Consultation Response from KC, Conservation and Design		
2022/90058 Stonebow House, 103, Northgate, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8UU		
Listed Building Consent for extensions and alterations to convert basement to two dwellings with associated internal and external works (Within a Conservation area)		
Date Responded: 24.1.22	Responding Officer: Sue Brooks	Responding Ref: HUD40/1059

Stonebow House is a prominent Grade II listed, three-storey building with a basement, located within the Almondbury Conservation Area. The front of the building faces directly onto Northgate and the rear faces east towards the private car park for the building.

The applicant proposes to convert the basement into two apartments, with a single storey rear extension and external works to the rear of the building. At the present time the basement is a single apartment and office space. The rear of the building is constructed from coursed natural stone and is of lower significance than the façade, with two east facing projecting wings.

Listed Building Consent has been approved for the conversion of the space into one apartment with a single storey rear extension and external alterations on application number 2021/90202.

The internal layout of the basement will be altered, with existing stud walls and modern fittings being removed and new stud walls and fittings installed. The walls will be drylined and insulated, with adequate ventilation, and the ceiling will be lined and insulated. Due to the low headroom of the basement, the floor level will be reduced by 360mm to create habitable space and a concrete floor laid. Any stone flags that can be salvaged will be re-used for the patio.

The walls and ceilings of the basement have previously been over boarded and plastered, with no surviving architectural features of interest within this space. The proposed alterations to the layout, walls and ceiling are not considered to harm the significance of the listed building. The proposed removal of the stone flags does lead to slight harm, however the public benefits of providing habitable space and creating a sustainable use for the basement is considered to outweigh this harm and this has been approved on the previous application.

A new opening will be created in the eastern external wall to access the new extension and a 3m wide aperture will be created in place of the existing external office doorway.

The proposed construction materials of the rear extension are coursed natural stone to match the existing in style, colour and texture, with stone window surrounds. A flat roof with a single ply roof membrane, two roof lights and a parapet wall with stone copings is proposed, with two timber double-glazed sash windows, timber doors, and aluminium bi-fold doors in a colour to match the windows facing the patio within the lightwell.

Coursed natural stone retaining walls are proposed around the lightwell, topped with a 900mm high metal railing and new steps leading from the basement to ground level.

The proposed extension is considered to lead to slight harm to the significance of the listed building by constructing a new addition onto the rear, however no visible architectural features will be altered or removed, and it is set partially below ground level, with the proposed railing obscuring it when viewed from the south. The flat roof is set below the cill level of the ground floor windows and central archway on the listed building. The public benefits of bringing this vacant floor space into a sustainable and viable habitable use is considered to outweigh the slight harm (NPPF 2021 paragraph 202). In addition, the replacement of the existing basement windows on the rear elevation with timber sashes is an enhancement on the existing.

As the proposed works are to the rear of the building at low level the proposal is not considered to harm the character of the conservation area.

The external alterations replicate the previous approved proposal, albeit with the following amendments:

- Glazing the upper panels of the timber four panelled rear door will provide natural light into the studio flat whilst retaining a traditional door design and this is therefore acceptable.

- Front basement windows – Evidence suggests that there would originally have been a lightwell to each side of the carriage entrance, with two full height basement windows on each side. These have been infilled, with two pavement lights in front of the left-hand shop front on the façade, and two shallow arched heads with blocked up recesses beneath the right-hand shop front.

  Internally, the proposal is for bathrooms, plant room and a utility room at the front of the basements. The insertion of high-level glazed blocks within the southern basement is not of concern as these will not be visible from outside, however, inserting them into the visible arched apertures of the northern basement area will introduce an element which could create maintenance issues and will appear inconsistent with this elevation.

  The application does not provide clear justification for this intervention on the principal elevation, which appears unnecessary given the function of these internal spaces. We would recommend that they are omitted from the proposal.

As before, we recommend that the following conditions are applied if the application is supported:

- The external walls to the extension shall be constructed in natural stone walling to match the stone type, colour, finish and coursing of the existing rear elevation that it will adjoin. A sample panel shall be prepared on site and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before construction work is carried out. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.

- The new heads and cills for all new openings shall be of natural stone and shall replicate the heads and cills of the existing windows on the rear elevation in terms of stone type, size, tooling and section. A sample shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- Pointing of the walls to the extension should be carried out in mortar to match the re-pointing on the rear of the main building. A sample panel should be provided and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the work is carried out. **Weatherstruck, ribbon or strap pointing is not permitted.**

- All new window frames shall be set back in the reveal by 50-75mm and shall not be fitted flush with the external wall.

- Flashings for the flat roofed extension shall be fixed into mortar joints below cill level, and shall not be cut into the external masonry.