

Norwich Preservation Trust Objection

These applications seek retrospective consent for a kitchen flue extractor unlawfully installed by the Stranger's Club at this Grade II* Listed building. They were submitted only after NPT reported the matter on 28.03.2019 to Planning Enforcement and NPS as landlord's agent. No enforcement action was taken.

On 13.07.2016 NCC Cabinet agreed to transfer the neighbouring long-term vacant / part condemned Grade II* listed 26-28 Elm Hill to the NPT on a long lease, thus enabling NPT to access grant funding not available to NCC to undertake the extensive repairs needed to bring No.26-28 back into use and remove it from Historic England's National Heritage at Risk Register.

Whilst NPT conducted a £22k Options Appraisal for the repair and re-use of 26-28 Elm Hill, a pungent frying odour within the building was traced to the Stranger's Club kitchen extractor which vents moisture and flammable fatty emissions into the 65cm space between the buildings and due to lack of air movement enters through the windows above. The emissions have also caused 26-28 Elm Hill structural damage (see photos).

There is only a 65cm gap between the buildings making scaffolding/maintenance access difficult even without the unlawful extractor taking up half the space.

As Planning failed to consult Norfolk Fire Service or the requisite National Amenity Societies, NPT brought the applications to their attention.

When it became evident that Planning would not recommend refusal or negotiate with the Strangers Club to relocate the extract to the open west side (away from 26-28 Elm Hill), NPT's Vice-Chair met with the Strangers Club's surveyor. A solution was found re-routing the flue internally and exiting west via the Stranger's modern brick rear lean-to. Historic England indicate that this alternative scheme would be acceptable if submitted, but Stranger's Club have failed to submit it for consideration.

Local Authorities have a duty to deal with planning and LBC applications at their own listed buildings as exemplars of good practice to other owners. It is important they don't offer lesser protection to their buildings than their listed status requires, and that the "special regard to the desirability of preserving the building" (S66 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990), applies as it would if the listed buildings belonged to a member of the public.

Retrospective consent would regularise this unlawful development, which has significantly harmed and will continue (even with the proposed adaptations) to harm two nationally important Grade II* listed buildings. The current fire risk posed to Stranger's Club, 26-28 Elm Hill and the rest of the timber framed terrace of Elm Hill is substantial. For these reasons the applications should be refused and planning enforcement action should be taken.

Whilst the flue remains in its current location, the persistent stench, fire risk and ongoing structural damage make 26-28 Elm Hill unfit for occupation. No developer will invest the required £500K to repair and return this Listed Building at Risk to beneficial use and the Council will have failed in its duty to preserve 26-28 Elm Hill.

PHOTOS BELOW TO BE SHOWN TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Photo 1 - North elevation (looking from River) of 22-24 Elm Hill (right building) and 26-28 Elm Hill (left building) – showing the extremely narrow gap between the two buildings (into which the flue was unlawfully inserted) and the damaged and structurally compromised west wall of No.26-28.



Photo 2 – On right of picture – Timber framed east elevation of the Stranger’s Club with the unauthorised extract unit (fire risk) located directly below the C16th timber framed jetty beam. On left of picture - West elevation of 26-28 Elm Hill severely damaged by years of moist fatty flammable emissions in the enclosed gap between the buildings.

This image shows the extremely narrow gap between the buildings and the almost complete enclosure above by the abutting roof eaves. In the event of a deep fat fryer fire starting directly below the extract flue, there is a serious fire risk to both these Grade II* listed buildings and the rest of Elm Hill timber framed terrace.

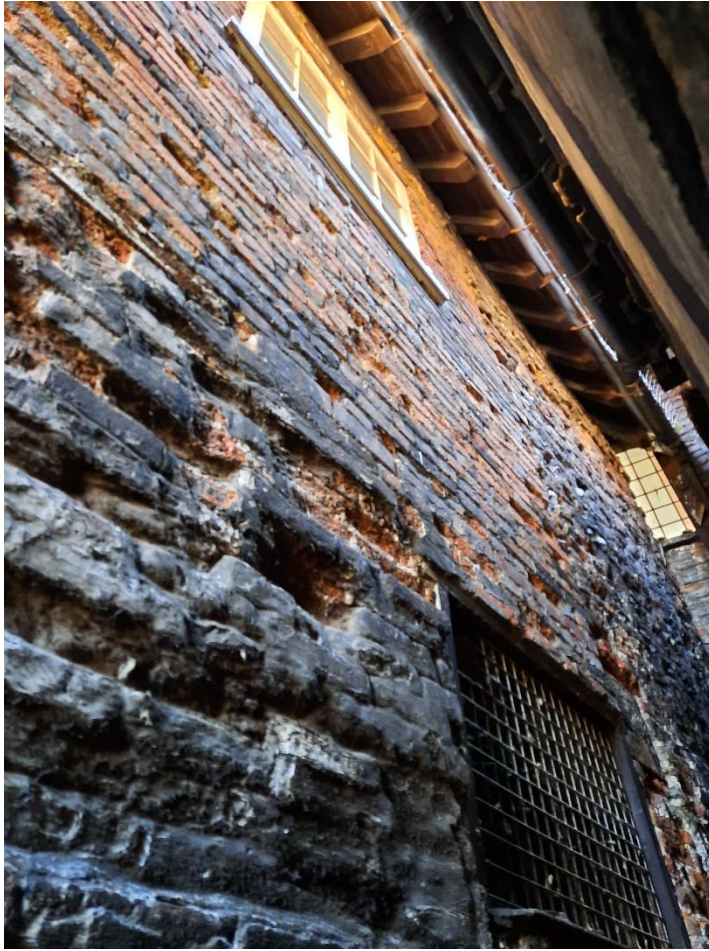


Photo 3 – East elevation of 26-28 Elm Hill – Brickwork has been severely structurally damaged by the moist emissions from the kitchen flue unlawfully installed immediately opposite. Windows of 26-28 Elm Hill are directly above the extract, which makes them unopenable due to the stench of the deep fat fryer fumes. Even with the windows shut, the whole of 26-28 Elm Hill reeks with the fumes from the unlawful extract which permeate through the masonry when the extract is in use. This explains in part why 26-28 Elm Hill has remained untenanted for so many years and has ended up on the Historic England's National Heritage at Risk register, where it will remain whilst it is blighted by such offensive odours, fire risk and damage from the neighbouring flue extract.



Photo 4 – Showing possible alternative location of flue extract on west elevation the Stranger's Club modern rear lean-to. The NCC could request that the Strangers Club submit such a proposal.

Plan - Sketch of the possible alternative route for the extract flue (which NCC could require the Strangers Club to submit instead of retrospectively approving the unlawful flue). The flue could be routed northwest internally (hung from the ceiling) and exit through the open west elevation of the modern lean-to, rather than emitting east direct from fat fryer into the enclosed space between Strangers club and 26-28 Elm Hill.

