



The Heath & Hampstead Society

The Society examines all Notices of Intent for tree work relating to Hampstead and Hampstead Heath Fringes, and assesses them for their impact on the Conservation Areas, the local environment and building stability.

To London Borough of Camden

Planning Ref: 2022//P
Address: 1 Chesterford Gardens
Case Officer: Miriam Baptist
Date: 25th December 2022

This application is for permission to 'alter the requirement for the boundary wall to be exactly as the original wall prior to unauthorised works taking place'. This section 106 requirement was for planning permission 2020/1502/P.

This all began in 2020 when 1 Chesterford Gardens' owner, without obtaining planning consent, doubled the size of the parking lot and reduced the garden. This was done by demolishing an entire right hand panel of a panel-pair in the historic clinker brick wall fronting the garden, reducing the size of the right-hand pillar to merely a brick length, and rebuilding the side clinker brick wall vertically instead of with its iconic angled pane and even further back: 2.85metres in all (see photographs later taken June 2020). This new form was presented as 'Existing' for planning application 2020/1502/P to convert a garage attached to 1 Chesterford Gardens into a new 2-storey house.

Hampstead's historic clinker bricks are decorative features found in the boundary walls of quite a number of roads in NW3 and a few in NW6, one of the most extensive collections being all along the odd numbers side of Chesterford Gardens (see photographs at the end). The clinker bricks are burnt bricks from the bottom of Victorian kilns that were used to decorate garden and boundary walls locally. Brickfields with their steaming kilns or brick clamps were plentiful over the Hampstead area and parts of the Heath, its very silty clay being ideal for making bricks. These subjects were painted by several well-known artists, including Constable.



'Finchley Road Fields, Hampstead' 1875, Claude Hayes (1852-1922)

Hampstead's
many
brickfields
with their
smoking kilns



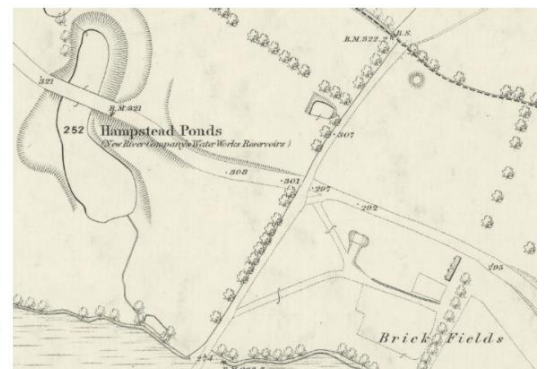
'Hampstead from the South-East' 1852-55 by Alfred Clint (1807-1883)



'Hampstead landscape with a kiln' 1821-2, John Constable (1776-1837)



1866
OS
map



1 Chesterford Gardens right-hand panel of the end pair demolished and pillar replaced by a single brick-length 'end'



April 2015



June 2020



Stop cock



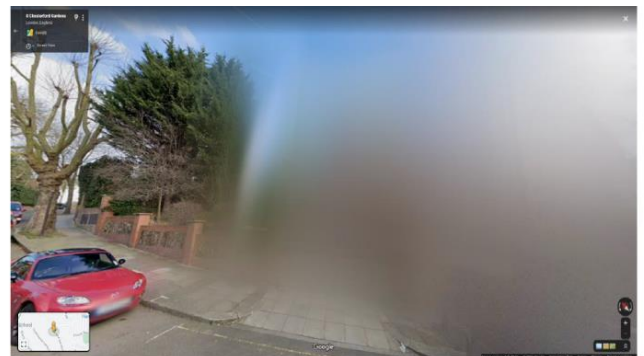
Stop cock

Immediately after objections to the historic wall's demolition and side wall's rebuild and move were submitted to Camden, Google's Streetviews - including historical views - were fogged out. What was there to hide?

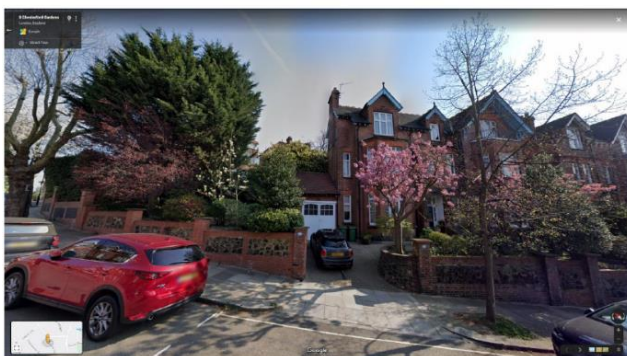


Feb 2018

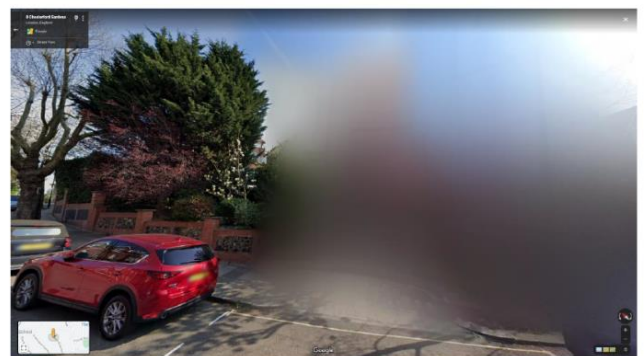
Streetview accessed up to 7th June 2020



After objections to part-demolition of the wall Streetview access has now been fogged out since 18th June



April 2019



Camden required as a condition of planning permission 2020/1502/P that the front wall be reinstated to match the 'existing wall prior to unauthorised works taking place...in precise accordance with the details thus approved... prior to the first occupation of the new residential unit and retained thereafter.' As a very generous compromise Camden allowed the side wall itself to remain rather than be re-built as the existing wall with its angling back and in its previous position.

2015: Prior to the unauthorised works



2020: After, the left-hand pillar and side wall set-back 2.85m



- a harsh and ugly contrast to the wall opposite

However, to fulfil this condition the wall was very unfortunately rebuilt in different coloured red bricks with two pillars instead of one and losing the sense of double panels, a very much smaller replacement panel, breaking the form of stepping down of the panels, and retaining a larger opening for vehicles allowing two to be parked on the still widened forecourt for this 'car-free' building.



The developer has now submitted this planning application to try to regularise this wall rather than be required to reinstate the original one. In the submission it is suggested that other different walls exist, with photographs given to support this contention.

Comments on the local boundary wall photographs provided by the applicant (bounded in red) as precedence

The applicant has attempted to argue that the variation in his wall already exists locally with suggested examples:



This boundary wall is in Redington Road: No. 25 that turns the corner into Chesterford Gardens (see below)



No properties in Redington Road contain clinker brick walls, apart from the rounded corner of Redington Road and Frognal (right) which has a few 'courses' at the top of the curve and the next three small wall sections to its right, and the very low walls of clinker bricks outside Nos. 61 & 67 (below).



The previous low 'toothed' and stepped brick wall around 25 Redington Rd is shown below (from 2005/4990/P)



Photograph showing detail of existing bay window to front façade of 25 Redington Road



Composite Photograph showing façade of 25 Redington Road London NW3 viewed from Redington Road.

Following local complaints, the present boundary wall for 25 Redington Road, associated with 2009/3148/P but built without planning permission was considered by Enforcement EN06/1017, however the response was (from Officers Delegated Report, 2009/3148/P): *'Enforcement investigation into the erection of the boundary wall. The file was closed, as it was considered not expedient to take enforcement action.'*

This wall was not built with the same brick colours of the house, and seems to be an attempt to part mimic the use of brick panels of the boundary wall of 12 Redington Rd opposite (see below) with 1 Chesterford Garden's applicant using similar reasoning for accepting his different wall. 25 Redington Rd's boundary wall however was made much taller and shielded the view of this interesting house. Retrospective planning consent for 2009/4263/P was unfortunately given for this ugly wall which we have had to live with ever since, however it has no relevance to the historic boundary walls in Chesterford Gardens which are quite different. Their panels contain the clinker bricks made in local kilns from the Claygate Beds clay, angled back to make the walls appear lower, more revealing of the house they front, and with a weightier, more three-dimensional sense.



The boundary wall to 12 Redington Road, built and extended to suit the house and its side extension, rebuilt from the garage. The brick colours somewhat match the house bricks; the wall's construction date is not known.



Nos 12 & 25 R Rd both vertical walls, No. 25 taller

We contend that these are inappropriate as precedents for what has been rebuilt at 1 Chesterford Gardens. The examples given (below) are of Chesterford Gardens: rather than the usual pairs they are part or individual panels for nos. 1 (past entrance gate), 3 (carved up panel for new entrance), 9B (1 panel only remains post-demolition for a garage) & 11 (blocked main entrance, not well filled but now has permission to open & reinstate entrance again).



These attempts to show there is difference in the clinker panel walls in Chesterford Gardens, merely illustrate past feeble planning laws and poor past decisions. This can be seen when looking at the walls in their context.



The examples coming from Nos. 9, 9a (left) and 11 (right) are actually a car crash of demolished or re-built walls and garage installations affecting the Conservation Area very seriously e.g. E5/15/9/6421 submitted in 1968.

Camden refused demolition of a similar wall for a garage at 7 Chesterford Gardens in 2007, describing this as 'inappropriate by removing a characteristic, unique and original solid boundary feature of the streetscape and having an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the building, the streetscape and Conservation Area'.



Chesterford Gardens clinker brick walls up until 2020

Angled face to clinker panels

Part of the applicant's argument for altering their re-built panel's width seems to be that Chesterford Gardens' original clinker panels are of different widths. They are not all the same but, looking along the road (as above), it is clear this is to match the different widths of the houses along here. Some were built as double-fronted and some as semi-detached houses, all of varying designs though fitting together into a sense of a road of generally Edwardian, villa-type houses, with some differently-placed front gate entrances. Since 9A Chesterford Gardens' garage in 1968 and 3 Chesterford Gardens' dreadful changes in 1948, no walls have been given permission to be altered, especially not to just accommodate increased parking as was done recently without permission at 1 Chesterford Gardens.

Camden have continued more recently to help preserve the historic boundary walls of Chesterford Gardens by now insisting on reinstatement of 1 Chesterford Gardens' illegally removed front boundary wall panel. This could also have been an opportunity to replace the concrete slab pillar tops with copies of the original Chesterford Garden pillar caps as other neighbours have done and to look more in keeping with these grand houses.

While it is good that the developers have kept the clinker bricks from the walls they demolished (apparently, though the colour and smoother finish is very different) and this time, with prompting, have retained the backward slope on the clinker panel, they have not reinstated the wall as it was and the result is extremely ugly. The brick colour looks wrong and too much of a contrast for weathering to calm; there are two pillars in place of one with loss of the double-panel pattern which no longer steps down the slope correctly; there is ugly snail pointing of the clinker bricks; the end panel's width looks ridiculous; the entrance gap remains wider than before allowing 2 cars to be parked on what has become the front forecourt to 1A Chesterford Gardens, not merely an entrance route for the existing parking in front of the original house 1 Chesterford Gardens.





Position of pillar in 2022 compared to 2015 (red arrows)

I contend that appropriate precedence has not been demonstrated, and two wrongs in any case don't make a right. At this address there has been a litany of wrongs from the very beginning of the present ownership with attempts to manipulate and bypass planning regulations.

Another new addition is that the wheelie bin and bike sheds built behind the front wall and along the side wall and hiding it are also not to plan and certainly not of good design, construction or fit. Not making a matching pair of end panels to the front boundary wall means the wall becomes much lower here and the off-the-shelf sheds appear awkwardly above on their sloping base. If the side wall had also been reinstalled in its original position with one pair of panels as before, the sheds could all have been hidden behind it now the garden is smaller, presenting a very tidy and grand entrance to the house with its historic wall – that they could be very proud of.



Please refuse this application to 'alter the requirement for the boundary wall to be exactly as the original wall prior to unauthorised works taking place'.

This developer needs to realise that planning regulations cannot be ignored in Camden, and that in Hampstead the Hampstead and the Redington Frognal Neighbourhood Plans and the Conservation Area Statements cannot just be ignored either.

Hampstead residents as well as Camden care about their heritage and about any positive contribution and pleasure that buildings and their surroundings give to the Conservation Areas.

Dr Vicki Harding