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Decision by David Buylla, a Reporter appointed by the Scottish Ministers

- Listed building consent appeal reference: LBA-230-2223
- Site address: Flat 8, 50 Manor Place, Edinburgh, EH3 7EH
- Appeal by Mr S Bahl against the decision by The City of Edinburgh Council
- Application for listed building consent 21/01795/LBC dated 1 April 2021 refused by notice dated 15 June 2021
- The works proposed: enlarge existing windows to doors including protective barrier
- Application drawings: 1460 LB(2-)002, 1460 LB(2-)003
- Date of site visit by Reporter: 22 October 2021

Date of appeal decision: 3 November 2021

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## Decision

I allow the appeal and grant listed building consent. Attention is drawn to the advisory note at the end of this notice.

## Reasoning

1. It is proposed to convert two, third floor windows at the rear of this category B listed building to inward-opening doors protected by a Juliet balcony. The building lies within the New Town conservation area.
2. In accordance with sections 14(2) and 64(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the determining issues in this appeal are the effect the proposals would have on the listed building and surrounding conservation area, having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and paying special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

### *Effects on the listed building*

3. The proposals involve a third (top) floor flat within this impressive Victorian terrace. The windows in question are in the building's rear façade, which does not display the symmetry and classical design influences that are seen on its front, street-facing, aspect.
4. The building's rear fenestration has been altered over the years, including the windows that are the subject of this appeal – it was clear from my site inspection that the windows are already of a different size and proportions to others found at third floor level

and are separated by an usually wide mullion that appears to have been formed in brickwork and cement rendered. Non-original window boxes are also present.

5. It is proposed to lower the cill level of the windows to floor level to allow a pair of white painted timber doors to be fitted. The central mullion would be replaced with a glazed timber panel. The existing cills would be re-used and new stonework edging to either side would match the existing design. The Juliet balcony would be of a simple form in black painted mild steel.

6. What is proposed is not entirely in keeping with the original design of the building. The height of the proposed opening in what would once have been ancillary (probably servants') accommodation would slightly exceed that of the windows on principal floors below. As is noted by The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, this does not follow the hierarchical arrangement of fenestration typically seen in a building of this age and character. This would slightly upset the visual balance of the rear of the building, although in reality would be difficult to appreciate unless one had been made aware of it in advance. The proposed glazed timber mullion is a modern design concept that is not found anywhere else in the listed terrace.

7. However, the existing windows are also neither original or appropriate and the proposed Juliet balcony would represent a visual improvement over the existing non-original window boxes that it would replace. There would be minimal effect on the building's original fabric. Taking all factors into account, I am satisfied that the proposed works would provide a visual improvement to the building without causing any material harm to its special architectural or historic interest.

#### *Effects on the conservation area*

8. The property occupies a prominent position within the conservation area, but its rear façade cannot be seen from any public viewpoint. The proposed alterations would be visible to residents of some of the properties that back onto the garden courtyard. But even from those properties, what is proposed would not be visually prominent.

9. The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal confirms its status as one of the most important conservation areas in the United Kingdom, containing an outstanding concentration of planned ensembles of ashlar-faced world-class neo-classical buildings. It is described as being characterised by Georgian and early Victorian rectilinear development of grand formal streets lined by fine terraced buildings expressing neo-classical order, regularity, symmetry, rigid geometry, and a hierarchical arrangement of buildings and spaces.

10. What is proposed in this appeal would have no effect on any of these characteristics and would only be visible from a small number of private viewpoints. Taking all matters into account, I am confident that both the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved.

#### *Conclusions*

11. For the reasons I have set above, I conclude that the proposal would cause no harm to the special interest of this important listed building and would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. Therefore, I find no conflict with Policies Env 4 or

Env 6 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, with the council's published guidance on listed buildings and conservation areas, with the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland or with guidance issued by Historic Environment Scotland on window alterations.

*David Buylła*

Principal Reporter

### Advisory note

**The length of the consent:** This listed building consent will last only for three years from the date of this decision notice, unless the works have been started within that period. (See section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended))