

Item No 07:-

17/00866/LBC (CD.4187/F)

**Borzoi Book Shop
White Cottage
Church Street
Stow-On-The-Wold
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL54 1BB**

Item No 07:-

Creation of new doorway from Church Street to provide separate pedestrian access to first and second floor flat, and associated internal alterations at Borzoi Book Shop White Cottage Church Street Stow-On-The-Wold Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 1BB

Listed Building Consent 17/00866/LBC	
Applicant:	Mr D Whittingham
Agent:	Oakwood Planning
Case Officer:	Joanne Reeves
Ward Member(s):	Councillor Dilys Neill
Committee Date:	14th June 2017
RECOMMENDATION:	REFUSE

Main Issues:

(a) Special architectural or historic interest of Grade II listed building, and its setting.

Reasons for Referral:

The Ward Member for Stow-On-The-Wold has referred the application to Planning Committee for the following reasons:

"I have read all the documentation associated with this application and visited the bookshop and the flat above. The flat is rapidly deteriorating and I think that the changes which have been proposed are the most sensible plan which will allow the building to remain viable as a business with a flat above. The upper floors are not suitable for use within the business and it is not currently an attractive proposition as a wholly residential building. The current staircase is in my opinion dangerous, this is highlighted by the fact that there was a fatal fire in the flat some years ago. Also the stairway is too narrow and winding to allow objects of any size to be taken to the upper floors, and furniture would have to be hoisted in through the window.

If an application were made to return the building to wholly residential use, this would require greater changes to this listed building than are envisaged under the current plan. Further, it would lead to the loss of one of the loss of an excellent and viable bookshop, one of the declining number of shops in the town which cater for the needs of local residents. I am not happy for you to refuse this application, and I request that it be reviewed by the planning committee."

1. Site Description:

The application site comprises a Grade II listed building, which dates from the mid-19th century incorporating parts of earlier structures. The building currently comprises a book shop at ground floor level, with associated living accommodation that is currently vacant occupying the floors above. The building forms part of a narrow lane lined with similar 17th century coursed rubble properties, exhibiting characteristic shop windows and simple domestic fenestration and door openings. There is a strong sense of tight-knit, modest vernacular connecting Sheep Street to the grander Masonic Hall and Parish Church of St Edward's beyond.

The site is within the Stow-on-the-Wold and Mangersbury Conservation Area.

2. Relevant Planning History:

06/01495/LBC Creation of external opening to provide fire escape with installation of external staircase. Refused 30/08/2006.

3. Planning Policies:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

4. Observations of Consultees:

Historic England:

"Whilst the creation of the new doorway is not entirely out-of-character when seen in the context of Church Street, it will distort the historic appreciation of the building's form and function as a single property. Likewise, the staircase replacement not only entirely removes a feature of 19th century provenance of a modest winder form (as well as associated removal of stonework), but appears to result in the unfortunate cutting across of the western ground floor window. Historic England does recognise the difficulty of separately accessing the first floor independently of the book store, and acknowledges previous unsuccessful attempts at achieving this from the rear elevation. Likewise, we welcome efforts to put the upper floors of this property into good use. Nevertheless this should be achieved in combination with the preservation of the building's features of architectural interest. We have outlined the harm above which, whilst minimal, should be balanced against the benefits of permanent residential occupancy.

Recommendation: Historic England has concerns regarding the application of heritage grounds."

Conservation Officer:

The Conservation Officer has recommended the application for refusal. His comments form the basis of the Officer Assessment below.

5. View of Town/Parish Council:

Stow-On-The-Wold Town Council:

"Council would like to see a window in the new door as it opens directly onto the street and therefore could be a Health & Safety issue with passing pedestrians or vehicles. To retain the street scene in a sensitive area of the town the doorway should be recessed in keeping with the rest of the properties in this street. Council would also like assurance that there necessary fire escapes for both the shop and flat are in place."

6. Other Representations:

None.

7. Applicant Supporting Information

Covering Letter
 Application Form
 Before and After Photograph (Drawing No. 6216-00)
 Existing Plans and Elevations (Drawing No. 6216-01)
 Proposed Plans and Elevations (Drawing No. 6216-02) - SUPERSEDED
 Proposed Plans and Elevations (Drawing No. 6216-02a)
 Entry Point Options (Drawing No. 6216-03)
 Design and Access Statement
 Heritage Report

8. Officer Assessment:

White Cottage (known as the Borzoi Book Shop) is a Grade II Listed Building. The Local Planning Authority is therefore statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest it may possess, in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. There are also a number of Listed Buildings nearby, including the Grade II* listed Masonic Hall and Grade II listed Woodward Brothers, which are located to either side of the site. The Local Planning Authority is also required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of these buildings in accordance with Section 16(2) of the aforementioned Act.

Section 12 of the NPPF asks that local planning authorities take account of the desirability of sustaining or enhancing the significance of heritage assets. In particular, paragraph 132 states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a Listed Building or Conservation Area, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It also states that significance can be harmed through alteration or development within its setting. Paragraph 134 states that where proposals will cause harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset that is less than substantial harm, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of those works.

The application seeks listed building consent for the creation of a new external doorway in the front elevation of the building and the insertion of a new internal staircase to provide access to the first floor accommodation, independent of the ground floor shop. The proposed works would involve the demolition of the existing ground to first floor timber staircase, a section of internal stone wall and the removal of a section of the ground floor ceiling to accommodate the new straight stair. The proposed works would also involve the blocking up of the stone stair to the cellar. It is noted that a trap door is proposed to provide occasional access to the cellar; however no details of this have been provided. It is also noted that a fireplace is likely to be present in the south wall of the building adjacent to the proposed works, however no details of this have been provided either.

The proposed works would adversely affect the character and special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building by virtue of their layout, form and design and through the loss of historic fabric and layout which would result. The removal of the 19th century winder stair would involve considerable loss of historic fabric and the complete removal of a characteristic feature, which forms a key element of the building's historic layout and plan form. The blocking up of the historic stair to the cellar would likewise obscure the historic layout of the building. It is not clear from the submitted plans exactly how this would be achieved. The works would also involve the removal of a section of historic stonework to accommodate the new stair (it is not clear if this would affect the fireplace that is indicated in the south wall on the submitted plans), and a section of the first floor including sections of the floor joists and lathe and plaster ceiling. It would also appear from the submitted plans that the proposed straight flight of stairs would cut across the ground floor window, presenting an incongruous appearance both internally and externally.

Whilst the creation of a new external doorway would not be entirely out of keeping with the character, the doorway would give the façade the appearance of two separate properties, obscuring the historic form and function of the Grade II Listed White Cottage as a single property. As such, its architectural and historic significance would be harmed.

As noted above, the creation of the new external doorway and the demolition/removal of the internal historic staircase are sought in order to create a separate access to an existing first and second floor flat. The flat is currently accessed via the ground floor retail unit with which the first and second floor living accommodation would have historically been associated. Both the ground floor retail unit and the first and second floor living accommodation already exist. No additional unit of accommodation is therefore being proposed. Instead, the alterations are sought in order to create a separate means of access to the upper floors, which in turn is sought as a result of a change in the applicants' circumstances.

Whilst it is accepted that the proposed works would fall into the category of "less than substantial harm" as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF, the harm identified is still regarded as considerable, and as such should be given weight. In the context of Paragraph 134, the proposed works would help facilitate the creation of a separate residential unit (i.e. a self-contained flat). The creation of a separate residential unit would contribute to the Council's need to provide an ongoing supply of housing and could therefore represent a public benefit. Notwithstanding this, the Council can currently demonstrate a robust 5 year supply of housing land (7.54 years) and as such the weight attached to the creation of the separate residential unit is considered to be less than if the housing supply was in deficit. It is considered that the public benefit arising from the proposal is limited and does not outweigh the significant adverse impact to the designated heritage asset arising from the loss of the historic staircase and the other proposed alterations.

Other uses at first and second floor level, other than residential, could also be explored and potentially instigated using permitted development rights. These include the use of the first and/or second floors as part of the existing book shop, or some other retail use, or to provide financial or professional services. Such uses would not necessarily require a separate access, as they would be likely to operate similar opening hours to the existing book shop, and as such would not require the 24 hour access associated with an independent residential use.

9. Conclusion:

In reaching this conclusion, the difficulties of finding an appropriate use for the upper floors of the building given its constraints, together with recognition that the applicant may be reluctant to invest large sums of money in the upper floors whilst they remain vacant, are acknowledged. However, whilst Officers are sympathetic to the desire for an alternative access to the upper floors, the extent of the harm caused by the proposed development is not considered to be outweighed by the public benefits in this case.

The scheme is therefore recommended for refusal.

10. Reason for Refusal:

1. White Cottage is listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. There are also a number of other listed buildings nearby. The Local Planning Authority is statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving these buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest they possess. The proposed works are for the creation of a new external doorway in the front elevation of the building and the insertion of a new staircase to provide access to the first floor accommodation, independent of the ground floor shop. The proposed works would involve the demolition of the existing 19th century ground to first floor timber winder staircase, the blocking up of a stone stair to the cellar and removal of sections of stone wall and ceiling. The proposed works would adversely affect the character and special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building by virtue of their layout, form and design and through the loss of historic fabric and layout which would result. The removal of the 19th century winder stair and the blocking up of the historic stair to the cellar would involve considerable loss of historic fabric and the complete removal of a characteristic feature, which forms a key element of the building's historic layout and plan form. The proposed new external doorway would distort the historic appreciation of the building, giving the façade the appearance of two separate properties, thereby obscuring the historic form and function of White Cottage as a single property. For these reasons the proposals would fail to preserve the listed building. The significance of the designated heritage asset would be diminished, and without public benefits in this case to outweigh that harm. The proposals are therefore contrary to Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.



Borzo Book Shop White Cottage Church St Stow on the Wold Scale: 1:1250

Organisation: Cotswold District Council

Department:

Date: 26/05/2017



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

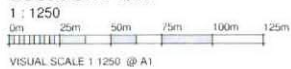


NORTH

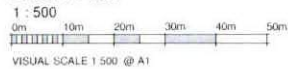
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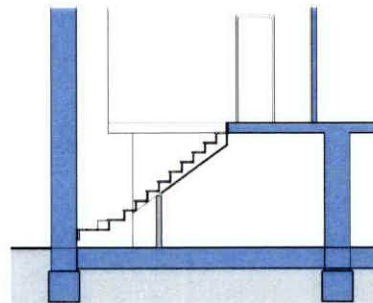
Location Plan



Block Plan

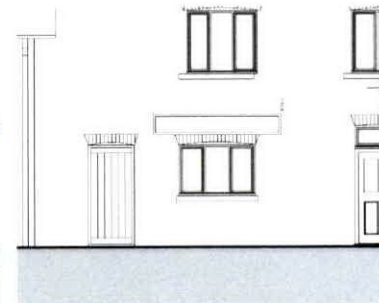


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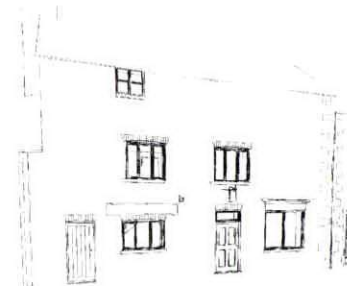
Section 2

1 : 50



Enlarged Door Elevation

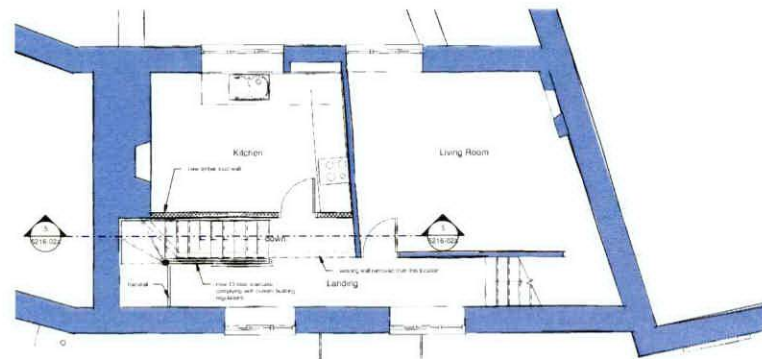
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Shop Front Perspective 1

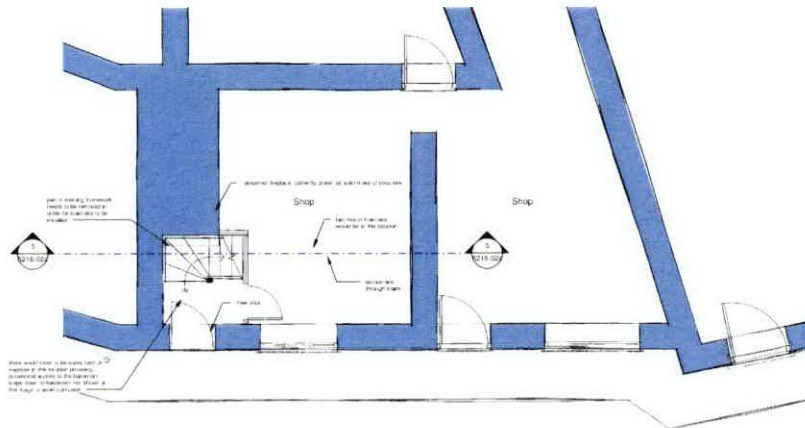


East Elevation - Front

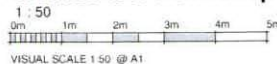


First Floor Plan

1 : 50

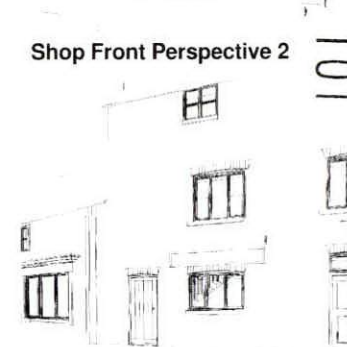


Ground Floor Plan - Shop

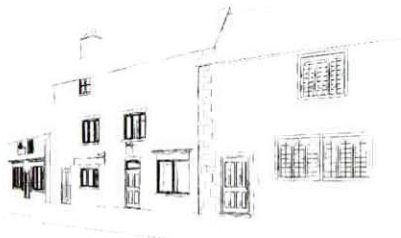


Shop Front Perspective 2

101



Shop Front Perspective 3



East Street Perspective



South Street Perspective

Rev's on 'A' Annotation note in relation to entrance door removed 25/5/2017

Rev. Date Revision Notes

Proposed



Job: New Opening to Existing Flat
White Cottage
Stow on the Wold

Client: Mr and Mrs Whittingham
c/o Stable Architecture

Drawing No: 6216-02a Date: 3/1/17 Scale: As indicated@A1



SOUTH WEST OFFICE

Ms Joanne Reeves
Cotswold District Council
Trinity Road
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 1PX

Direct Dial

Our ref: L00562071

4 April 2017

Dear Ms Reeves

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015

BORZOI BOOK SHOP, WHITE COTTAGE, CHURCH STREET, STOW-ON-THE-WOLD, CHELTENHAM, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, GL54 1BB
Application No. 17/00866/LBC

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2017 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

White Cottage (known as the Borzoi Book Shop) is Grade II listed, and dates from the mid-19th century incorporating parts of earlier structures. It forms part of a narrow lane lined with similar 17th century coursed rubble properties, exhibiting characteristic shop windows and simple domestic fenestration and door openings. There is a strong sense of tight-knit humble vernacular connecting Sheep Street to the grander Masonic Hall and Parish Church of St Edward's. The application property is additionally within the Stow-on-the-Wold and Mangersbury Conservation Area.

The proposal requires a new door inserted into the principal Church Street elevation and the rearrangement of the staircase, identified within the Heritage Report as 19th century, to facilitate a remodelled access point to the first and second floor accommodation. Historic England's remit, in line with this application, permits us to comment on the demolition to this historic staircase.

As the application affects a listed building, the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any features of special interest (ss.16, 62, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) must be taken into account by your authority when making its decision. Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 requires that great weight be afforded to the conservation of this heritage asset when determining potential harm caused by the internal modifications. Paragraph 134 highlights that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a



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SOUTH WEST OFFICE

designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Whilst the creation of the new doorway is not entirely out-of-character when seen in the context of Church Street, it will distort the historic appreciation of the building's form and function as a single property. Likewise, the staircase replacement not only entirely removes a feature of 19th century provenance of a modest winder form (as well as associated removal of stonework), but appears to result in the unfortunate cutting across of the western ground floor window. Historic England does recognise the difficulty of separately accessing the first floor independently of the book store, and acknowledges previous unsuccessful attempts at achieving this from the rear elevation. Likewise, we welcome efforts to put the upper floors of this property into good use. Nevertheless this should be achieved in combination with the preservation of the building's features of architectural interest. We have outlined the harm above which, whilst minimal, should be balanced against the benefits of permanent residential occupancy.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely



Samuel Souter

Assistant Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas



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