



HERITAGE STATEMENT

Project: The Cabinet, Reed, Herts

Ref: 16/001/A

Date: July 2017



1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement forms part of the application to North Herts District Council for retrospective Listed Building Consent for alterations to The Cabinet, Reed, Herts. by Mr Richard Newman who acquired the property at auction in December 2015. Various alterations to the premises had already been commenced by the previous owners but not completed. Listed Building Consent for these alterations has not been obtained.

An application for Change of Use and Listed Building Consent for alterations carried out by Mr Newman since he took possession of the property has been submitted separately under references 16/02113/1 and 16/02129/LB.

2.0 The Building

The Cabinet is located on High Street, Reed, Hertfordshire within the Reed Conservation Area. It is included within the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and is grade II listed. Both the building and the area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purposes of applying the aims of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The building is described in the list entry as:

Public house. Late C17 or early C18, extended C19 and C20. Timber frame on brick base. Weatherboarded. Steeply pitched tiled roof. Originally 2 bays, extended by 1 bay to left with further additions at both ends. 2 storeys. Ground floor: entrance to left of original centre, recessed plank door in architrave with dentilled and bracketed hood, to left two 3 light small pane flush frame casements, to right one of 2 panes, all with hoodboards. First floor three 2 light small pane casements. Coved eaves. Cross axial ridge stack at original left end, part rebuilt. To rear a C19 continuous lean-to outshut behind main range and first added bay, weatherboarded and rendered. Rendered upper part of rear wall on main block with some comb pargetting. Short C20 gabled addition to left end, set back slightly. 1 storey mid C20 addition to right end with an entrance. Beyond this to right a C19 weatherboarded and slate roofed outbuilding with 2 doors to front. Interior: chamfered axial bearer, stop chamfered fireplace lintel.

The Cabinet was extended in the 1980s with a single storey dining room with plain tiled gabled roof and timber weatherboarding to the rear of the C20th infill between the original building and the C19th outbuilding. The lean-to outshut, referred to above, was deepened at the same time with Velux roof windows and the walls finished in painted render.

It would appear that The Cabinet has been a public house for a considerable part of its history and is identified by name on the Ordnance Survey of 1878. The name derives from a small, private room used for retreat or study but will probably have also drawn on connotations to the political sense of the word.

Internally, the original lath and plaster or panelling to the walls and ceilings has been removed at some unidentifiable date in the past. Ceilings on the first floor were replaced with plasterboard although these were also missing when the current owner took possession along with the ceiling joists. There may have been horizontal ceilings over the current Games Room (within the C19th outbuilding) that are no longer present but there is no documentary evidence to support this supposition. It is unlikely that an outbuilding would have warranted a ceiling.

Chipboard linings to the historic stud partitions have been removed by the current owner and are the subject of the LBC application referred to above.

There is no evidence now of the original staircase. The current owner removed a plasterboard enclosure to the present softwood stair that probably formed part of the 1980s extension works.

At first floor level the current owner discovered the original partitions stripped of their linings and much of their structure removed. These have been reformed in new timber studwork. This is part of the LBC referred to above.

Bathroom fittings have been installed in rooms formed at ground and first floor level with new plasterboard stud partitions. These form part of the LBC application referred to above.

The property has been recently redecorated throughout.

The property is currently occupied as a dwelling.

3.0 The Works

The Listed Building Consent application relates to the removal of the horizontal ceilings at first floor level and the fixing of insulation and plasterboard linings between the rafters above. It also relates to the installation of similar insulation and linings above the Games Room where it is not possible to state that horizontal ceilings have been removed.

There is photographic evidence (dated October 2014) held by the LPA that the original lath and plaster ceilings at first floor level had been replaced by plasterboard and that some of the original ceiling joists had been replaced or splinted with treated softwood. The extent of the historic fabric already lost in 2014 is not documented. By January 2016, it is documented that the ceiling joists were also gone. As part of the historic fabric the ceilings represented an intrinsic part of the character and appearance of the Listed Building. We are not able to comment on the justification for the removal of the ceilings and no explanation has been given by the LPA why the work being carried at that time were being monitored. Their removal has had an impact on that special character but there would be nothing of substance to be gained now by replacing the ceilings with new construction.

The installation of insulation and plaster linings with a lime wash finish between the rafters is an acceptable expedient for the finishing of the accommodation at first floor level to bring it in to habitable use.

Above the Games Room, due to the lack of documentary evidence, we cannot comment on whether there has been an impact on the character of the Listed Building by the removal of horizontal ceilings. According to the current owner, there were no such ceilings in December 2015 when he took occupation. The installation of insulation and linings between the rafters here is an acceptable solution to bring the accommodation in to habitable use.