



88 Albert Street, London

Design & Access Statement

88 Albert Street,
London,
NW1 7LX
June 2023

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1. Introduction

This report has been prepared in relation to the works proposed at 88 Albert Street, London, NW1 7NR on behalf of the owners of the property, Mr A Howson and Ms Eugenia Hartono.

The works seek to replace the existing retaining wall to the building's external coal vaults and to repair the vaults as necessary to ensure they are structurally sound. The internal walls of the vaults will not be rebuilt but will be repaired where necessary. In addition, the existing staircase leading to the lightwell will be replaced.

88 Albert Street will hereafter be referred to as the 'Site'.

This Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the other supporting planning documents and drawings prepared by Berrys and other consultants. The design has been informed through engagement with the local authority and guidance received in a site visit on 5th January 2023 which has been used as the basis for works required and design approach.

2. Existing Lightwell and Vaults

The lightwell to the front of the site provides light to the basement windows and, should the staircase be in good condition, alternative access to the property. Extending from the lightwell, below the front garden are three storage vaults, likely built for the purpose of storing coal.

The vaults are masonry arch structures which can be accessed via timber doors set in the retaining wall opposite the site's front elevation. This wall has a significant deformation and cracking through the entire thickness of the wall, and the internal arches are starting to deflect downwards, indicating high risk of collapse. This damage has been caused by age, poor waterproofing and potentially the removal of a large nearby tree.

The middle vault has a large hole in the wall leading to the vault being directly accessible from the interior of the property. Due to the poor condition of the existing doors and external wall, this poses a large security risk with limited resistance should someone wish to intrude.

The existing timber staircase down to the lightwell in its current form is not considered an access to the lightwell/property at present. The timber is rotted and there are sections missing making it unusable. Therefore, the only access to property is through the main entrance door on the front elevation.

Flagstones to the existing front garden are in good condition, as is the painted black metal railing above the lightwell, both of which are being retained.

3. Design Proposal

Berrys propose that the external facing wall is rebuilt in materials to match existing, and the hole in the internal vault wall is infilled with replacement brick to match the original structure. External brickwork will be painted white to match existing and the coal chute will be retained with a protective glass capping to assist waterproofing the vaults.

New hardwood timber lintels will be installed above the external doors, flush to the retaining wall, and the doors will be replaced with vertical boarded timber doors. All ironmongery will be painted black to match existing ironmongery on site.

New metal staircase is proposed, painted black to match the existing railing to the lightwell.

For more information, please refer to Berrys' drawings 103 and 104.

4. Access Principals

The vaults and lightwell are on private property with no public access. The replacement of the existing staircase will reopen a secondary access for the property, and an external access for the storage vaults. The primary access to the house will remain unchanged.

Infilling the internal wall of the vaults will also prevent unwanted access to the main house providing a higher level of safety and security.

5. Conclusion

The works proposed are required in order to prolong the life of the site and provide useable, safe accommodation for any inhabitants. All new materials will be chosen to match the existing and ensuring continuity with the traditional style of the site and surroundings.

6. Photos



The Site, as viewed from Albert Street



The lightwell and existing retaining wall



The existing railings to the front garden



Existing doorway into the middle vault



Severe cracks in the existing arches



Cavity left following original lintel rotting away



Hole in wall of vault leading to internal of property



Interior of one of the vaults, with coal shute on the rear wall



Retaining wall separated from vault ceiling