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## HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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In respect of

**2 Holly Terrace, London, N6 6LX**

On behalf of

**Dr Matthew and Mrs Emily Banks**

**AHC REF: PM/10092**

**Date: August 2023**

[www.assetheritage.co.uk](http://www.assetheritage.co.uk)

**Annexe Offices, Linton Road, Oxford, OX2 6UD T: 01865 310563**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT**

### *Purpose, heritage constraints, and background to application*

- 1.1 This report has been prepared and written by Patrick Christopher Maguire, IHBC, Associate Director at Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. ('AHC'), on behalf of Dr Matthew and Mrs Emily Banks, in order to assess the impact in built heritage terms of the proposals affecting 2 Holly Terrace.
- 1.2 2 Holly Terrace is a Grade II listed building. It forms part of the group with the other listed buildings that comprise 1-11 Holly Terrace (as well as the listed entrance gates/gardens and lamp posts that serve Holly Terrace) and is located within the Highgate Conservation Area.
- 1.3 Dr & Mrs Banks purchased and moved into 2 Holly Terrace last year and shortly afterwards assembled a professional team to prepare a scheme of sympathetic alteration and renovation to the listed building, their ambitions being centred around carrying out sensitive changes to meet the needs of modern living.
- 1.4 With this in mind, I first visited Holly Terrace in May 2022 and subsequently prepared a detailed Statement of Significance for the site, which considered its historical development and significance in heritage terms.
- 1.5 The purpose of that report, which was circulated to the design team in June 2022, was to inform the development of the application scheme, ensuring that the significance of 2 Holly Terrace, the setting of adjacent listed buildings, and the character and appearance of the conservation area were all fully understood and considered as part of the design process for the then-emerging proposals affecting 2 Holly Terrace.
- 1.6 That Statement of Significance formed part of a pre-application submission made to Camden Council in August 2022. As part of the thorough pre-application process, meetings were carried out on site with both the Conservation and Planning Officers of the Council.

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- 1.7 In order to facilitate a programme of works which included various elements, including minor internal alterations and areas of external repair, extension, and alteration, the proposals were split into several applications following the pre-application process (which also identified some areas of work that the Council felt could legitimately be carried out without consent as they did not have the potential to affect the special architectural or historic character of the listed building), allowing work to begin on site on some elements while design continued on others.
- 1.8 Indeed, listed building consent was granted in February 2023 for various internal works (ref.2022/5517/L), including works within the basement to upgrade the kitchen (B.01 – see application drawings for room references), form a pantry in the closet wing extension (B.05), form a WC within the eastern rear vault (with associated water-proofing works – B.06), and remove modern boxing around the family room fireplace (B.02). Consented works elsewhere in the building include repairs to doors (and in some cases, where necessary, replacement) and windows and areas of replacement cornicing.
- 1.9 Consent was also recently granted for necessary roofs repairs and the formation of a new central dormer on the front (southern) elevation, alongside the replacement of a modern rooflight in a more sympathetic form on the rear (northern) elevation (ref. 2023/0082/P & 2023/0467/L). Further applications relating to works to the garage (ref.2023/1505/P & 2023/1725/L) and works to front (southern) lightwell and garden (ref. 2023/1319/P & 2023/1721/L) have also recently been granted consent.
- 1.10 As these submissions suggest, a constant and constructive dialogue has been maintained between the applicants' professional team and the officers of Camden Council throughout this process.
- 1.11 The application proposals to which this Heritage Impact Assessment relate are concerned principally with external works, alongside modest extensions, to the main house. These are issues that were considered as part of the August 2022 pre-application submission and were supported in principle by the Council at that stage. The detailed design has been refined through internal discussions within the design team and through informal discussion with Council officers since then.

### *Methodology*

- 1.12 Now that a detailed scheme has been drawn up, the June 2022 Statement of Significance provides a useful 'baseline' against which to assess the effects of the proposals on the significance of Holly Terrace and nearby heritage assets (including the Highgate Conservation Area).
- 1.13 As such, this Heritage Impact Assessment should be read alongside that Statement of Significance as well as the Design & Access Statement prepared by the scheme architects, Alistair Downie, which sets out the rationale underlying the approach taken to the design proposals.
- 1.14 As noted in the Statement of Significance, this two-stage approach, of analysing and understanding 'significance' first and allowing this to inform the formulation of the application proposals, is very much in accordance with the good practice advocated in documents such as English Heritage's (now Historic England) *Conservation Principles* (2008) and now formally expressed in the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF – revised July 2021) and the accompanying interpretation and guidance contained in the revised (National) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 1.15 Indeed, in the absence of such an approach, and in accordance with the advice set out at paragraph 194 of the recently-revised NPPF and that contained in Historic England's 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2' (July 2015; hereafter referred to as 'GPA2') the Council might well be unwilling to validate the applications accordingly.

### *Assessment*

- 1.16 Following my own assessment of 2 Holly Terrace, its relationship with the neighbouring listed buildings, and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Camden Conservation Area carried out for these reports, it is my considered view that the application scheme would serve to 'preserve' what is significant about these important designated heritage assets.

- 1.17 As such, the proposals are compliant with both local and national policy on the conservation and enhancement of the historic built environment, including the guidance set out in the NPPF and its accompanying PPG, and, most importantly of all in heritage planning terms, pass the statutory tests set by Sections 16, 66, & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

## 2.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS AND THE HERITAGE ISSUES

- 2.1 The aim of this section of the report is to examine the application proposals in the context of the site's heritage significance as set out in my June 2022 Statement of Significance. Naturally, this analysis is undertaken with a particular focus on the effects of the proposals on the significance of 2 Holly Terrace as a listed building and, where relevant, the setting of other listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### The application proposals

- 2.2 The application proposals relate principally to external works to 2 Holly Terrace. In most cases, these are matters that were considered as part of the August 2022 pre-application submission or, if not, have been the subject of subsequent discussions with Council officers.
- 2.3 Taking advantage of their elevated position and long views southwards, the Holly Terrace properties are unusual in that they 'turn their backs' on the highway, with what are architecturally their front elevations facing onto gardens and the entrance lane to the south, while their rear elevations face onto enclosed yards set between the buildings and the road. While historically the front entrance from the access lane would have been the main entrance, with the yard access from Highgate West Hill being a service entrance, the access from the rear is now generally used as the 'day to day' entrance to 2 Holly Terrace.
- 2.4 Within this rear yard, the lightwell/sunken alley on the western side of the yard is to be extended slightly with a reconfigured retaining wall to provide a recess to accommodate wheelie bins and an air source heat pump in a discreet and convenient location. As part of the pre-application scheme, the existing stairs in the lightwell were to be moved slightly northwards of their existing location but this no longer forms part of the proposals and the steps are to be retained in their existing location.
- 2.5 Where the kitchen exits into the rear lightwell, it is proposed to form an enclosed, glazed lobby. A glazed lobby in this area was considered at pre-application stage, where officers raised concerns, noting that, *'The glazing would be highly visible, and*

*the area currently allows for natural rear ventilation to the basement, the proposed enclosure would give rise to potential flooding'.*



**Fig.1. Comparison of the pre-application (left) and full application (right) proposals for the lobby in the rear lightwell (ground-floor plans, showing roof of the lobby, and elevations)**

2.6 In direct response to this, the design of the proposed lobby has been thoroughly revised since pre-application stage (see comparison drawings at **Fig.1**). The lobby then proposed filled the entirety of the lightwell area adjacent to the main house and had a sharply-pitched, glazed, lean-to roof that would have been highly visible within the yard (covering the western bay up to a point level with about half-way up the height of the ground-floor rear entrance).



- 2.7 The porch now proposed covers approximately half of the footprint of the previous proposals, forming a covered lobby between the kitchen and the wine cellar in the vaults. The roof design has also been comprehensively changed, offering a far shallower pitch and far lower overall height, with the top parts of the lean-to roof just rising over the existing retaining wall. The result is a structure with far less visual impact than the pre-application proposals (see comparison drawings at **Fig.1**).
- 2.8 As part of this work, it is also proposed to convert the basement window in the west elevation of the closet wing (a later extension to the building) into a doorway, allowing communication between the already-consented pantry and kitchen via the glazed lobby.
- 2.9 The other proposed change in the yard area is the provision of an infill extension in the gap between the eastern bay of the main house and the garage block. As set out in my June 2022 Statement of Significance (paragraphs 2.17-18), there was historically a structure in this position.
- 2.10 The principle of reintroducing a single-storey structure in this location was explored at pre-application stage. Officers were supportive in principle, stating that, *'The proposed extension is considered to be acceptable in principle, given the location to the rear and given the extension would be no greater in height than the extant garage'*.
- 2.11 However, officers had some detailed concerns about the proposed materials, which were largely to be glazing, stating that, *'The proposed materiality of the extension is not supported by the Council as the proposed contemporary glazing is considered harmful to the host building'*.
- 2.12 The extension then proposed would also have involved dropping the cill of the ground-floor window in the eastern bay of the rear (northern) elevation and removing the existing (non-original) window, providing stepped access into the extension. Officers raised no concerns with that element of the proposals.
- 2.13 The application scheme continues to propose a single-storey extension in this location, the proportions and scale of which match those found to be acceptable at pre-

application stage, although now with a traditional mansard pitch rather than the 'crown-pitch' previously proposed.

- 2.14 However, responding to officer comments, the materiality has been thoroughly revised. Rather than the full-height glazing to the exposed (western) elevation and roof-slopes as previously proposed, it is now proposed to style the exposed (western) elevation as a traditional small-pane French window with timber glazing bars, while the roof is to be clad in standing-seam zinc.
- 2.15 Standing-seam zinc is a high-quality roofing material that is often used in heritage contexts. Indeed, I note the guidance set out in Historic England's July 2017 'Metal theft from historic buildings: prevention, response and recovery'. This national guidance considers various alternatives to lead as a roof covering in heritage contexts and sets out zinc as a reasonable potential alternative.
- 2.16 Regarding the use of zinc, this national guidance document sets out that its advantages include that it is a similar colour to certain types of lead, has a good longevity, and can be detailed to resemble lead (p.13). As such, its usage is clearly acceptable in heritage contexts, having a traditional form while (due to its lesser scrap value) lacking lead's susceptibility to theft.
- 2.17 In order to light this garden room, glazing is now proposed only on the shallow-pitched, central area of roof.
- 2.18 The roof structure of the garden room is to be supported by five beams, resting against the northern wall of the existing house and the garage on padstones, as specified by the construction contractor.
- 2.19 It is also no longer proposed to form the access into the garden room extension from the eastern bay of the main building. Rather this will be accessed only from an opening made in the eastern elevation of the later closet wing extension (this opening in the later closet wing wall also featured in the pre-application submission and was not raised as a concern by officers).

- 2.20 Finally on the rear of the building, it is proposed to replace the existing, modern, glazed and metal door to the ground-floor entrance in the closet wing with a solid, timber, six-panelled door, more consistent with the late Georgian character of the listed building.
- 2.21 Moving to the front elevation of the building, which faces onto the garden to the south, the only change proposed here is the formation of an open metal porch/canopy, mirroring the style of later porches found elsewhere on the listed Holly Terrace properties. This would be a reversible alteration.

#### Heritage assessment

- 2.22 The principal heritage issues in this case are the effects of the proposals on the character of the listed 2 Holly Terrace, the contribution their settings make to the significance of the other listed buildings of Holly Terrace, and the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area.
- 2.23 These issues are considered in some detail in the June 2022 Statement of Significance. As well as serving to inform the development of the application proposals, the Statement of Significance provides a 'baseline' against which the scheme can be assessed in heritage terms.
- 2.24 Considering that the contribution that 2 Holly Terrace makes to the setting of the adjacent Holly Terrace is a result of their 'group value' as a contemporary, planned terrace, and this also forms the group's contribution to the significant character and appearance of the conservation area, there is clearly a good degree of overlap between the principal issues in this case.
- 2.25 That is to say, as the proposed changes are largely external, a scheme that serves to preserve what is significant about 2 Holly Terrace will, almost by definition, also serve to preserve the significance of the adjacent listed buildings and the significant character and appearance of the conservation area and, as such, there is little to be achieved in drawing too fine a distinction between these issues.

- 2.26 The majority of the proposals relate to the rear of the building. I note at paragraphs 3.15-18 of the June 2022 Statement of Significance that the rear of the Holly Terrace properties do not have a uniform character and, indeed, that this character is varied and the result of a myriad of distinct phases of extension and alteration to individual properties.
- 2.27 In support of this assessment, I note the guidance in the Council's adopted 'Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals' (adopted October 2007), which states that, *'There is a great contrast between the front and rear of the terrace. The rear of Holly Terrace backing onto Highgate West Hill has an assortment of rear extensions, garages, service yards, and rear boundary walls'* (unpaginated but p.19 in the .pdf version).
- 2.28 I also note Historic England's national guidance, entitled 'Conserving Georgian & Victorian terraced housing' (July, 2020), that, *'The rear of a Georgian terrace is generally easier to alter without compromising architectural integrity. Extensions are therefore often later than the main range, or have been substantially altered over the years to accommodate improvements in sanitation and comfort'* (p.12).
- 2.29 I note in their comments on applications ref. 2023/0082/P & 2023/0467/L that the Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee made reference to this part of the Statement of Significance, stating that, *'the quote from Historic England in paragraph 3.15 [this being the guidance quoted at paragraph 2.27 of this Heritage Impact Assessment above] would normally apply where the rear of a building faces away from the public realm, which is not the case here. Changes made to "the rear" of this building are likely to be clearly visible to passers-by, e.g. passengers on the 214 bus. The Conservation Officer should therefore ensure that changes at the rear of the building are as appropriate as those at the front'*.
- 2.30 Of course, I agree that the Conservation Officer should ensure that any alterations to the rear of the building should be appropriate and, in any case, this is a duty incumbent on the Council through the 1990 Act.
- 2.31 Moreover, I would agree that it is self-evident that the 'fronts' of buildings overwhelmingly tend to face towards the highway and that the Holly Terrace

properties are unusual in presenting their fronts to an access alleyway and their rears to the road (behind enclosed yards); however, the guidance set out in 'Conserving Georgian & Victorian terraced housing' and quoted at paragraph 2.27 above is in reference to the architectural character of Georgian buildings and is clearly directly applicable to Holly Terrace, where what is certainly legible as the rear of buildings (i.e. the northern elevations facing Highgate West Hill) have been the subject of far greater change over time, as one expects of Georgian terraces, and remain less sensitive to alteration than the frontages.

- 2.32 Clearly this is not to say that an 'anything goes' approach is appropriate but rather that there is greater scope for change to this part of the building than to the front. Such change must, of course, still be sympathetic.
- 2.33 Indeed, as I note in my Statement of Significance, '*...if appropriately handled it [the rear of the building] could accommodate a fair degree of alteration without diminishing its contribution to the architectural interest of the listed building*' (paragraph 3.18 – emphasis added).
- 2.34 In my view, the proposed changes to 2 Holly Terrace meet this important requirement. The proposed changes to the lightwell to accommodate bin storage and an air source heat pump are modest and proportionate and will not materially alter the form or experience of the rear yard. Indeed, the location of the bin store and plant are appropriate to the historic use of the yard and rear lightwell as service areas.
- 2.35 In principle, the installation of an air source heat pump is clearly commendable in the context of adapting to climate change, which is a key tenet of the NPPF, which identifies 'an environmental objective' as one of the overarching objectives of the planning system (paragraph 8).
- 2.36 As the proposed location and associated works would not result in harm in heritage terms, this aspect of the scheme should certainly be encouraged.
- 2.37 The replacement of the modern main door into the closet wing with a solid, six-panel door, more appropriate to the Georgian character of this listed building, will also certainly not result in any harm in heritage terms.

- 2.38 Within the rear lightwell, the lobby extension has been altered and its design improved markedly since the pre-application submission (see **Fig.1** above). The revised proposals would result in a modest extension in an inconspicuous location. It would improve the functionality of the kitchen, vault wine cellar, and the consented pantry in the closet wing. While it would be visible from within the rear yard, visibility is not synonymous with harm in heritage terms and it would be a low-key structure, identifiable as a product of its time but neither dominant nor discordant with the host listed building.
- 2.39 As such, I am not of the view that it would result in harm to what is significant about 2 Holly Terrace, or the contribution that the site makes to the significance of the other Holly Terrace properties as part of their setting or to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



**Plate 1. Closet wing window to be converted to doorway in rear lightwell**

- 2.40 The formation of a doorway at basement level in the western elevation of the closet wing will result in the loss of a window and the associated material below; however, the closet wing is a later addition to the listed building and of substantially less significance than the main element of Holly Terrace. The loss of the window here (a 20<sup>th</sup>-century sash incorporating both horns and glazing bars, alongside obscure glazing – **plate 1**) and area of brickwork or blockwork below will not have a discernible impact on the significance of this listed building.

- 2.41 Similarly, the modest loss of historic fabric proposed through the formation of the ground-floor opening between the closet wing and the proposed garden room extension will not result in harm to the significance of this listed building, affecting only later fabric that is not of material interest.
- 2.42 In terms of the proposed garden room extension, I agree with the view of the officers of Camden Council that an extension of this scale and massing in this position would not be harmful in heritage terms.
- 2.43 As set out in the Statement of Significance (paragraphs 2.17-18), there is historical precedent for a structure in this location and the proposed extension would be no higher than the existing garage. It is not uncommon for Georgian terraces to incorporate later rear projections of this sort (see quoted Historic England guidance at paragraph 2.27 above) and are characteristic of the rear yards of the Holly Terrace properties (see the assessment in the Council's adopted conservation area appraisal quoted at paragraph 2.26 above).
- 2.44 As the pre-application process has established that the principle, scale, and massing of this extension are acceptable in terms of both the listed building, setting of neighboring listed buildings, and the character and appearance of the conservation area, the principal issues at this stage relate to the detailed design and materials of the proposed extension.
- 2.45 These have been substantially improved since pre-application stage. The proposed timber-and-glazed French window, seamed-zinc mansard, and central roof lights are a notable improvement over the (almost) fully-glazed structure considered at pre-application stage and respond directly to the detailed concerns raised then.
- 2.46 In my view, the extension design has now been refined to a point that it would not result in any harm in heritage terms and would be an attractive and proportionate addition that would be congruent with the established character of the rear of the Holly Terrace properties. As such, it would result in no harm to either 2 Holly Terrace as a listed building, the group value of the Holly Terrace properties more generally, or the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area.

- 2.47 I note that the roof structure of the extension is to be supported by beams set into the walls of the the listed building and garage with padstones. This will result in the loss of small associated areas of render and brickwork, although the loss of fabric will be modest and no greater than, for instance, the formation of new doorway. Considering the modest loss of fabric, I can see no reason why this element of the scheme should be harmful in heritage terms assuming it is acceptable in structural/engineering terms, i.e. it will have no adverse implications for the structural stability of the listed building (which is beyond my expertise and the scope of this Heritage Statement to comment upon).
- 2.48 Finally, the bespoke metal porch proposed to main entrance on the front (south) of the property will be a reversible change that is consistent with the established character of the front elevations of the Holly Terrace properties, including the adjacent Nos.3 and 4, which each have a full-width pentice and raised terrace of similar design to the canopy proposed at No.2, albeit substantially larger in size. A porch of similar design is also found at 5 Holly Terrace (**plate 2**).



**Plate 2. Existing porch at 5 Holly Terrace (reproduced from Harper Downie's Design & Access Statement accompanying application ref. 2015/6612/L)**



- 2.49 Metal porches are not an incongruent feature by any means on Regency villas and high-status terraces, with the early 19<sup>th</sup> century being the heyday of decorative cast iron porches and verandahs, as demonstrated in works such as J.B. Papworth's 1818 *Rural Residences*, which describes a verandah in iron as '*a useful and ornamental appendage to a London dwelling*' (p.103).
- 2.50 Moreover, this proposed addition will not be inconsistent with the elevational composition of 2 Holly Terrace, which emphasises the central ground-floor entrance bay, including through the existing stoop. The proposed addition would be modest, attractive, and reversible and, most importantly of all, would not look 'out of place' as part of the group of properties that makes up Holly Terrace. As such, it would not result in harm to either the character of 2 Holly Terrace as a listed building, the 'group value' of the Holly Terrace properties (i.e. the contribution that their settings make to the significance of the adjacent listed buildings), or the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area.
- 2.51 Taken as a whole, it is therefore my view that the scheme would not result in harm in heritage terms and, as such, should be supported from a heritage perspective.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 For all the detailed reasons set out in this report, which is informed by the June 2022 Statement of Significance, it is my considered opinion that the application proposals are compatible with the heritage significance of this sensitive site and will serve to preserve the significance of 2 Holly Terrace as a listed building.
- 3.2 Equally, I have not identified any harm to the significance of the nearby listed buildings of Holly Terrace through the effects on their settings nor to the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area.
- 3.3 As such, I am firmly of the view that the application proposals are compatible with both local and national guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic built environment, including the guidance in the NPPF and its accompanying PPG and, most importantly of all in heritage planning terms, pass the statutory tests set by Sections 16, 66, & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.