# Fuller Long

Heritage Statement

40 Chamberlain House Phoenix Road London NW1 1EU

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1.0	INTRODUCTION
1.1	The following Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for listed building consent at no.40 Chamberlain House, Phoenix Road, London NW1 1EU.
1.2	Chamberlain House forms part of the Ossulston Estate and is Grade II listed. The proposals are for minor internal works to the layout of the flat to form a smaller bathroom, a storage space associated with the bedroom and a small lobby to the living room.
1.3	In line with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, the purpose of this Statement is to define the significance of the listed building and the features which contribute towards its special architectural and historic interest. The Statement will describe the proposed works and assess their impact on this significance and special interest.
1.4	This document has been produced using desk-based and online research and includes an analysis of the building and its surrounding context. Consideration has been given to the relevant national and local planning policy framework.
1.5	The Statement will demonstrate that the proposals will cause no harm to the significance of the building in terms of fabric, plan form or spatial quality, and will therefore preserve its special architectural and historic interest.



# 2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 Chamberlain House forms part of the Ossulston Estate, which is a London County Council development dating from 1927-29. The estate sits between Chalton Street and Ossulston Street in the Somers Town area to the north of Euston Road.

The estate consists of three large blocks – Levita House, Chamberlain House and Walker House – laid out around landscaped courtyards. Levita House and Chamberlain House are Grade II listed. The buildings are of 5 – 7 storeys in height and constructed of load bearing brickwork with a render finish. The roofs are steep mansards, with dormer, prominent chimneystacks and red pantiles. Architecturally the estate is influenced by Viennese Modernism of the 1920s.

The application site is at no.40 Chamberlain House. The flat has 1 bedroom, a living room, kitchen and a generously sized bathroom and utility room.

## **Heritage Designations**

Chamberlain House was Grade II listed on 13 December 1996. The description reads as follows:

Includes: Nos.86-100 Chamberlain House CHALTON STREET. Includes: Chamberlain House OSSULSTON STREET. Block of council flats, partly with shops at ground floor level, forming part of the Ossulston Estate; frontages to Phoenix Road, Ossulston Street and Chalton Street. 1927-9. To the designs of the LCC Architect's department under G Topham Forrest. Loadbearing brickwork rendered with roughcast, channelled to ground floor to appear as stone; reinforced concrete balconies. Pantiled hipped roofs with tall chimney-stacks. PLAN: courtyard plan with entrance from Phoenix Road. EXTERIOR: Phoenix Road frontage of central entrance flanked by similar 2 storey and attic pavilion blocks having 3 tripartite sashes each and hipped roofs with dormers and overhanging eaves. To either side the row continues with 4 storey blocks having ground floor shops and tripartite sashes to upper floors; other street facades in similar style. Opposite entrance in courtyard the southern block has balconies designed to make the voids above them read as holes punched in the building; central rectangles with a projecting corbelled balcony with shields to the top floor flanked by long rectangular voids grouped in 3s to each floor. Round-arched arcaded ground floor with central opening approached by curved steps. A similar design continues to the western bays. INTERIORS: not inspected. This complex forms a group with Levita House, Ossulston Street, (qv)

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2.3

## SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.4 cont'd

and the southern block of Walker House, Phoenix Road including The Cock Tavern (qv). HISTORICAL NOTE: despite policy to house as many Londoners as possible on outlying cottage estates pressure of waiting lists and urgency of slum clearance forced Cecil Levita, Chairman of the LCC Housing Committee to review the situation. The Ossulston Estate is the most important inner-city estate of the inter-war period, representing the most considered attempt by the LCC to inject new thinking into inner-city housing estates. It was influenced in particular by Viennese housing models and was innovative in terms of layout and elevation. The foundation stone of Chamberlain House was laid by Neville Chamberlain, then Minister of Health.

2.5 The site is not located within a designated conservation area.

2.6 A fuller description and assessment of the architectural and historic significance of the listed building is contained at Section 5 of this Statement.

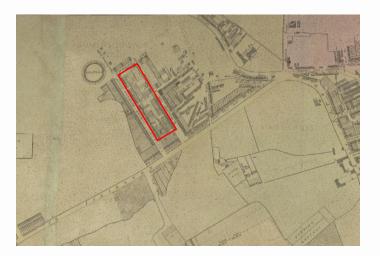
Figure 1: The London Borough of Camden's map of designated and non-designated heritage assets – Grade II listed buildings are marked in blue.



## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AND AREA

3.1

By the time of Horwood's map of 1799 Ossulton Street and Chalton Street had been laid out, lined with terraced houses. The unusual circular development known as the 'Polygon' sat to the northwest. At this point the streets were surrounded by undeveloped fields, to the north and south of Euston Road. Greenwood's map of 1828 shows the pace of change as the area continued to develop with new streets of houses.





Figures 2 & 3: Roque's map of 1746 (left) and Greenwood's map of 1828 (right).

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AND AREA

3.2

The 1870 Ordnance Survey map shows the area in greater detail, as a densely packed urban inner suburb. Euston Station and its tracks were added to the west of Eversholt Street in 1837, accelerating the pace of development within the surrounding area.

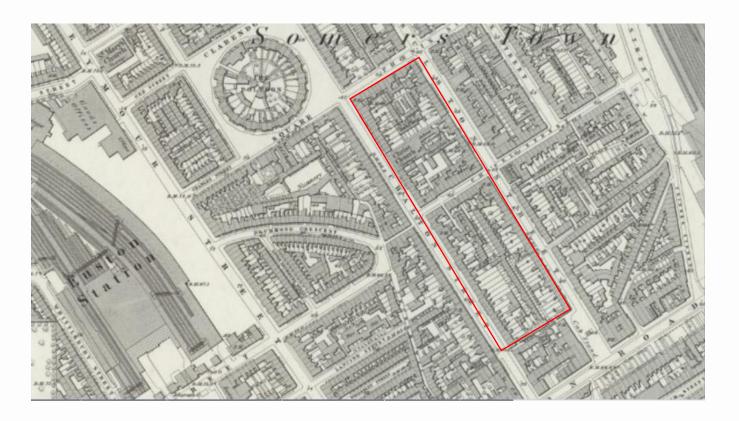


Figure 4: The 1870 Ordnance Survey map.

# 3.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AND AREA

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3.6

After the First World War the government was increasingly concerned about the health of the nation and the poor state of housing in the country, particularly the unhealthy living conditions of the working classes. The Housing and Town Planning Act 1919 allowed local authorities to clear slum housing and the 1920s saw the completion of new housing developments and estates, providing 'homes fit for heroes.' Many of these were low rise and low density, such as the London County Council's cottage estates in Downham (LB Bromley/Lewisham) and Becontree (LB Barking & Dagenham).

In contrast to these suburban developments, the site at Somers Town was intended to house the urban working class and the proposals were for a denser, high-rise development to suit the constraints of the site, notably its long, narrow shape. In 1925, the existing housing in the area was deemed to be an 'Unhealthy Area' as defined by the Housing Act 1924, which meant that the "houses courts or alleys in the said area were unfit for human habitation and/or the narrow closeness and bad arrangement or the bad condition of the streets and houses or groups of houses within each area or the want of light are ventilation of proper conveniences or any other sanitary defects or one or more of such causes were dangerous or injurious to the health of the inhabitants."

The original proposals for the estate in 1925 were for 9 story blocks, requiring lifts, and with more expensive flats for private tenants on the upper floors, as well as commercial development at ground floor level. This plan was eventually replaced by proposals for 5-7 storey blocks, all of which were flats for the working classes. The foundation stone for the estate was laid by Neville Chamberlain, the Minister of Health on 1 February 1928.

The estate was designed by G Topham Forrest of the London County Council, who had visited public housing schemes in Vienna in 1927 such as Karl Marx-Hof, and was influenced by this strand of Viennese Modernism. Chamberlain House was constructed in 1927-29 and Levita House, named after Cecil Levita, chairman of the LCC's Housing Committee, in 1930-31. The estate was designed to accommodate 3054 people, in 492 flats, at a cost of £400,000.

3.0	HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AND AREA
3.7	Although there is nothing innovative about the internal layout or spatial planning of the flats, they were notable for their all-electric servicing and central heating.
3.8	By the 1980s the blocks were in poor condition, suffering from serious disrepair. Camden Council, who had inherited the blocks from the Greater London Council, initiated a £6m scheme to upgrade the blocks and create 44 new homes from the 66 original flats.

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework Annex 2 defines significance as "The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."

A heritage asset is defined as "A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)." In this case the heritage asset is the statutorily listed Chamberlain House.

Historic England's document 'Conservation Principles – Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (2008) identifies a series of values that can be attributed to a heritage asset and which help to appraise and define its significance. Paragraph 3.3 of the document outlines that:

"In order to identify the significance of a place, it is necessary first to understand its fabric, and how and why it has changed over time; and then to consider:

- who values the place, and why they do so
- how those values relate to its fabric
- their relative importance
- whether associated objects contribute to them
- the contribution made by the setting and context of the place
- how the place compares with others sharing similar values."

4.2

In assessing the significance of Chamberlain House it is therefore necessary to examine its origins, history, form, architectural design, layout, materials and relationship with surrounding buildings. In making this assessment, consideration has been given to its intrinsic architectural merit, completeness, the extent of any alterations and their impact, the contribution of the buildings to the character of the area and the degree to which the buildings illustrate aspects of local or national history.

Chamberlain House is arranged around a rectangular courtyard, with an entrance through a large arched opening onto Phoenix Road, flanked by 3 storey pavilions. Elsewhere, the blocks are 5 and 6 storeys in height, constructed in brickwork and with a white painted render finish. The ground floor facades have channeled roughcast, to provide the impression of stone. The balconies are of curved reinforced concrete and are enclosed, producing a 'punched' effect in the massing of the walls and a horizontal, streamlined effect to these facades. Elsewhere there are 6 over 6 traditional timber sash windows.



Figure 5: A view of the NW corner of the building facing Ossulston Street and Phoenix Road.

4.4

The roofscape of the building is of particular interest, with tall, hipped roofs clad in red pantiles, creating high contrast between the roofs and the white facades of the building. The attic storey is lit with lead clad dormers and there are prominent, rendered chimneystacks which punctuate the skyline.

#### Interior

Flat 40 consists of a one bedroom unit, with a living room and separate kitchen. The main entrance hallway provides access to a large bathroom and separate utility space. The interior of the flat is plain and simple, with a Victorian fire surround added to the living room. The walls are plain, painted plaster, with modern skirtings and flush, modern doors.

#### Values and significance

As referenced at paragraph 3.16 above, Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' identifies four values that can be attributed to a heritage asset. These have been examined in turn below.

#### **Evidential Value**

This value is derived from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity (para 35) and is generally closely associated with archaeological sites and remains, with age being a strong indicator of evidential value.

In this case the estate provides evidence of urban working-class life during this period and the improvements in living standards and sanitation which were secured as a result of slum clearance and housing improvement schemes. However, given its construction date at the end of the 1920s its unique evidential value is relatively low., further minimised by internal works to the estate over time.

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## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUILDING

#### 4.8 cont'd

#### Historical value

Paragraph 39 of the Conservation Principles document outlines that "Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative."

The estate is illustrative of post First World War efforts to provide better housing for the working classes and government efforts to clear 18th and 19th century terraces which had deteriorated into insanitary slum housing. It is a particularly notable example of the LCC's housing output during this period.

The estate has associative value due to its connection with Neville Chamberlain, who laid the foundation stone.

#### Aesthetic value

Aesthetic value is defined as "....the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place."

The building is notable for its European architectural influences, notably Viennese modernism of the 1920s. The rendered finish is a departure from the typical red/brown brickwork neo-Georgian blocks which were popular during the 1920s/30s and provides an interesting architectural contrast with the red pantile covered roof. The estate is notable for its eternal spatial planning, set around landscaped courtyards, particularly to Levita House which has an unusually shaped footprint — Chamberlain House has more conventional rectangular courtyard arrangement. The facades which contain the open balconies are the most interesting architecturally, with a streamlined, Moderne character. Elsewhere the facades have bays of traditional subdivided timber sash windows.

The interiors of the building are plain and functional and retain no notable original features.

#### Communal value

This value is derived from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience of memory. In this case, any communal value would be 'social', defined at paragraph 56 as ".....places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence."



The building has communal value in so far as it has been part of the local scene for around 100 years and has thus featured in the day to day lives of those who live, work and pass through the area. This communal value however is local in its focus and the building does not have any particular regional or national symbolism or value.

#### Conclusion

The listing description for the Ossulston estate notes that "The Ossulston Estate is the most important inner-city estate of the inter-war period, representing the most considered attempt by the LCC to inject new thinking into inner-city housing estates. It was influenced in particular by Viennese housing models and was innovative in terms of layout and elevation." Its significance reflects its contribution to an understanding of the role of social housing for the working classes during this period and as part of the London County Council's slum clearance schemes and efforts to improve the unsanitary conditions that many of the urban poor lived in. The estate is a well-known and distinctive townscape feature of the Somers Town area and is prominent in views along Chalton Street and Ossulston Street.

The building has a high degree of architectural quality, reflecting Viennese Modernism of the 1920s and providing a strong contrast with other more traditional LCC output of the period. Its white rendered facades, highly articulated roofscape and the punched balcony openings are all features of particular architectural interest.

Internally the flat is of low significance due to its plain, functional character and lack of innovation in terms of layout, features or spatial planning.

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# 5.0 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

#### **National Planning Policy & Legislation**

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that:

"In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

The revised National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. There is a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within national planning policy guidance.

#### Paragraph 194

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

## Paragraph 195

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

## Paragraph 199

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.



5.1

# 5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## 5.3

## **Local Planning Policy**

Camden's Local Plan was adopted on 3 July 2017. Various policies must be taken into consideration when assessing the impact of the proposals.

## **Policy D2 – Heritage** has relevant parts and notes that:

The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

## Designated heritage assets

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

## Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

j. resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building;



# 5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## 5.4 Camden Planning Guidance – Design CPG 1 (2015)

CPG 1 contains guidance in relation to works to listed buildings.

#### Para 3.20

Most works to alter a listed building are likely to require listed building consent and this is assessed on a case by case basis, taking into account the individual features of a building, its historic significance and the cumulative impact of small alterations. The listing description is not intended to be exhaustive and the absence of any particular feature in the description does not imply that it is not of significance, or that it can be removed or altered without consent. Listed status also extends to any object or structure fixed to the listed building, and any object or structure within its curtilage which forms part of the land. You should contact the Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss proposals and to establish whether listed building consent is required.

#### Para 3.22

In assessing applications for listed building consent we have a statutory requirement to

have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. We will consider the impact of proposals on the historic significance of the building, including its features, such as:

- original and historic materials and architectural features;
- original layout of rooms;
- structural integrity; and
- character and appearance.

#### Para 3.23

We will expect original or historic features to be retained and repairs to be in matching material. Proposals should seek to respond to the special historic and architectural constraints of the listed building, rather than significantly change them.

#### Para 3.24

Applications for listed building consent should be fully justified and should demonstrate how proposals would affect the significance of a listed building and why the works or changes are desirable or necessary. In addition to listed building consent, some proposals may also require planning permission. These applications should be submitted together and will be assessed concurrently.



# 5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

#### 5.5 The London Plan

The London Plan 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth part C is relevant.

C Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

# 6.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS This section will set out the proposed works to the building and will consider their impact. It will assess this impact in terms of the 6.1 special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. The proposed works will also be considered against the relevant local and national historic environment policies. The proposals are for modest internal alterations to Flat 40 of Chamberlain House, which is a one-bedroom unit. 6.2 A walk-in wardrobe is proposed, attached to the main bedroom. This will be formed from part of the existing hallway of the flat and 6.3 access into the wardrobe will be via the existing single leaf door opening from the hallway into the bedroom. The existing bathroom is large in relation to the overall size of the flat, and will be reduced in scale, with a new partition installed 6.4 between it and the adjacent hallway. The existing position of the door from the hallway into the bathroom will be maintained, providing access to a corridor which leads to the retained utility room. A small lobby will be created within the living room. This will allow for access into the bedroom, following the internalisation of its 6.5 door from the hallway inside the walk-in wardrobe. This is a modest feature which will have no harmful impact upon the plan form of the flat. The walls will be plain and plastered to match the surrounding partitions and the lobby is entirely reversible. This could be removed without any harm to the listed building in the future if desired. A new door opening will be created in the wall between the living room and the bedroom. This is a very minor intervention within the flat and in relation to the overall context of the listed building. No fabric of demonstrable architectural or historic interest will be affected.



6.0	ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS
6.6	The interior of the building is plain, simple and functional. There is nothing innovative about the layout, planning or spatial quality of the flat. The proposals generally affect secondary spaces such as the hallway and bathroom. The small lobby in the living room and single leaf door opening to provide access to the bedroom will not harm the fundamental character of the living room, which will remain the most spacious room within the flat.
6.7	The flat is lacking storage space and the proposals will provide this by reducing the existing fairly large bathroom.
6.8	The proposals will have no impact upon the high significance external facades or composition of the listed building. Its contribution to the surrounding townscape will be entirely preserved. They will cause no harm to historic fabric or features of demonstrable significance.
6.9	It should be noted that extensive works took place to the Ossulston Estate in the early 21st century, following permission to merge several flats and decrease the overall number of units. Since then, there have been several non-contentious small scale applications for minor internal works to modify the layout of flats, which are acknowledged as areas of little significance.
	Assessment of the proposals against the relevant policy framework  Statutory duties – The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
6.10	The main issue for consideration in relation to this application is the effect of the proposals on no.40 Chamberlain House as a listed building. The relevant statutory provision is contained at s.16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
6.11	This Statement has demonstrated that the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building will be preserved. The proposals will have no impact upon features which make a demonstrable contribution to special interest.



# 6.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS

#### The London Borough of Camden Local Plan

The proposed works are considered to comply with the relevant sections of the London Borough of Camden's Local Plan 2017.

Policy D1 – Design requires development to respect local context and character, preserve or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets and comprise details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character. Policy D2 – Heritage outlines that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate enhance the borough's rich and diverse heritage assets, including listed buildings. With regard to listed buildings, the Council will resist proposals to alter or extend them where this would cause harm to their special architectural or historic interest and setting.

The proposals are very minor in their scale and scope and will provide a modest reconfiguration of the existing flat, retaining the overall balance of accommodation but with the addition of valuable storage space. The large bathroom will be reduced in size, but this will not adversely affect the spatial quality of the flat. The proposed layout and new partitions will merge seamlessly with the existing walls within the flat and its overall internal character will be maintained.

## **National Planning Policy Framework 2021**

The NPPF requires the significance of heritage assets to be described and for planning applications to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing this significance. Great weight should be given to the conservation of the heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposed development. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be.

This Heritage Statement has provided a thorough analysis of the significance of the listed building and the relative contribution of the various parts to its special architectural and historic interest, in a manner which is proportionate to the scale of the works. The proposals will avoid any harm to this defined significance or value, through small scale alterations to the layout of the flat to better suit it's new owner. The key, high significance external features of the listed building will remain unaltered. Consequently, the proposals are considered to comply with the requirements of the NPPF.

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# 6.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS

#### Camden SPG Design (2021)

The proposals are considered to comply with the guidance within this document, in so far as it relates to the interior of listed building. In line with paragraphs 3.22 and 3.23, the proposals are considered to preserve the significance of the building, which is mostly vested in its external planning, layout and the architectural quality and innovation to its external elevations. This Statement has assessed and justified the impact of the proposals upon the special interest of the listed building, in accordance with paragraph 3.24.

#### The London Plan 2021

The proposals are considered to comply with the adopted London Plan (2021). The thrust of Policy HC1 - Heritage conservation and growth is that heritage assets and their settings should be conserved. Proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities. The proposals will affect only the interior of the listed building, which is an area of low significance and will modestly adapt it to suit the requirements of the new owner, providing valuable storage space. The revised layout will not harm the intrinsic spatial quality or plan form of the flat. Overall, the affected heritage asset (the listed building) will be conserved.

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# 6.0 **CONCLUSION** This application is for minor internal works to the listed building, creating a walk-in wardrobe and modifying the circulation space 6.1 within the flat. The proposals are minor in their scope and scale and will affect an internal area of limited significance – the special interest of the 6.2 Ossulston Estate is vested in its historic values as a response to the poor living conditions of the urban poor during the 1920s, as well as its external layout, spatial planning and architectural treatment of its facades. These features will be unaffected by the proposals and the special interest of the listed building will be preserved. The proposed works are considered to fully comply with the requirements of the London Borough of Camden's Local Plan 2017 and 6.3 will preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. The proposals also accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular ensuring that the significance of the heritage asset is sustained and enhanced.

Thank you for Viewing our Heritage Statement

If you have any queries or would like to discuss anything further with us, please don't hesitate to get in contact hello@fullerlong.com

