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56 Gayton Road Hampstead

London Borough of Camden

*A Heritage Statement Concerning Alterations to the
Rear Elevation and other Enhancement Works*

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Introduction

Martin O'Rourke has over 35 years' experience in the management of change in the historic environment, both in the public and private sectors.

He holds a Diploma in Environmental Design (Wimbledon School of Art) and a Master of Art degree from the Faculty of Environmental Design, Royal College of Art (MARCA).

Following six years as a professional officer at the Greater London Council Historic Buildings Division (Kensington & Chelsea and City of Westminster), he was a conservation officer for Hertfordshire County Council. Later, after twelve years as a heritage consultant, working mostly in London and the southeast, he became a Historic Buildings Inspector and Regional Regeneration Adviser for London Region of English Heritage (now Historic England).

Martin has contributed to English Heritage publications concerning conservation-led regeneration as well as the Buildings of England volume on the City of London.

He has appeared at public inquiries as an expert witness for English Heritage, local authorities and private clients.

He has been Director of Conservation Regeneration for 18 years.

1 Purpose of the Heritage Statement

1.01 This heritage statement seeks to describe the heritage significance of No. 56 Gayton Road in the context of the wider historic environment. The proposals for change will be discussed in the context of local and national heritage policy for managing change in the historic environment.

2 Designations

2.01 No. 56 is not statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest.

2.02 The whole of Gayton Road is situated within the designated Hampstead Conservation Area. Gayton Road is within the Conservation Area Sub Area 3: Willoughby Road/Downshire Hill. The whole Conservation Area is subject to an Article 4 Direction meaning that virtually all works of change are brought under planning control. In this case the Article 4 Direction applies only to street frontages and return elevations.

2.03 Camden Borough Council have published two documents regarding this Conservation Area:

- Hampstead Conservation Area Statement

This document describes the characteristics of the Sub Area 3 and mentions Gayton Road;

“falls gently from the High Street to Well Walk and has an unusually long terrace for this conservation area.”

- Hampstead Conservation Area Streetscape Audit;

In Gayton Road, the impressive street trees are noted and public realm features such as coal hole covers, granite setts and granite drainage channels.

3 The Building and its History

3.01 The development of Gayton Road dates from the 1870s. The site for Gayton Road formed part of the land holding of George Nathan Best, a Norfolk barrister. The builder developer for this road and adjacent streets was George William Potter (1831-1919). George Potter was a builder/developer and estate agent. In 1881 the Potter family were living at No. 27 Gayton Road. By 1909, Potter's estate agency and development practice was 50 years old and had undertaken development in Hampstead Garden Suburb.

But Gayton Road of the 1870s was built and designed in the urban tradition of London terraced houses rather than Garden City principles.

3.02 THE BUILDING

No. 56 Gaydon Road is part of a terrace of similar houses on the east side of the road. It is 3 storeys high, plus a roof storey and basement. The front elevation of the house is two windows wide and is built of gault brick with brown stock brick dressings and segmental arches over the timber sash windows. The arches have a raised keystone. The ground floor entrance, approached by steps from the pavement level, has a recessed front door under a semi-circular decorative brick arch. To the left is a shallow bay at basement and ground floor level having, originally, tripartite sash window on both floors, but now adversely altered.

3.03 The rear elevation is seen from the self-contained rear car parking area. The houses making up this terrace appear now to have a variety of roof storeys and treatments. There is a sheer gabled brick frontage to the roof storey of one house, a raised valley roof-style parapet to another. In the case of No. 56, the gabled parapet sits in front of a sheer vertical roof storey which has two dormer windows, having the appearance of a full storey rather than a mansard roof.

3.04 There is also a variety of heights to the rear extension outriggers, ranging from two storeys to the almost full height extensions at No. 50 and its neighbours. There is no regular rhythm or single or principal design controlling feature. The character of this rear elevation is one of variety and change.



Rear elevation of Gayton Road terrace showing the degree of existing alteration

4 Heritage Significance

4.01 The terrace in Gayton Road which includes No.56 do not possess sufficient heritage significance to be statutorily listed buildings. The terrace does, however, contribute to the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area as a later 19th century example of townscape development. The terrace has significance as a substantial piece of townscape and contributing generally to area character rather than the detail intrinsic special interest provided by listed buildings.

4.02 Protecting or enhancing the contribution the terrace provides to the Conservation Area therefore rests in general care and protection of the main

architectural and townscape elements rather than the detail control expected in the case of listed buildings.

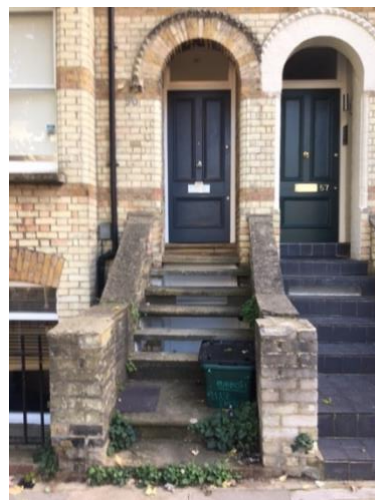
5 The Proposals

5.01 It is proposed to add a floor to the existing outrigger at the rear of No. 56 which would be accessed from the half landing between the first and second floors off the existing main staircase, resulting in the new extension would being lower in height than the full extent of the second-floor elevation. The extra storey would be finished in matching brickwork with a small sash window on the rear elevation.

5.02 Together with this proposal, a suite of restoration works is proposed to enhance the existing building and its place in the terrace and the wider conservation area.

5.03 FRONT ELEVATION

- Timber painted tripartite sash windows would be restored to the shallow bay on the basement and ground elevation.
- The front steps and the flanking dwarf walls would be restored with York stone risers and treads and dwarf wall copings.



5.04 REAR ELEVATION

- The windows generally would be restored as painted timber sash windows to the original pattern.

6 COMMENTARY & HERITAGE POLICY CONTEXT

6.01 Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It is the duty of local planning authorities to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest and to promote and protect the character or appearance of the area. The London Borough of Camden Local Plan (2017) and the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018) contain policies aimed at the recognition and protection of conservation area character (Local Plan Policies D1 & D2 - Hampstead N.P. DH1 & DH2).

6.02 Whilst the terrace containing No.56 Gayton Road is not listed, its character renders it a non-designated heritage asset within the designated conservation area. It is necessary to ascertain accurately whether the proposal would have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. This would establish the acceptability or not of the proposal in heritage terms.

6.03 In this regard, Historic England has produced heritage policy guidance on proposals affecting terraced housing. The guidance does not differentiate between listed buildings or non-listed buildings of character within conservation areas, but offers a six-point analysis guide:

Conserving Georgian and Victorian Terraced Houses - A Guide to Managing Change (July 2020).

Issues to be considered when extending terrace houses.

1) Are existing extensions historically significant?

The proposed extension of the outrigger extension would not harm the existing fabric and would be part of an existing varied treatment of the terrace rear.

2) Is there an existing rhythm to the extensions?

The terrace rear elevation is characterised by a variety of extensions and alterations.

3) *Does the proposal enclose or infill the rear yard?*

The existing rear garden would not be affected by the proposal.

4) *Does the service character of the extension survive, i.e., small simple unadorned rooms?*

To some extent the room's character survives despite past conversion of the house into flats. The proposal would have no impact on the existing interior.

5) *How does the proposal affect the traditional service character of the extension?*

The proposal would have no impact on any surviving service character.

6) *What is the impact upon the balance between main house and the rear extension?*

The proposed extension of the original outrigger would have a minor impact on this balance as the outrigger would still be markedly shorter than the main house rear elevation. The rear elevation of No. 56 forms part of a terrace with a varied and altered elevation as a whole.

6.04 Applying the Historic England analysis shows that the proposed extension of the outrigger would have a minimal impact on the character of the house, the terrace and the wider conservation area. It is notable that the proposed extension is at the rear, which is markedly shielded from major views and prospects within the conservation area. This further reduces any possible impact on the wider area.

6.05 The project proposal also includes positive items of enhancement such as the restoration of the use to a single-family house and significant architectural improvements to the front and rear elevations (see Proposals section above).

6.06 The key issue in this case is the impact of the proposals on the character or appearance of the conservation area and it is inappropriate to adopt listed building detail fabric/feature analysis to what is a conservation question rather than a preservation issue. The Historic England 6-point analysis for change regarding terraced houses is intended to apply to listed buildings, but the current proposal here concerning conservation character emerge with a positive conclusion of appropriateness.

6.07 The extraordinary variety and alteration of the rear elevation of this terrace means that the single first/second half landing extension will take its place in a melee of altered elevations contributing no significant change. The terrace elevation is contained from general public view and seen from the small rear car park.

7 CONCLUSION

7.01 The proposed rear extension would not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the building or the wider Hampstead Conservation Area, as it would take its place in a terrace rear elevation of varied and altered building fabric. The proposals also include significant restoration and enhancement works to both the front and rear elevations to the positive benefit of conservation area character.