

Ashley House, Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5AZF

Conversion and extension of the existing office building with an additional floor of accommodation above the southern wing and the erection of a new single storey extension on the northern elevation to provide 8x2 bed and 4x1 bed residential flats together with a revised parking layout and external amenity space (as amended).

Ward:	Town
Contact Officer:	John Mumford

1 Plans and Representations

- 1.1 The Council now holds this information electronically. Please click on the following link to access the plans and representations relating to this application via the Council's website, which is provided by way of background information to the report. Please note that the link is current at the time of publication, and will not be updated.

Link: <http://eplanning.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=O1LQDNGYKBZ00>

2 Summary

- 2.1 This application proposes the conversion and extension of the existing Grade 2* Listed Building previously in office use to provide a total of 12 residential flats together with a revised parking layout and external amenity space.
- 2.2 The application is a Listed Building Application and accompanies the associated major application 15/01532/FUL which is also on this agenda.
- 2.3 The application is recommended for approval.

3 Site description

- 3.1 The application site comprises the 3 storey Ashley House and the adjoining 2 storey annex to the south. The property is a Grade 2* listed building and is situated within the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area. The property was originally built as a single residential dwelling and more recently it was in B1 office use but apart from a short-term let of a small part of the building it has been vacant since November 2011. There is no garden left for Ashley House and its annexe. All the land around its small curtilage has been laid to tarmac for car parking.
- 3.1 Ashley House is set well back from its frontage on the west side of Ashley Road which is part of the one-way gyratory system. Wrapping around the western and northern boundaries to the site are the Ashley Centre facades including some office space and to the south is the service egress ramp from the Ashley Centre and beyond that is Finachem House that is in mixed office and student residential use.

- 3.1 The previous planning permission and listed building consent for an additional storey to the Ashley House annexe building for office use and new 3 storey glazed link between annex and main building (applications 06/01274/FUL and 06/01275/LBA) was never implemented apart from some minor internal alterations.

4 Proposal

- 4.1 This application seeks listed building consent for the conversion and extension of the existing office building with an additional floor of accommodation above the southern wing and the erection of a new portico on the northern elevation to provide 8x2 bed and 4x1 bed residential flats together with a revised parking layout and external amenity space.

- 4.2 The current application has arisen in response to pre-application discussions with both Historic England and council officers. The proposed development has been amended since originally submitted in the light of comments received from Historic England and includes the following alterations to the main Ashley House:

- Laying out the basement for bike and other storage;
- Retention of the ground floor virtually unaltered to create 2 flats thereby enabling the front door, entrance hall and passage to the garden to be kept open for all residents. It would also allow the principal staircase to be used to access all of the upper floors;
- The existing single storey extension on the northern elevation would be removed and rebuilt recessed slightly behind the principal façade;
- The first floor would be converted into 2 flats with rooms largely restored to their original appearance;
- The second floor would be converted into 2 flats with the living room in Flat 4 retaining its original form and that in Flat 5 being restored.

- 4.3 The following alterations to the annexe are proposed:

- Removal of the single storey corridor link to Ashley House;
- Provision of a new staircase off the main entrance to allow for 2 flats on each floor;
- Provision of a new second floor as a mansard.

- 4.4 The application is supported by the following documents:

- Planning Supporting Statement
- Heritage Statement and appendices
- Design and Access Statement

5 Comments from third parties

- 5.1 The application was advertised by means of letters of notification to 26 neighbouring properties, a site notice and a notice in the local press. No representations have been received.

6 Consultations

6.1 Historic England – Converting the building will inevitably entail some harm to its significance. However, we are satisfied that this has now been minimised, as is required under the terms of the NPPF (Para 129) and that any remaining harm is justified by securing the building’s future through a sympathetic conversion to residential use (Para 132). We are therefore content that the application might be approved in its current form.

7 Relevant planning history

Application number	Decision date	Application detail	Decision
06/01274/FUL/ 06/01275/LBA	26.04.2007	Erection of additional storey to Ashley House	Granted
15/01532/FUL		Conversion and extension of existing office building with additional floor of accommodation above southern wing and erection of new single storey extension on northern elevation to provide 8x2 bed and 4x1 bed residential flats together with revised parking layout and external amenity space (as amended).	Under Consideration

8 Planning Policy

National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) 2012

Core Strategy 2007

Policy CS1 Sustainable development
Policy CS5 The built environment

Development Management Policies 2015

Policy DM5 Trees and landscape
Policy DM8 Heritage Assets
Policy DM9 Townscape character and local distinctiveness
Policy DM10 Design requirements for new developments

Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals 2008

9 Planning considerations

The existing Listed Building

- 9.1 Historic England has been closely involved in negotiating the proposed additions and alterations to the application property and has offered the following advice:
- 9.2 Ashley House is a particularly fine late Palladian mansion built in the 1750's/60's on the edge of Epsom. Its external elevations are typically restrained, handsome and well composed. What makes this building exceptional is its highly decorative interior and the completeness of this work. The best spaces are undoubtedly its principal rooms: the corniced axial corridor with columnar arched screens and central coved crossing, the very fine columnar screen that separates this from the adjacent stair hall and stair (all lit by a grand Venetian window) and the two principal ground floor rooms at the front of the house all survive largely intact. The high quality of this work and the clever composition of the ground floor plan result in a sequence of rooms of outstanding architectural quality.
- 9.3 While the upper floors of the building are more altered, enough of their early form survives to tell us that these were also well appointed and cleverly laid out rooms. They therefore also make an important contribution to the building's significance. The upper part of the stair hall was compromised by the introduction of an additional flight of stairs and an understanding of the way in which the building was serviced has been lost with the demolition of the service stair.
- 9.4 The adjacent 19th century building is well designed as a discrete addition to the site and thus does not impact to any great degree on the primacy of Ashley House in the street scene. Its 20th century interior dating to its conversion to offices is of low significance.

Impact of the proposed development

- 9.5 There is no objection to the principle of replacing the existing single storey extension on the north elevation (which has no architectural merit) or of the proposed enlargement to its footprint. The amended design incorporating blind arched window opening, an arched sash window and re-aligning the steps in front of the proposed door minimise the visual impact of the proposed extension and thus also the harm entailed, meeting the need to do this set out in Paragraph 129 of the NPPF.
- 9.6 In response to pre-application advice with both the council and Historic England the proposed ground floor layout has been amended and the hallway and stairwell remain undivided in the present scheme. While effecting some minor alteration, the other interventions at ground floor level retain features of key architectural importance (e.g. historic doors remain in situ and are sealed closed where no longer required for access) while adapting the interior to new use and thereby cause little harm to the significance of the heritage asset as a whole.

- 9.7 There is no objection to the proposed internal changes that now retain RG18 as a common room for residents and visitors to the building. RG18 is one of two very fine principal ground floor rooms at the front of the house. Carefully composed for maximum architectural and visual effect, it comprises a series of plaster panels of alternating sizes embellished with exuberant plasterwork detailing (reflecting Rococo tastes) of outstanding quality and craftsmanship. Beneath the panels is a dado rail and above an enriched and deep dentilated cornice. The high architectural value associated with this room means it contributes a great deal to the building's significance.
- 9.8 The applicant is attempting to replicate the form of a mansard roof as found on many 18th century buildings. A traditional mansard roof has two pitches (the upper part of the roof is usually a gentler pitch than the lower part). Dormer windows are set into the lower pitch (the top of which is usually at the line between the lower and upper sections of pitched roof). The roof design has been amended by the applicants to satisfactorily achieve this objective. The remodelled building remains subordinate to Ashley House and the architectural treatment is complementary. While the new work undoubtedly increases the dominance of the modern element, the designated heritage asset will remain clearly preeminent and its historic significance will be little affected
- 9.9 Demolition of the linking corridor between Ashley House and the annexe together with the associated making good is welcomed, as better separation is achieved between the two elements.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 The conversion of the listed building into residential flats will inevitably entail some harm to its significance. However, Historic England's advice is that they are satisfied that this has now been minimised, as is required under the terms of the NPPF (Para 129) and that any remaining harm is justified by securing the building's future through a sympathetic conversion to residential use (Para 132).

11 Recommendation

- 11.1 Listed Building Consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- (1) **The works hereby granted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.**

Reason: To comply with Section 18 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 52 (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) **Prior to the commencement of development, details and samples shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the development including all making good works, demonstrating that the**

finishing materials match those of the existing building/structure in size, colour, texture, profile, finish, bonding and pointing. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building / In the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (3) No work shall take place until detailed drawings and/or samples of all new internal and external joinery details including windows (depth of reveal, method of opening, details of heads, cills and lintels), doors frames (architraves, linings, mouldings and beading), staircases (including balusters, newel posts and handrails); beading and skirting boards have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted details of sample elevations shall be at a scale of not less than 1:20, and horizontal/vertical frame sections (including sections through glazing bars) at a scale of not less than 1:2. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (4) Prior to the commencement of development, details of new fire or acoustic interventions, secondary glazing (if required) and new pipework and extraction fans shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building / In the interest of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (5) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Numbers P101Rev E, P102 Rev E, P110 Rev D, P111 Rev D, P112 Rev D, P113 Rev B, D110 Rev C, D111 Rev C, D112 Rev C, D113 Rev B

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans to comply with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007).

Informative:

- (1) **The Council confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of paragraph 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.**