REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 22/02192/LBC

APPLICATION PROPOSAL

Listed building Consent: Removal of parapet of the rear extension by lowering it fully (2 blocks), to the height that the left hand stairwell has already been lowered to, To show gutter detail and downpipe detail, Decrease size of windows on stairwell

ADDRESS 23 Church Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 1HT

RECOMMENDATION to GRANT planning permission subject to conditions (please refer to section 11.0 of the report for full recommendation)

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The proposal in itself is not considered to cause harm to the listed building. The
 previous, implemented consent on this site caused a very low level of less than
 substantial harm through the loss of a window at the rear, and that consent has already
 been implemented. This scheme does not materially add to the level of harm identified
 before:
- Other issues raised have been assessed and there are not any which would warrant refusal of the application or which cannot be satisfactorily controlled by condition.

INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF PROPOSAL

The following are considered to be material to the application:

Contributions (to be secured through Section 106 legal agreement/unilateral

undertaking): N/A

Net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A

Estimated average annual workplace salary spend in Borough through net increase in

numbers of jobs: N/A

The following are not considered to be material to the application:

Estimated annual council tax benefit for Borough: N/A

Estimated annual council tax benefit total: N/A

Estimated annual business rates benefits for Borough: N/A

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application has been called into the planning committee by Councillor Rutland for the following reasons:

- to consider the impact of the application on the listed building
- to consider the impact of the application on the other listed properties in the terrace and the terrace as a whole; and

• to consider the impact of the application on the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area.

WARD Culverden	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL N/A	APPLICANT Ms Melanie O'Brien
	N/A	AGENT
DECISION DUE DATE	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE
03/10/22	09/09/22	17/08/22

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
22/02191/FULL	Removal of parapet of the rear extension by	Pending	
	lowering it fully (2 blocks), to the height that	consideration	
	the left hand stairwell has already been		
	lowered to, To show gutter detail and		
	downpipe detail, Decrease size of windows on		

	stairwell, Make the front steps to the property		
	in line with that of neighbours, Reinstatement		
	of iron railings, Addition of gas pipes on front elevation.		
21/03974/SUB	Submission of Details in relation to Condition	Pending	
	4 (Air Source Heat Pump) of reference 20/03358/LBC.	consideration	
21/03924/SUB	Submission of Details in relation to Condition	Pending	
	4 (Air Source Heat Pump) and 5 (Archaeological Work Specification and	consideration	
	Timetable) of reference 20/02933/FULL		
21/03449/SUB	Submission of Details in Relation to Condition	Granted	19/11/21
_,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	3b (Type and Finish of Render) and Condition 3c (Glazing Manufacturer's Details) of		
	20/03358/LBC		
20/03358/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Proposed multi	Granted	07/06/21
	storey rear extension and internal alterations;		
	addition of air source heat pump; external		
20/02933/FULL	Steps Proposed multi storey rear extension and	Granted	07/06/21
20/02933/1 OLL	internal alterations; addition of air source heat	Granted	07/00/21
	pump; external steps		
19/03442/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Change of Use from	Granted	03/02/20
10/00/14/5	Offices to 2 no residential units and alterations		20/20/20
19/03441/FULL	Change of use from offices to 2 no residential units	Granted	03/02/20
11/00025/LBC	Extension of Time - Listed Building Consent -	Granted	15/02/11
	Change of use from offices to two residential units (TW/08/00062/LBC refers)		
11/00024/FUL	Extension of Time - Change of use from	Granted	20/05/11
	offices to two residential units		
08/00062/LBC	(TW/08/00060/FUL refers) Listed Building Consent: Change of use from	Granted	04/03/08
00/00002/200	offices to two residential units	Oranica	0-1/00/00
08/00060/FUL	Change of use from offices to two residential units	Granted	04/03/08
94/01435/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Alterations to form	Granted	18/01/95
	new ground floor office		
85/00643/LBC	Listed Building - Provision of a period lamp at front entrance	Granted	24/06/85
82/00624/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Installation of multi core cable	Granted	19/07/82
84/00602/FUL	Listed Building Consent - Provision of lift with lobbies. Toilet additions	Granted	19/07/84
84/00601/FUL	Toilet additions at first and second floors. Lift housing on roof	Granted	19/07/84
79/00307/FUL	Extension and alterations to form additional office accommodation	Granted	11/07/79
74/09176/HIST	Fire escape walkway	Granted	28/01/75

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 This property forms part of a terrace of 10 buildings located on the south side of Church Road, known as Belvedere Terrace. This terrace consists of four storey buildings with a basement and are either in use as offices or dwellinghouses.
- 1.02 These properties are set back from the road and there is an in/out vehicular access that leads to parking to the front of the terrace. Along the front boundary is a tree/hedge screen, which is protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 1.03 No.23 is a mid-terrace dwellinghouse and there is a good sized garden to the rear that backs onto the gardens of the properties in Clanricarde Gardens.
- 1.04 The property had previously been in use, along with the adjacent no.21, as offices for C&H Fabrics (the retail business occupies a shop in the Town Centre) and access to no.23 was internally via no.21 as the front entrance to no.23 had been removed. Planning permission and listed building consent was granted for the change of use to two dwellinghouses under applications 19/03441/FULL and 19/03442/LBC respectively and work has commenced to convert both these buildings.
- 1.05 The adjacent properties, 21 and 25 Church Road, are both in residential use as single dwellinghouses.
- 1.06 All the properties within this terrace are Grade II Listed Buildings and the listing description describes them as being a 'Circa 1840. Tudor Gothic range, 4 storeys stuccoed with a shaped gable to each house, some with finials. 1 or 2 casement windows to each with dripstones over. Nos 11 to 29 (odd) form a group'.
- 1.07 Planning permission and listed building consent has been granted for a three-storey rear extension to this property under applications 20/02933/FULL and 20/03358/LBC respectively and work has commenced on this extension.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 Planning permission 20/02933/FULL and listed building consent 20/03358/LBC granted consent for the construction of a 1st/2nd floor rear extension above an existing rear single storey extension and a three storey fully glazed rear extension.
- 2.02 Work has commenced on the construction of the rear extensions and this application seeks consent for the following alterations to the approved scheme:
 - Increase in height of the 1st/2nd floor rear extension so that it matches the height of the glazed extension;
 - Changes in floor/ceiling heights between the 1st and 2nd floor of extension and at ground floor level so that they match existing levels
 - Removal of roof lantern within 1st/2nd floor rear extension;
 - Repositioning of door and addition of side window on rear elevation;
- 2.03 It is noted that a parapet wall has been constructed above the extensions, which does not have planning permission or listed building consent, this does not form part of this application and is to be removed with only the triangular parapet remaining as previously approved.
- 2.04 A separate planning application has been submitted for the above works under application 22/02191/FULL.

3.0 SUMMARY INFORMATION

	As Approved under 20/03358/LBC		As Proposed under this application		Change (-/+)	
	1 st /2 nd Floor	Glazed Extension	1 st /2 nd Floor	Glazed Extension	1st/2nd Floor	Glazed Extension
	Extension		Extension		Extension	
No. of storeys	3	3	3	3	No change	No change
Height	9.8m	10.3m (11.2m to parapet)	10.3m	10.3* (10.9m to parapet)	+ 0.5m	No change (- 0.3m to parapet)
Width	2.7m	3.3m	2.7m	3.3m	No change	No change
Depth	1.9m	1.9m	1.9m	1.9m	No change	No change

^{*}this is the height discounting the unlawful parapet currently in place, which is required to be removed by condition below

4.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

 Listed Building (1083763) Grade: II – No.23 and Belvedere Terrace (statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990)

5.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy 2010

Core Policy 4: Environment

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006

Policy EN1: Development control criteria

Tunbridge Wells Borough Submission Local Plan 2020-2038

Policy EN5: Heritage Assets

6.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.01 Two site notices were displayed around the site on 17 August 2022, one on the Church Road frontage and one to the rear in Clanricarde Gardens. The application was also advertised in a local newspaper on 19 August 2022.
- 6.02 No representations were received in support of the proposal and a total of 8 responses have been received raising the following concerns:
 - Original objections to application 20/02933/FULL remain unchanged;
 - Rear extension exceeds the approved overbearing height;
 - Removal of parapet does not reduce height to approved level;
 - Object to 'block' like appearance and loss of step up to main extension;
 - Loss of symmetry and cohesion with neighbouring extension;
 - Not visually pleasing or in keeping with neighbouring properties or this listed terrace;
 - Inappropriate design, size and proportion;
 - Loss of important historical fabric and design elements;
 - Impact on no.25's original design elements and features;
 - Adverse impact on no.25 in terms of light, views and overbearing impact from taller, oversized extension;
 - Proposal would result in additional overlooking and loss of privacy;

- Loss of gable central element that was key to assimilation with terrace;
- Need for internal height above stairs not a sufficient reason for increased height of extension and original plan of houses has restricted head height to top floor stairs. Building Regulations could be relaxed or alternative designs investigated:
- Extension is discordant in terms of design, size & proportion with no 23 & terrace;
- Height and scale of extension hides the original rear elevation and top floor windows from ground floor/garden level;
- Unauthorised work carried out to a listed building is a criminal offence and enforcement action should be taken to ensure that the extension is built in accordance with the approved plans;
- Proposal shows no regard for the planning process or permissions and approval would set a dangerous precedent;
- Timber fascia and external gutter is not a feature that is found elsewhere on the terrace and is out of keeping with its character;
- Submitted information and statement are misleading and suggests that the proposal will bring construction in line with the planning permission.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

Principal Conservation Officer (10/10/22)

- 7.01 Amended drawings have now been submitted which now include a small gable end rising from the eaves of the extension, reinstating the detail that was part of the originally approved scheme. Floor levels have also been revised on the ground and second floor to match the existing. These are acceptable the floor levels were changed out of necessity in construction. The addition of the gable is considered to be an improvement to the completely flat roof as it provides visual interest to the extension and reflects the gable end on the upper floor.
- 7.02 In terms of harm to heritage significance, it had been identified a very low level of less than substantial harm to the listed building when assessing the approved scheme, largely due to the removal of the oriel window. The level of harm was very low as this is not an original feature and is not uniform with the others on the terrace, but nevertheless is part of the historic development of the house. Of the view that the proposal as is equates to a similar level of less than substantial harm. The left hand extension to the existing rear extension is higher than as approved, as is the new extension, but the gable end will still be visible. Any additional harm could be considered to come from the new height of the left hand extension, as it is no longer the same height as the neighbouring property, but these are not symmetrical properties and so this is not a feature of its architectural character. The harm, therefore, is also on the very low end of less than substantial.

(15/08/22)

- 7.03 These planning and listed building consent applications propose amendments to the approved scheme to extend to the rear at the grade II listed 23 Church Road.
- 7.04 The applications also proposed reinstatement of the original step configuration to the front door, and a return of the railings, using part of the existing railings to the front which were repositioned at some point when the front entrance was blocked off (when it and the neighbouring property were combined). The listed building consent application also proposes the installation of a gas pipe to the front, which is a necessity.

[Officer Note: These elements of the proposal have been removed from this application. The gas pipes are to be run internally through existing voids and this does not require planning or listed building consent. The entrance arrangements are to remain as existing and the reinstatement of the railings has been approved under applications 19/03441/FULL and 19/03442/LBC. Details of the railings has been secured by a condition attached to the listed building consent and will need to be discharged before the railings are installed]

- 7.05 This application was required for the rear elevation, as the previously approved extension was not built in accordance with the approved plans, and so was built higher. As the stairs have already been constructed it would be unreasonable to insist on demolition and full compliance with the approved plans, and so these applications propose a compromise of lowering the height of the parapet as much as possible and creating a timber fascia and external gutter. This is not ideal, but the reduction in height carried so far, and proposed to the glazed extension, will address concerns raised about the scale of the extensions and will allow the top of the building to be visible. For practical reasons, can therefore support this part of the application as the minor amount of harm caused by the change to the top of the extensions is justified by the fact that it would be unreasonable to insist on a complete demolition and rebuild, where this could also have structural implications.
- 7.06 A condition requiring joinery detail for the revised window (also supported as this is as per the approved plans) is requested.

8.0 APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING COMMENTS

8.01 An addendum to the originally submitted Design & Access Statement has been submitted and this concludes that:

The proposal mainly concerns with the removal of the parapet of the rear extension, by removing the block work so that it is level with the left-hand stairwell. It will also ensure that the windows are also brought into line with the previous planning application. This will bring the proposal in accordance with the original proposal and ensure that the character of the proposal in in keeping with the neighbouring properties.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

Application form

Design & Access Statement

Design & Access Statement Note

Heritage Statement

798/08A Site Location Plan

20/23BT/PL 01 Proposed Site Plan

20/23BT/PL/A1 03C EXTRACT 1A Section Through Stairs

20/23BT/PL/A1 03C EXTRACT 2B Rear Elevation (South) As Built

20/23BT/PL/A1 03C EXTRACT 2C Rear Elevation (South) As Proposed

10.0 APPRAISAL

Background Information

- 10.01 Work has progressed on site on the rear three-storey glazed extension and 1st/2nd floor rear extension approved under planning and listed building consents 20/02933/FULL and 20/03358/LBC. However, this was not constructed in accordance with the approved plans and differed from the approved as follows:
 - 1st/2nd floor extension was built 0.5m higher than approved;
 - A parapet wall of two blocks in height was constructed above both extensions resulting in the loss of the triangular parapet feature;

- Alteration to the position and size of the rear openings, including a taller third floor window, repositioning of rear door and addition of small ground floor window on rear elevation:
- Internally, the increased height of these extensions has allowed for the step down into the 2nd floor of the extension and the reduced ceiling height of the 1st floor to be removed so that these remain level with the existing floor and ceiling heights.
- 10.02 Since this revised planning application has been submitted the parapet wall above the 1st/2nd floor extension has been removed and the third floor window opening has been reduced in height to more closely match the approved size of the window.
- 10.03 It is noted that the Conservation Officer's comments on this application state that the previous scheme caused 'less than substantial harm' to the listed building (to use NPPF terminology) at the very low end due to the removal of an oriel window, which has now already been removed in line with that earlier consent.

Impact on the special character and historic interest of the listed building.

- 10.04 The NPPF requires the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to assess such applications considering details that are proportionate to the heritage asset's importance. This reflects the statutory duty within S.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 10.05 Para 199 of the NPPF states that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'
- 10.06 The comments of the Conservation Officer carry significant weight in the determination of this application.
- 10.07 Listed building consent has been granted under application 20/03358/LBC for the glazed rear extension and the 1st/2nd floor rear extension. The proposal involved the loss of the rear oriel window and as this was not an original feature, albeit part of its historic development, the Conservation Officer considered that the level of harm to the listed building was at the very low level of less than substantial harm. It was considered as part of the assessment of this previous application that the extensions and alterations were acceptable and the Conservation Officer was supportive of the general design concept. The lightweight contemporary design of the glazed extension was considered to be 'of its time' rather than trying to replicate a more traditional form and the proposed 1st/2nd floor extension was in keeping with the general appearance and materials of similar extensions on this terrace.
- 10.08 The general design concept remains as originally intended but the extensions have not been constructed in accordance with the approved plans. The main revisions to the approved scheme relate to the increase in the height of the 1st/2nd floor extension by 0.5m so that it matches the height of the glazed extension. There have also been changes to the openings within this extension, in that an additional window has been placed next to the back door. In this case, the main consideration is the impact that these changes have on the character, appearance and significance of this grade II listed building.
- 10.09 In terms of the glazed extension, this has been raised in height but the structure has incorporated the height of the formerly proposed parapet. With the removal of the

- additional parapet that has been constructed on top, the overall height of this element would be as approved. A triangular parapet shape has been added to the top of this extension to reflect the rear gable of the main building behind and the Conservation Officer is satisfied that this would not compete with that original gable end and the original gable end will still be visible As this extension would be of a similar height, scale and design as previously approved it is considered that this is acceptable.
- 10.10 The changes to the floor/ceiling heights to match the existing levels are considered to be justified. These have resulted in the main alteration to this proposal, the increase in height of the 1st/2nd floor extension by 0.5m to match the height of the adjacent glazed section. It is acknowledged that this increases the scale and prominence of this element on this rear elevation and to some extent the balance provided by the set-down of the extension similar to the set down of the neighbouring extension to the rear of no.21. However, it is noted that the rear of the properties within this terrace have been altered and added to over time. Consequently, there is no uniformity in the sizes or design of extensions or the type or position of windows or bay window/balcony details etc.
- 10.11 Changes have been made to the windows and door on the rear elevation. The upper floor window, which had been constructed larger than approved, has now been altered to more closely reflect the approved windows and is considered to be acceptable. As with the previous application these are to be timber framed and joinery details are required to ensure that these match existing windows. The ground floor door has been repositioned so that there are more steps leading to the garden and a small window has been added to the side of this door. As these are mainly at ground floor level and there are a variety of openings on this terrace, including a similar arrangement to the rear of no.21, it is considered that this would have limited impact on the character or significance of this building..
- 10.12 The use of a timber fascia to support the proposed gutter is a necessary feature required to attach the gutter to the rear elevation of the building. It is likely that this would not be highly visible but having discussed this with the Conservation Officer it is considered that a section drawing showing the eaves detail is required to understand the relationship between the gutter, fascia and lead roof. This detail can be secured by condition.
- 10.13 Having considered the alterations to the height of the extension, the Conservation Officer remains of the view that the current proposal would result in a similar level of harm as the approved proposal and that this would be on the very low end of less than substantial.
- 10.14 NPPF para 202 states 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.
- 10.15 Planning legislation requires that, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects the setting of listed buildings, the LPA shall have special regard to the special character of the listed building. These matters should be accorded considerable importance and weight when weighing this factor in the balance with other 'material considerations' which have not been given this special statutory status.
- 10.16 If any proposed development would conflict with that objective, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of listed building consent, although, in exceptional

- cases the presumption may be overridden in favour of development which is desirable on the ground of some other public interest. But if a development would not conflict with that objective, the special regard required to be paid to that objective will no longer stand in its way and the development will be permitted or refused in the application of ordinary planning criteria.
- 10.17 In this case the only harm that arises is from the loss of an oriel window which has already been permitted to be removed in an earlier, implemented consent. The Conservation Officer does not consider than any additional harm arises from this revised scheme. Therefore, on balance, it is considered that there is an absence of harm from this revised proposal to the significance of this grade II listed building or the listed terrace.

Enforcement and non-compliance with approved plans

- 10.18 Work has progressed on site with the construction of these extensions and this has result in unauthorised works being carried out that do not comply with the approved proposals. An enforcement investigation has been carried out resulting in the submission of this current application to rectify the situation.
- 10.19 Paragraph 59 of the NPPF states that 'Effective enforcement is important to maintain public confidence in the planning system. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should **act proportionately** in responding to suspected breaches of planning control'. (Officer emphasis)
- 10.20 Some of the submitted comments suggest that the application should be refused on the basis that it is retrospective and because the proposals differ from those originally approved. This is not a reason in itself to refuse planning permission or listed building consent; mechanisms exist within planning legislation to allow an applicant or landowner to attempt to regularise unlawful development. Any decision to refuse solely because the development has already been carried out is contrary to NPPF and PPG guidance and would be likely indefensible at appeal or in the face of a costs claim against the LPA.
- 10.21 Whilst it is a criminal offence to undertake works to a listed building without listed building consent (and listed building consent cannot be retrospectively granted, as a grant only takes effect from the day the decision is issued), it is likely to be disproportionate to seek prosecution in the courts straight away. This is particularly the case where in the professional opinion of the Council's Conservation Officers the harm ultimately arising from that breach is limited (especially when considering that the limited harm that does arise is from works that have already been permitted)..
- 10.22 The key aim of enforcement measures is to prevent/reverse development that the LPA deems unacceptable and for which it cannot grant consent/permission, rather than taking punitive action against landowners regardless of the level of actual harm to the heritage asset. The Principal Conservation Officer considers that to require the applicant to demolish the upper floor so that the floor/ceiling levels can revert to their approved levels (consequently reducing the height of the extension) would be unreasonable. This is consistent with the requirements of the NPPF that enforcement is discretionary and proportionate (and also that permission/consent is only refused where the harmful impacts of the development are so great that the application must be refused).

Conclusion

10.23 On balance, taking into account the views of the Conservation Officer it is considered that the overall character of this rear elevation as a whole, being the more service

side of the building, would be preserved as no greater harm would arise than has already been permitted (which in itself was very limited). Therefore, it is recommended that this application be approved.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT subject to the following conditions;

(1) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the following submitted plans:

20/23BT/PL/A1 03C EXTRACT 1A Section Through Stairs 20/23BT/PL/A1 03C EXTRACT 2C Rear Elevation (South) As Proposed

Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved.

(2) Prior to the commencement of works to install the replacement window on the rear elevation, elevation and section joinery details at 1:5 scale, including details of materials and finish, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details

Reason: To safeguard the character, appearance, setting and fabric of the building.

- (3) Notwithstanding the submitted drawings and all supporting documentation prior to commencement of those areas of work referred to below, the following details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - (a) 1:5 scale drawings illustrating proposed eaves detailing, indicating the provision of eaves, fascia and gutter and the specification of any roofing covering.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the character, appearance, setting and fabric of the building.

(4) Within three months of the date of this decision any part of the parapet wall that extends above the extension hereby approved shall be removed and replaced with the triangular parapet as shown on drawing 20/23BT/PL/A1 03C EXTRACT 2C.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the character and appearance of the building.

Case Officer: Kirsty Minney

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.