panelling even split open. In the absence of contactable owners - an off-shore trust registered in Liberia - we called on Richmond Council and Historic England to intervene, and no 8 was placed on the At Risk Register.

We commissioned a survey of our shared party wall with no 8 which revealed widespread wet rot, mould, vermin ingress and some evidence of dry rot in no 8.

The Council took action to help no 8 gradually to dry out and had the rear roof of no 8 replaced to prevent further damage to our property .

We had to bear the high cost of repairs and redecoration on all four floors of our home.

Following the replacement of its rear roof, no 8 was effectively moth-balled with no provision for essential maintenance. Over the ensuing six years, we and the owners of 7 Montpelier Row have repeatedly expressed our serious concerns to the Council about the clearly visible consequent deterioration of no 8: gutters and drains blocked causing rainwater to cascade down rear walls; rotting window and door-frames; soaking brickwork and a decaying chimney stack. which, as a dangerous structure, is a serious threat to health and safety.

We have continued to suffer from damp along our party walls with no 8.

Given the now dangerous state of dereliction of no 8, and the consequent threat to our and the other adjoining listed building at no 7, it is imperative that the planned replacement of the roof and repairs to the associated structures are carried out without any further delay, but to the highest possible standards of appropriate materials and workmanship. Damage from the historic neglect of the property has been compounded by the extremely poor quality of recent works carried out to no 8 on behalf of the agent of its offshore owner, namely stripping lead from the roof when required only to clear blocked gutters thus causing further damage to the already failing roof structure and house below, and subsequent totally inadequate covering of the exposed roof leading to further water ingress.

We consider it essential, therefore, that all planned works undertaken at the property are closely and meticulously supervised throughout by specialist Building Control, and this should be made a condition of approval of the application. We share the concerns of the owners of no 7 about the threat to the structural integrity of our properties from the planned roof works to the now fragile structure of no 8, following its long exposure to the elements, and related health and safety issues. This will involve loading beams onto our party walls, which is notifiable under the Party Wall Act 1996.

We strongly request therefore that the issuance of a notice under The Party Wall Act 1996 is made a condition for

approval of this application.

The fire report is inadequate in not recognising the risk of fire spreading through open roof cavities in the attics of these properties , which need to be sealed..

It is essential that approval of the application requires full account to be taken throughout the works of the need to protect and safeguard adjoining properties, and minimise nuisance to their owners.