

Along the length of the terrace, a number of other properties have lowered the floor of the vaults and created openings between them to create a usable space. Most recently this has occurred at 26 Chester Terrace, whilst permission has been sought for a reduction of floor levels and openings within 25 Chester Terrace.

Altering the internal floor level to the vaults will not alter the external form or appearance of the house or terrace, retaining its heritage significance intact. It would have no impact at all on the contribution the building makes to the settings of other nearby heritage assets. Significance lies within the subservience of the vaults in relation to the main house in proportion, scale and function. As such, the use of the vaults for plant is broadly in keeping with the original function of the vaults for a modern house. Removing the partitions would comprise an alteration to the (presumably original) fabric of the building, however retaining the barrel vaults above would result in the space remaining legible as a vaulted basement.

Vault 1 is currently 1.48m high whilst vaults 2 and 3 are 1.82m high. The proposal seeks to make the floor levels the same level. It should be noted that the vaulted ceiling height of vault 1 differs slightly from vaults 2 and 3 resulting in a final height of 3.805m for vault 1 as compared to 3.755m high for vaults 2 and 3. The reason for the higher existing floor level within vault 1 is not clear, however the floor surface here (concrete or screed) does not have any intrinsic historic merit, and its loss can be seen as having a neutral impact, potentially even positive if its removal did reveal (as expected) that this is indeed a more recent addition.

The lowering of the vaults, removal of parts of the partition walls, and replacement of the louvered doors within windows will not be visible from street level due to the limited visibility. As a result, the impact of this in terms of the communal, aesthetic, evidential and historical value of the site would be considered neutral. Similar proposals have been considered (although with less substantial lowering) in the adjacent houses (numbers 11, 21, 26, 28, 34 and 50).

## **Discussion**

34 Chester Terrace is a high-quality Grade I Listed house of early 19th-century date which lies within the Regent's Park conservation area. Externally, the house is of distinctive original design as are the other houses in the terrace, having been restored to John Nash's original 19th century design after being damaged during World War II. Internally the house underwent significant transformation and unlike the outside, which was restored to its previous standards, the internal aspect is modern with no original features remaining.

The proposal is to alter the house in a manner sympathetic to the historic nature of the property, and would not change the character or frontage of the house. The transfer of utilities from the basement laundry space to the