

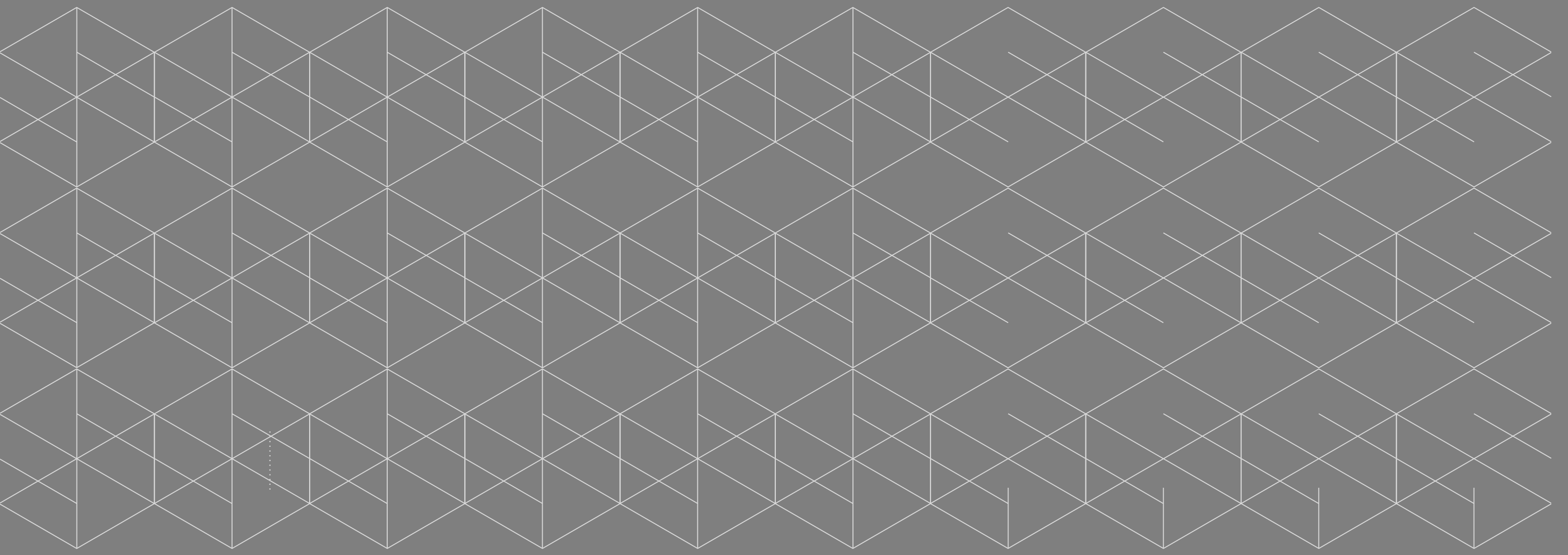
No.52 Oakley Square, London, NW1 1NJ

Heritage Appraisal

January 2024



The
Heritage
Practice



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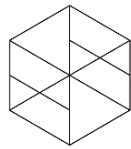
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THE HERITAGE PRATICE

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1 Introduction

1.1 The following Heritage Appraisal has been prepared in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent at no.52 Oakley Square, London NW1 1NJ.

1.2 No.52 Oakley Square is the former vicarage to St Matthew's Church, which once sat to the NE of the site but was demolished in 1977. The building is Grade II listed and situated in the Camden Town Conservation Area.

1.3 The proposals are for a single storey glazed extension to the rear of the property and associated alterations to the existing window openings in the rear façade at upper and lower ground floor levels. This will improve the visual and physical relationship of this family house with its private rear garden.

1.4 This appraisal has been produced using archive, desk based and online research, combined with a visual inspection of the site and wider area.

1.5 The appraisal should be read in conjunction with the drawings and supporting information prepared by Zac Monro Architects.

Research and report structure

1.6 In line with paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, the purpose of this appraisal is to define the significance of the listed building, in so far as it will be affected by the proposals, as well as its contribution to the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area.

1.7 The Appraisal will describe the proposed works and assess their impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the surrounding Camden Town Conservation Area. It will go on to consider the proposals in relation to the relevant statutory, national, regional and local heritage policy framework.

1.8 This Heritage Appraisal has been prepared by Hannah Walker (BA (Hons) Oxon MSc IHBC) who has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment. She has 15 years of local authority experience, including 10 years as a Principal Conservation & Design Officer at the London Borough of Camden. She also has a wide range of experience in the private sector, preparing heritage statements and appraising the significance of historic buildings. She has trained as a historian, has a specialist qualification in historic building conservation and is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC).

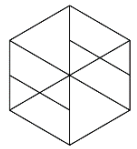


Figure 1: An aerial view of Oakley Square looking north, showing its distinctive shape, the well vegetated central square and the extent of post war development on the NE and SE edges of the square.

2 Site and surroundings

2.1 The following section provides a brief overview of the building and its context.

2.2 Oakley Square is situated to the east of Mornington Crescent tube station and the busy traffic junction at the southern end of Camden High Street. Oakley Square was developed between 1845 and 1859 on land owned by the Duke of Bedford. The square is in fact an unusual, longbow shape, with a straight NW side and canted sides to the NE and SE. The original private garden in the centre is now publicly accessible.

2.3 The NW side of Oakley Square retains its original group of attractive and generously proportioned four storey terraced houses., set above a semi-basement. These are constructed of yellow stock brick with Italianate painted stucco dressings. The similarly designed houses on the opposite side of the square were swept away following bomb damage during World War II. First to be demolished in the immediate post war period were the houses on the NE side of the square which were replaced with the 8 storey Godwin Court, a rather austere and unadorned development in red brick which wraps around onto Crowndale Road. This was followed in the late 1960s by the Mayford Estate, a brown brick mid-rise estate designed by Eric Lyons & Partners.

2.4 No.52 Oakley Square was built in 1871 as the vicarage for the adjacent St Matthew's Church. Its architect was John Johnson, the designer of Alexandra Palace. The building utilises the neo-Gothic style, which originally complemented the architectural character of the adjacent church. The house is of three main storeys, set above a semi-basement. Its facades are of creamy yellow brickwork with stone dressings and bands of red/cream polychromatic brickwork decoration. The roofscape is a characterful composition of steeply pitched slopes, with gables to the front and rear, and a square based tower with a pyramidal roof providing articulation towards the centre of the plan. A fuller description of the building and an assessment of its significance are contained at section 5 of this Appraisal.

2.5 St Matthew's Church was demolished in 1977 due to damage sustained during World War II. It was replaced with St Matthew's Lodge, a four storey residential block in light grey brickwork which reflects the architectural influences of the period, with a flat roof, strong sense of horizontality and absence of ornamentation.

2.6 Oakley Square lacks the enclosure and architectural coherence of a traditional, rectilinear London square. The NW side retains much of its historic character and has a strong sense of uniformity. However, the loss of St Matthew's Church in 1977 has eroded the context and legibility of the vicarage, which now stands somewhat isolated in relation to its mid 19th century neighbours, as well as robbing the square of a highly attractive architectural focal point. The SE and NE sides of the square are now dominated by bulky post war housing development which does not reflect the scale, grain or relationship with Oakley Square of the original terraced houses. Heavy traffic to the one way system along this SE/NE of the square also contrasts with the quieter, residential character of the surviving NW section. However, the mature tree cover in Oakley Square Gardens does provide a buffer between the post war development and the retained historic buildings to the north.

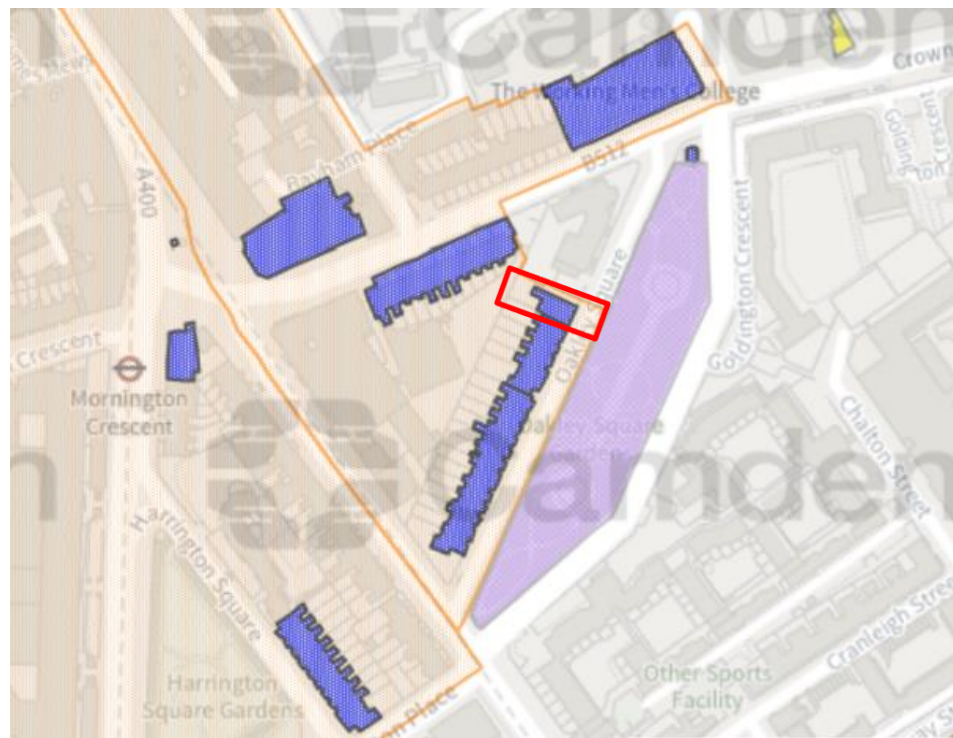


Figure 2: LB Camden's interactive map showing designated and non-designated heritage assets. Grade II listed buildings are marked in blue, locally listed buildings/spaces are shaded in purple and the Camden Town Conservation Area is shaded in buff.

Heritage Designations

Statutory listed buildings

2.7 No.52 Oakley Square was Grade II listed on 11 January 1999. The description reads as follows:

CAMDEN

TQ2983SW OAKLEY SQUARE 798-1/83/1244 (West side) The Old Vicarage and attached railings, gate & wall

GV II

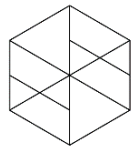
Vicarage, now a private residence. 1861. By John Johnson. Yellow stock brick with stone, red brick and dark yellow brick bands, patterning and dressings. Slate pitched roofs with red cresting, tall brick chimney-stack to rear and pyramidal roof to stair tower. Gothic Revival style. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys, attic and basement. Asymmetrical design. A deep band of zig-zag patterned brickwork, outlined with stone, runs around the building. Entrance in lower mono-pitched roof bay to right; round-arched panelled door with quatrefoil and trefoil-headed glazed panels under a gabled trefoil porch supported on Decorated columns; carved Agnus Dei in apex. To right, a trefoil headed lancet and 2-pane sash with shaped stone lintel to 1st floor. Left hand gabled bay has canted bay windows rising from the basement to the 2nd floor and terminating with a penthouse roof beneath a 2-light window with trefoil heads, colonnette and quatrefoil under a pointed arch. Ground floor central window with colonnette and foil enrichment. Right hand return has irregular similar style windows and stair-tower with deep diaper patterned band with oculi below the eaves. Decorated cast-iron rainwater heads. INTERIOR: retains original features with Gothic fireplaces, cornices and stair with twisted balusters and quatrefoil fretwork. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with enriched cross finials and entrance gate, set in Kentish ragstone random rubble, stone capped wall. HISTORICAL NOTE: the Church of St Matthew, also by Johnson, but now demolished, stood to the right. The architect was best known for his designs for Alexandra Palace.

2.8 The area surrounding the application site contains a number of other statutorily listed buildings which form part of its immediate and wider setting. These include the Grade II listed terrace of mid 19th century houses at nos.53-70 (consecutive) which form the original NW side of Oakley Square. To the north is a terrace of Grade II listed early to mid 19th century houses at nos.31-53 Crowndale Road, whose gardens face the rear gardens of the houses on Oakley Square, albeit separated by the car parking area for the Crowndale Centre, which sits between the rear of the two terraces. At the northern tip of Oakley Square Gardens is a Grade II listed Lodge house, built in the mid 19th century for the Bedford Estate. This is a modest single storey structure faced in painted stucco.

Locally Listed Buildings

2.9 Oakley Square Gardens forms part of the Council's Local List (January 2015). Its catalogue description reads as follows:

Oakley Square is named after Oakley House, a seat of land-owner the Duke of Bedford. The garden was laid out c1845, planned in conjunction with terraces that survive only along its northern side. The well-planted garden had serpentine paths, two circular areas at either end of a central path running north-east to south-west, and was originally for the use of the Duke, his heirs and assigns, and those living in the square. It is now open to the public, and was re-landscaped in 1953 to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.



The Camden Town Conservation Area

2.10 The application site is located in the Camden Town Conservation Area which was first designated on 11 November 1986. The Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted on 4 October 2007. This provides a description of the historic development of the conservation area and an assessment of its special character and appearance. The document also provides a series of policy objectives for new development.

2.11 The conservation area has two distinct sub areas – the busy, commercial retail area focused upon Camden High Street and the quieter, residential areas to the east and west, including Harrington Square and Oakley Square to the south and east of Mornington Crescent tube station. The residential areas consist of stock brick and stucco terraces dating from the early to mid 19th century.

2.12 The application site forms part of Sub Area 2: Residential. The Conservation Area Appraisal summarises the character of the residential areas at pages 19-21:

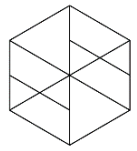
“The residential parts of the Conservation Area are largely homogenous in scale and character, having been laid out within a period of three decades spanning the years 1820-1850. The western part of the Conservation Area comprises long residential terraces running in a north-south direction on a planned rectilinear grid (Mornington Terrace, Albert Street and Arlington Road) intersected by shorter terraces (Delancey Street and Mornington Street). A second pocket of residential development, originally made up of slightly grander terraces, falls south-east of the High Street (Harrington Square and Oakley Square). The area contains a large number of good examples of early/mid 19th century speculatively built terraced London houses, generally of a uniform appearance, and many statutorily listed for their special interest.”

“Although this part of the Conservation Area is dominated by early 19th century development, there are examples of 20th century residential building, many of which arise from World War II bomb damage to the original 19th century terraces. Some post-war housing developments take the form of blocks of flats set in green landscaping, but others are either out of scale or character with their surroundings by virtue of layout, excessive height or use of materials.”

2.13 The Conservation Area Appraisal notes the distinct residential pocket of development at the far southern end of the conservation area, which includes Oakley Square. This we developed on the Duke of Bedford's Fig Meads Estate from 1834 onwards and was originally known as Bedford New Town. The houses here were notably taller and grander than other terraces elsewhere within the conservation area. Specifically in relation to Oakley Square the Conservation Area Appraisal explains that:

“Oakley Square lies to the east, beyond Eversholt Street, and like its contemporary neighbour is a planned composition of townhouses overlooking communal gardens with mature trees. The west side is all that remains after war damage, with houses of a similar scale to elsewhere on the Duke of Bedford's land, but noted for their ground floor entrance porticoes. Of contrasting design is the Old Vicarage, a grade II listed detached dwelling in a Gothic Revival style with polychromatic brickwork, situated at the northern end of the terrace. Dating from c 1861 it was designed by John Johnson, as the vicarage for the demolished St Matthew's Church, which stood next door.”

(NB: The vicarage was in fact constructed in 1871 and the date of 1861 in the statutory listing description is incorrect).



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3 Relevant planning history

2021

Planning permission (2021/1130/P) and Listed Building Consent (2021/1994/L) were granted on 1 June 2021 for 'Minor external works and internal alterations.'

Listed Building Consent (2021/3845/L) was granted on 8 October 2021 for 'Alterations to lower ground floor including removal of section of masonry and late 20th century joinery.'



Figure 3: Roque's map of 1746.



Figure 4: Greenwood's map of 1828.

4 Historic development of the site and area

4.1 For centuries the area was a district of open fields with dispersed farms and cottages, and distinct nuclear settlements at Hampstead and Highgate. By Roque's map of 1746 there was linear development at Kentish Town but still only a small cluster of buildings around what is now Britannia Junction. Modern day Camden High Street forms part of the ancient route northwards from the City, linking with the West End via Hampstead Road, and Kings Cross via Fig Lane (modern day Crowndale Road). Consequently, the area had a number of inns that provided rest and refreshment for travellers and their horses - The Mother Red Cap public house is a notable feature on Roque's map.

4.2 Lord Southampton had developed a number of narrow plots facing onto Camden High Street by 1791 however beyond this to the west the land remained as open fields. During the early 19th century London continued its inexorable outwards spread, with new buildings creeping up the main arterial routes such as Hampstead Road. The Crown's Regent's Park Estate had been developed from 1811 onwards and landowners in Camden Town began to think about turning over their fields for building plots. By the 1820s, Park Street (now Parkway) had been laid out across open land with roads to the south dotted as under construction. To the east of Camden High Street, Charles Pratt the Earl of Camden's land was also beginning to be developed, with Bayham Street, Pratt Street and King Street laid out but not yet lined with buildings. However large areas of open land remained, including to the south of Crowndale Road, known at this time as Gloucester Place.

4.3 Transport infrastructure also began to have an impact upon the area and its development in the early 19th century. The construction of the Regents Canal, which opened in 1820, linking the Grand Junction Canal at Paddington with the Limehouse Basin was a significant landscape feature. The London & Birmingham Railway was built in 1838 with its original terminus intended to be located at Chalk Farm. However, it quickly became clear that a terminus was required closer to central London and the site at Euston Square was identified.

4.4 The Duke of Bedford began to develop land at the southern end of Camden High Street from the 1830s onwards, arranged around Amphil Square, Harrington Square and Oakley Square. This became known as Bedford New Town. Oakley Square was named after Oakley House in Bedford and was constructed piecemeal between 1845 and 1859, eventually laid out with 56 terraced houses.

4.5 A comprehensive Historic building Report for no.52 Oakley Square was produced by Donald Insall Associates in December 2020 in support of minor internal alterations to the building and a programme of refurbishment (Appendix B). This document includes a detailed history of the site, with reference to information held by Camden Archives and the London Metropolitan Archives. Key dates and salient points from that historic analysis have been included below.

- St Matthew's Church was built in 1852-56 to the designs of John Johnson, the architect of Alexandra Palace.
- No. 52 Oakley Square was the final building to be constructed on the square, in 1871, also by John Johnson.
- The 1896 Ordnance Survey map shows an 'L' shaped building, with a projecting rear range.
- The building was extended to the front at 1st floor level, above the original porch, in 1899, reusing a range of materials from the pre-existing hall roof, including timbers and slates.
- St Matthew's Church was demolished in 1977 and the vicarage was converted to a private residence.



4.6 During the 20th century Camden Town flourished and its population grew, bolstered by artisans and shopkeepers who moved into the area in order to serve the working classes who made their living from the railway, canal and associated activities. A decline in the area was exacerbated by the grime of the railways which generated noise and dirt and decreased the attractiveness of the houses which were in close proximity to it. The building stock also suffered, as houses were subdivided and let out with a consequent deterioration in their fabric and appearance. However, the area had historically been popular with writers and artists and had a bohemian character which became increasingly attractive during the 1960s. The electrification of the train lines had a dramatic impact on air quality and the environment surrounding them and many of the streets began to gentrify, attracting new middle-class residents to their substantial houses.

4.7 No.52 Oakley Square was owned and occupied by the surrealist artis Nancy Fouts from 1978 until her death in 2019. A range of internal and external works were undertaken to the building, including the comprehensive cleaning and repair of the external brickwork, roof repairs and renewal of slates and the replacement of a number of windows with double glazing. Internally a range of alterations and additions were made. A full refurbishment of the property was undertaken in 2021 which removed some of the more damaging modifications that had been made to the house.



Figures 5-7 Top left to right: The 1870 Ordnance Survey map showing the site of the vicarage still empty and the 1894 Ordnance Survey map showing the building in place.

Bottom: The 1953 Ordnance Survey map depicting the first large scale change to the east side of the square, with the construction of Godwin Court in place of the original houses.

As late as 1953 the rear gardens of the houses at nos.31-33 (consecutive) Crowndale Road backed directly onto the rear gardens of nos.52 & 53 Oakley Square, prior to the creation of the Crowndale Centre carpark.

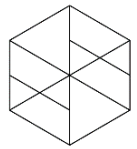


Figure 8: The front façade and flank facades of the building, viewed from Oakley Square.

5 Significance

5.1 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.*”

5.2 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 assets are the statutorily listed no.52 Oakley Square and the Camden Town Conservation Area.

5.3 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.”*

5.4 In assessing the significance of no.52 Oakley Square 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.

5.5 In this case the proposals are restricted to works at upper and lower ground floor levels and mainly external to the property. Consequently, the analysis contained within this section will be focused upon elements and features which will be affected by the proposed works, in line with paragraph 200 of the NPPF 2023, which is clear that assessments need only be “*...proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*”

5.6 No.52 Oakley Square was built in 1871 as the vicarage to the adjacent St Matthew’s Church and to the designs of John Johnson. It has three main storeys of accommodation set over a semi basement, with an open lightwell to the front. The front boundary of the site consists of a Kentish ragstone rubble wall, topped with painted cast iron railings with decorative finials.

5.7 The building is constructed in a neo-Gothic style. Its front and flank elevations are faced in creamy yellow brickwork with red brick embellishment, stone dressings and a wide polychromatic brickwork band above the upper ground floor window heads. The window openings are an eclectic combination of round, pointed arch and trefoil headed openings, many of which have centrally placed slender stone columns, and a variety of decorative heads in either stone or red brick. Window units are either painted timber sliding sashes or cusped casements. The front porch is a particularly attractive features, with a decorative trefoil shaped opening set beneath a steeply pitched roof, supported on foliage topped stone columns.



Figure 9: The rear façade of the house.



Figure 10: A view of the rear and flank elevations of the building from Crowndale Road.

5.8 The front and flank façade survive in their original form besides for an early addition to the building at 1st floor level in 1899. A small extension was added above the porch, with a sloping slate clad roof and matching architectural style, fenestration, and use of materials. Consequently, this provides a relatively seamless addition to the building, although the proportions of the panel of masonry above the apex of the front porch are a little over scaled as a result.

5.9 The roofscape of the building is lively and well-articulated with gables, steep slate clad pitches and a square based tower with a pyramidal roof.

5.10 The front and flank elevations are both visible from the public realm along Oakley Square, due to the wide gap between the building and St Matthew's Lodge. These elevations are both of high architectural significance due to their degree of embellishment, ornamentation and attention to detail, reflective of the original visual relationship between these parts of the building and St Matthew's Church to the NE.

5.11 The rear elevation of the building is much plainer, constructed in a pink/red brickwork which differentiates it from the front and flank facades. There is far less embellishment and use of decorative brickwork here, with only small areas of stone dressing and bright red/orange gauged brickwork window heads. This reflects the original status accorded to rear, and less prominent facades.

5.12 The rear façade of the house has two main components, both of which are topped with steep gables. To the north the façade has a full height external chimneystack rising through the apex of the roof and providing a sense of articulation. Adjacent to this, and setback, is the façade to the rear rooms at each floor level. The key feature here are the tripartite windows, with a wide central window flanked by more slender openings. This pattern is most appreciable at upper ground floor and 1st floor levels. Although there is also a tripartite arrangement to the lower ground floor windows this is concealed by the existing external steps and the high ground levels adjacent to the rear façade. The sash windows themselves appear to date from the early 20th century and are not original features.

5.13 Projecting from the rear façade is an original wing with accommodation at upper and lower ground floor levels. This has simple rectangular window openings in its NW façade, set beneath red brick heads and a hipped, slate clad roof. The rear wing is very plain and has a strong, ancillary character, consistent with its position and the secondary function of its internal spaces, particularly at lower ground floor level.

5.14 Access to the garden is currently via door openings in the flank wall of the rear wing at both upper and lower ground floor levels. The lower ground floor door is tucked beneath the external staircase which leads to the upper ground floor level door opening. Whilst the staircase is in its original position, the treads and risers have been completely replaced with modern concrete. The rear garden is currently hard landscaped, with modern brickwork planters containing some soft landscaping.

5.15 The flank elevation and elements of the rear façade are visible in oblique views from Crowndale Road. This includes the roofscape of the rear wing and the main roofscape, 1st floor window heads and the 2nd floor main rear façade, which is its most decorative area, with a large pointed arched window, stone quatrefoil detailing and a slender stone column dividing the window opening. The upper and lower ground floor main façade would not originally have been publicly visible as the Crowndale Centre carpark is a later addition, carved out of parts of the rear gardens to the houses facing Crowndale Road.



Figure 11: A view of the rear upper ground floor room looking towards the rear façade.



Figure 12: A view of the rear lower ground floor room looking towards the rear façade.

Interior

5.16 The interior of the building underwent a full programme of refurbishment in 2021. This has retained the building's neo-Gothic character where it survived. This is most evident to the principal staircase which has a quatrefoil fretwork pattern. Elsewhere there are surviving historic cornices, joinery and fireplaces, mostly at upper ground and 1st floor levels.

5.17 The front and rear rooms at upper ground floor level were quite dramatically altered under Listed Building Consent (2021/1994/L). This allowed for the significant removal of the spine wall, creating one open plan space. A new single leaf door opening was incorporated from the rear part of the hallway into the rear room, altering the original circulation pattern of the house to a degree. The space retains historic features such as cornicing, a fire surround to the front room and timber shutters to the front and rear windows. However, the decorative ceiling mouldings were added as part of the 2021 refurbishment works.

5.18 The lower ground floor rear room was opened up as part of the 2021 refurbishment works, with a wide opening to the adjacent hallway and the removal of the small, internalised room in the centre of the plan. The resulting space is plain and relatively modern, without decorative features or cornicing.

Values and significance

5.19 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.

The building dates from 1871 and therefore has relatively low evidential value in an age and archaeological sense. However, the building does provide evidence of ecclesiastical life in the Victorian period and the quality of accommodation constructed by the church for the clergy.

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 building forms part of the historic local scene in this part of Camden and been a feature of the townscape for around 150 years. The building has clear historical value as part of the transformation of the area from a district of open fields and farmland during the early to mid 19th centuries, to a densely covered residential and commercial inner suburb.

The building has historic value as the vicarage to St Matthew's Church, although an appreciation of this relationship has clearly been significantly undermined by the demolition of the church in 1977. The house demonstrates patterns of life during the later part of the 19th century, providing evidence of architectural and social hierarchy within the house, with principal rooms at ground and 1st floor level and ancillary service areas and accommodation for servants to the lower ground floor and attic areas.

The house is associated with John Johnson, the architect of Alexandra Palace, as well as being the home of Nancy Fouts, a well-known Surrealist artis, from 1978-2019.

Aesthetic value

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

The building is an attractive neo-Gothic composition, which utilises high status materials and intricate detailing, with an eclectic mixture of Gothic features, notably to the window openings and front porch. It is reflective of religious and philosophical trends during this period towards the appropriateness of Gothic Revival architecture for churches and ecclesiastical buildings. The roofscape is a particularly lively composition, with its steeply pitched slopes and pyramidal roofed stair tower, adding punctuation and visual interest.

The building is unique within its immediate context and stands alone following the demolition of St Matthew’s Church which was also built in a Gothic Revival style. Consequently, it provides a strong visual and architectural contrast to the form, style and materiality of the adjacent mid 19th century terrace. This adds interest and variety to the streetscene along this part of Oakley Square.

The front and flank facades of the building were designed to be seen from Oakley Square and within the context of the adjacent church, and consequently these are of the highest status, utilising the best quality materials and the most extravagant use of detailing and embellishment. The rear façade is of good quality but inevitably of lower status and architectural significance due to its position and the much more limited ability to appreciate this façade from the public realm.

Internally, the building retains a significant proportion of its original plan form. However, the shape and spatial quality of the rear room at lower ground floor level was substantially altered as part of the recent refurbishment works and the two principal rooms at upper ground floor level were connected following the removal of the spine wall, creating a large open plan space. There are a modest range of surviving original and historic features to the building, including cornicing, fire surrounds and joinery items which contribute to the aesthetic coherence and character of the interior.

Communal value

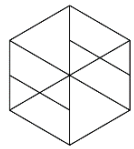
This value is derived from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience of memory. In this case, any communal value would be ‘social’, defined at paragraph 56 as “.....*places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness,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

The building has communal value in so far as it has been part of the local scene for around 150 years and has thus featured in the day to day lives of those who live, work and pass through the area. Its original role as a vicarage means that it will have held particular meaning for some within the community and will have been visited and experienced by a greater number of people than a typical dwelling. However, the building has been in private residential use now for many decades, which reduces the potential for communal value available in living memory.

Any communal value which the building has will be local in focus and the building does not have any particular regional or national symbolism or value.

Conclusion

5.20 In this case the key significance of the building relates to its historic and architectural value. The building was individually commissioned as the vicarage to the adjacent St Matthew’s Church, to the designs of John Johnson, the architect of Alexandra Palace. Its external facades have survived with little alteration, save for the 1st floor extension above the porch which was added in 1899. The high quality neo-Gothic detailing and style of the building are reflective of one of the key strands of architectural taste during the 1870s and one which was used widely for ecclesiastical architecture. Consequently, the building is of high architectural value.



5.20 The building forms part of a slightly later phase of development on Oakley Square but is firmly rooted in its original concept, which included St Matthew's Church as a focal point at its northern tip. The historic value of the building has however been somewhat eroded by the demolition of the church, losing some of its intrinsic historic legibility and context as a result.

5.21 The building makes a clear aesthetic contribution to the character of Oakley Square and this part of the Camden Town Conservation Area. Its neo-Gothic detailing and use of materials creates an interesting architectural juxtaposition with the uniformity of the adjacent mid 19th century terrace and recalls the original character of this northern section of the square prior to the demolition of St Matthew's Church.

5.22 The rear elevation of the building is of less significance than the front and flanks façades. This is due to the architectural hierarchy which existed on buildings of this period, whereby rear and less visible facades utilised lower status materials and received less ornamentation and decoration.

5.23 Internally the building retains elements of its original spatial quality and a range of historic features.



Figure 13: The previously proposed pre application scheme (2022/5652/PRE).

6 Assessment of the proposals

6.1 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 special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the surrounding Camden Town Conservation Area. The Appraisal will go on to assess the proposed works in relation to the relevant statutory, national, regional and local heritage policy framework.

6.2 The proposals are for a single storey glazed rear extension at lower ground floor level, the creation of a terrace at upper ground floor level and associated alterations to windows in the rear façade in order to provide access to the new extension and terrace area.

6.3 Pre application discussions began with the London Borough of Camden in early 2023 regarding a two storey glazed extension to the rear of the building. The pre application letter from the Council dated 26 May 2023 raised a number of concerns regarding the proposals. These included the following:

- The projection forward of the proposed extension beyond the building line of the rear wing results in a failure of subservience.
- The height and depth of the space created within the extension exceeds that of the property's principal rooms, resulting in a failure to be subordinate to the original internal spaces of the listed building.
- The existing proportion, rhythm and legibility of around half of the main rear elevation of the house would be compromised due to the height of the extension.
- The original window openings would be partly altered to accommodate access to the new extension and would result in the loss of brickwork below the window openings and the associated loss of sash windows.
- The proposed balcony and new staircase within the double height extension would cut across the lower and upper ground floor façade.
- Demolition of the existing external stair from the upper ground floor to the garden, which appears to be the same stair as shown on the 19th century Ordnance Survey maps.
- The proposals would result in the loss of the rear lightwell and the rear steps from the lower ground floor level up to the garden.
- The upper and lower ground floor retain chief elements of their historic plan form and circulation and altering these without causing harm is usually very challenging.

Impact of the proposals on the special interest of the listed building

Form, siting and relationship with the rear garden

6.4 The proposals seek to create a modest amount of additional accommodation at lower ground floor level. Alongside this the aspiration is to enhance visual and physical connectivity with the rear garden from both the upper and lower ground floors. At present access to the garden is convoluted and there is no direct relationship with the main living spaces of the house, which is occupied by a family with young children.

6.5 In light of the Council's pre application comments the scheme has been significantly revised in order to address officer concerns. Instead of the previously proposed double height rear extension the building will now only be extended at lower ground floor level, with a single storey structure. This will have a flat roof, allowing for the creation of a roof terrace at upper ground floor level. This will provide an outdoor seating area connected to the kitchen/dining space within the house, with a flight of steps down to the main garden area.



Figures 14 & 15: An external view of the affected windows at lower ground floor level (left) and a view of the underside of the external garden steps from upper ground floor level, showing their full concrete construction (right).

6.6 A sunken patio will be created adjacent to the extension at lower ground floor level, providing level access out from the space, and a route up to the main garden level via a short flight of steps. The existing lightwell and associated steps will be removed. These features are of relatively low significance - simply part of the topography of the rear garden and a small level area for access into the rear basement room. The 'lightwell' lacks the significance of a front lightwell, which has a very specific form and layout which related to its historic functionality. These lightwells were used on 18th and 19th century houses to provide access to the lower status and significance areas within the basement and were used by servants and tradesmen – the main ground floor entrance was reserved for the family and their guests. The lightwells also provided access to the under-pavement vaults, used for the storage of coal emptied through holes in the pavement or the front garden/path. By contrast, the 'lightwell' to the rear of the house is a much lesser feature, lacking demonstrable evidential or historic significance and contributing little to our understanding of the history of the house or social hierarchies of the period.

6.7 The proposed extension will be well set back from the building line of the rear wing of the house, projecting to just over half the depth of the original rear wing. This is a significant reduction in depth when compared with the previous pre application proposals. Its building line will be chamfered back towards the site boundary with no.53, creating only a very modest amount of additional space. Consequently, the extension will appear fully subordinate to the overall scale and massing of this substantial four storey building, tucked in neatly beneath the cill level of the upper ground floor level windows. The lower ground floor façade is currently partially concealed due to the high adjacent ground levels, and therefore the proposed extension will only internalise a small section of exposed rear façade. The vast majority of the elevation above lower ground floor level will remain visible, and the important sense of proportion and rhythm created by its tripartite arrangement of windows will still be fully appreciable.

6.8 The existing flight of steps which lead from the door in the side of the rear wing at upper ground floor level to the garden will be re-provided, allowing access from the roof terrace to the rear garden. This will maintain the original circulation route from the house to the rear garden via the rear wing and an external staircase. Further investigation on site of the underside of the existing external staircase has confirmed that these are of full concrete construction (see Figure 15) and thus their removal will not result in the loss of any historic fabric. It should also be noted that the small door in the flank wall of the rear wing at lower ground floor level will be retained, maintaining the traditional route through from the lower ground floor accommodation to the rear garden, via the new extension.

Design and materiality

6.9 The proposed extension will be of a simple, contemporary design, with a flat glazed roof and glazed doors to its garden facing elevation, as well as a glazed balustrade to the terrace and staircase at upper ground floor level. This will ensure that it has lightweight and recessive appearance, with views maintained through to the exposed brickwork rear façade at lower ground floor level.

6.10 The proposed extension will provide a subtle architectural juxtaposition between the new addition and the neo-Gothic appearance of the house. Although the rear façade is much plainer than the front and flank elevations of the house, it still retains a strong architectural character, with prominent gables, contrasting red brick window heads and an attractive pointed arch window at 2nd floor level with quatrefoil detailing and cusped tracery windows. The simple and restrained design of the extension will allow the listed building to retain its visual and aesthetic primacy, creating an appropriate level of design subservience. Furthermore, the differentiation between the solid, robust neo-Gothic architecture of the building and the rational, lightweight form of the new extension will allow the phased development and the evolution in the form and footprint of the listed building to remain fully legible.



Figure 16: The existing arrangement of windows at upper ground floor level.



Figure 17: The existing arrangement of windows at lower ground floor level.

Modifications to window openings

6.11 In order to create access between the main house and the newly created spaces, the existing window openings in the rear façade of the house will be modified.

6.12 At lower ground floor level this will require the dropping of the cills to the three existing window openings, whilst maintaining their current width. It is acknowledged that there will be a very minor loss of plain brickwork in this location. However, the masonry beneath the cill of the larger middle window and the opening to the SW is currently concealed by the high adjacent ground levels within the garden. Internally, the area beneath the three windows consists of simple plastered brickwork, with no decorative features. Indeed, the finish here is modern plasterboard which was added as part of damp proofing works which took place as part of the 2021 refurbishment. The loss of masonry proposed is very small, given the overall scale of the house and the position of the affected masonry at lower ground floor level and to the rear of the house.

6.13 It is worth noting that far more extensive removal of brickwork from walls within the building was permitted under planning permission 2021/1130/P and Listed Building Consent 2021/1994/L. This included a large section of the upper ground floor level spine wall and large areas of dividing wall to the lower ground floor. This demonstrates that the principle of removing plain, unadorned masonry from within a listed building can be considered acceptable, subject to other elements such as the impact upon character, plan form and spatial quality being sympathetic.

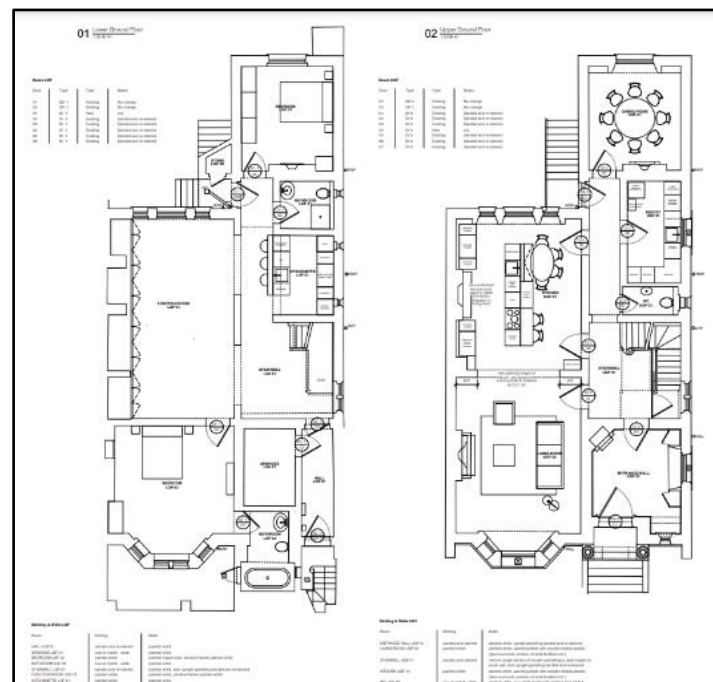
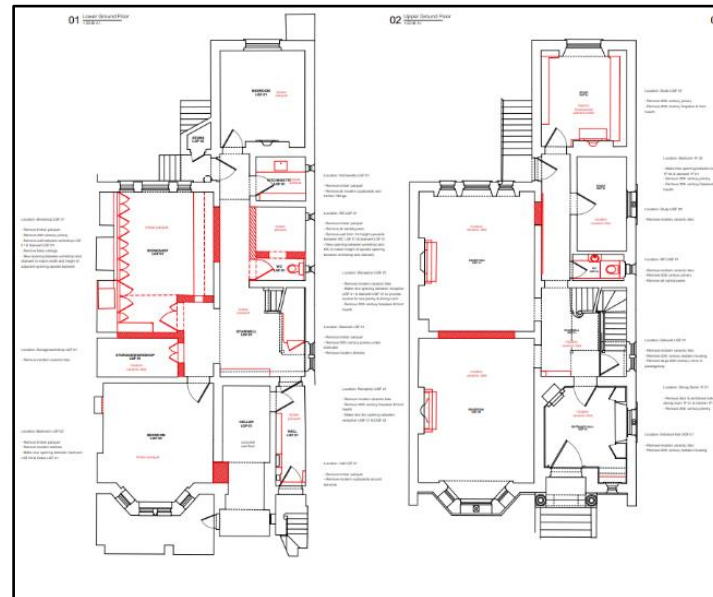
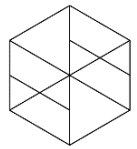
6.14 The three existing sash windows will also be removed. The central opening will have a new door which will be part solid/part glazed, with the upper glazed section aligning with the depth and subdivision arrangement of the existing sash windows. The flanking openings will have full height fixed glazed panes, with horizontal glazing bars. Both the door and the adjacent glazing will maintain the overall proportions and character of the openings, with the position of the cill and meeting rail replicated.

6.15 At upper ground floor level only the central window opening will be altered. The brickwork panel beneath the cill will be removed and the opening dropped to form an external doorway leading to the roof terrace. This amounts to a handful of courses of plain brickwork, which similarly to the proposals at lower ground floor level, represents a very minor amount of fabric within the overall context of the listed building.

6.16 The central window opening at upper ground floor level will have its sash window removed and a new door installed, constructed of painted timber. This will take the same design approach as at lower ground floor level, with the character and subdivision of the window reproduced within the new door. Internally the modifications will result in the loss of the timber spandrel panel beneath the central sash window. However, the design of the new door will have a panelled timber element to its base, which will replicate the visual effect of the spandrel panel. The lowest section of the existing timber shutters to the opening will be retained and modified to fit the reveals of the new door opening.

Plan form and spatial quality

6.17 At lower ground floor level access will be created from the rear room through to the new extension. However, the retention of the width of the original window openings will ensure that a clear 'pinch point' is retained between the original building and the modern extension. This will ensure that the plan form and spatial quality of the rear room are not harmed, albeit that the rear room was significantly altered in terms of its size, shape and connectivity with the rear hallway as part of the 2021 refurbishment works. As noted above, the existing door opening in the flank wall of the rear wing will be retained and access from the rear part of the hallway through to the rear garden will be preserved.



Figures 18 & 19: The existing and proposed drawings for the 2021 refurbishment works to the building (2021/1130/P and 2021/1994/L) showing the demolition of walls at both lower and upper ground floor levels and the alterations to the spatial quality of the rear rooms.

6.18 The proposed extension and roof terrace will have no impact upon the plan form or spatial quality of the listed building at upper ground floor level. A wide opening in the spine wall has already been created here as part of the recent refurbishment works and there is one open plan space which fills the depth of the house. Because of this there is already light and outlook from both the NW and SE due to the presence of windows at each end of the large, open plan room, altering its original character. The modest alteration of the window opening to a door, given the proposed design with a solid panel at its base and a glazed section above, will result in very little change to the character of the space or sightlines through it, given the extent to which it has already been altered.

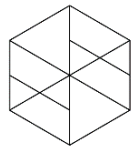
6.19 Due to the reduction in the depth and internal volume of the proposed extension in relation to the pre application scheme the proposed addition has a wholly sympathetic and proportionate relationship to the volume and spatial quality of the original rooms within the listed building.

Impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area

6.20 Taking account of the wider context to the site, the proposed rear extension will have no harmful impact upon the pattern of development along the NW side of Oakley Square. No.52 differs from the adjacent mid 19th century terrace in terms of its age, architectural style, form and profile. It reads as a distinct, stand-alone architectural composition which requires a bespoke solution that takes account of the particular characteristics of the listed building.

6.21 Notwithstanding this, the proposed extension has been restricted to a single storey and is tucked discreetly at lower ground floor level. It will be fully contained by the projecting rear wing, from which it is significantly setback, as well as the brickwork party wall to the south between the application site and no.53 Oakley Square. The south elevation drawing shows the proposals in 2D, with the upper part of the glazed balustrade to the staircase just visible. However, in reality this glazed element is set back significantly from the garden boundary wall with no.53 and will not be visible. Thus, due to its concealed position the proposed extension will have no harmful effect upon the rear of the wider terrace and will not be visible from the rear gardens of the adjacent properties.

6.22 Due to the presence of the Crowndale Centre carpark to the rear of the site and the gap in the townscape to the east of no.33 Crowndale Road, there are views through to the rear and flank façades of no.52 Oakley Square. However, given the existing sightlines, the projecting two storey rear wing will conceal the proposed extension from these public realm vantage points. From within the carpark the heavily vegetated rear boundary of the site and the mature trees within its garden will also obscure views of the proposed rear extension.



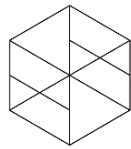
Assessment of the proposals against the relevant policy framework

Statutory duties – The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

6.23 The main issues for consideration in relation to this application are the effect of the proposals on no.52 Oakley Square as a listed building and the impact of external changes to the building on the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area. The relevant statutory provisions in relation to these matters are contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at sections 16 and 72.

6.24 The proposals have been significantly revised in response to concerns raised by officers at pre application stage. As revised, the proposals are considered to relate appropriately and respectfully to the character of the listed building and the surrounding townscape in terms of the siting, scale, massing, materiality and detailed design of the extension. The modifications which have been incorporated are as follows:

- Reduction of the extension to a single storey. This provides an appropriate level of subordination with the main house and allows the vast majority of the rear elevation of the house and its tripartite arrangement of windows to remain legible and appreciable.
- Significant reduction in its depth so that it is well setback behind the original rear wing of the house, further reinforcing a sense of subservience.
- Introduction of a simplified, contemporary design with a flat roof, tucked beneath the upper ground floor windows. This provides a subtle juxtaposition with the exuberant neo-Gothic character of the house, allowing it to maintain its visual and architectural primacy.
- Preservation of the historic circulation route through the flank wall of the rear wing to the rear garden. At upper ground floor level this is via a re-provided set of steps, also situated adjacent to the original rear wing, and at lower ground floor level, through the new extension, sunken patio and up a flight of steps to garden level.
- The plan form and spatial quality of the lower ground floor rear room will not be harmed due to the retention of the width of the three window openings which provide a 'pinch point' between old and new and retain a strong sense of enclosure to the rear room.
- The upper ground floor level rear room will no longer be internalised by the proposed extension, thus maintaining its character.
- The central window opening at upper ground floor level and all three openings to the lower ground floor will have either sympathetically designed doors or a glazed panel which replicates the balance of solid to void of the existing sash windows, thus maintaining the internal character of the rear lower and upper ground floor rooms and the external appearance of the building as far as possible.
- The reduced depth and internal volume of the addition means that it will relate sympathetically to the original scale and proportions of the rooms within the main house.
- The loss of any plain brickwork is minimal in terms of the overall scale of the listed building. The siting of much of the brickwork is at lower ground floor level and concealed within plain, modern plasterboard finishes or behind existing high external ground levels.



6.25 The proposed rear addition will have no impact upon the high significance front and NE flank facades of the listed building, in views from both Oakley Square and Crowndale Road, thus preserving their contribution to the streetscene and to the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area. The rear elevation is partially visible from Crowndale Road and the carpark to the Crowndale Centre at the rear of the building. However, views of the proposed rear extension will be concealed by the original rear wing of the house and the presence of mature vegetation.

6.26 The proposals are considered acceptable within the context of the wider terrace along the NW side of Oakley Square. There is no uniform pattern of development to the rear of the terrace, with a range of outriggers of varying height and projection. In any case, the proposed rear addition will be contained between the existing rear wing of the house and the party garden wall with no.53 Oakley Square and will thus not be appreciable from the rear gardens of the adjacent buildings.

6.27 Consequently, the proposals are considered to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of this part of the Camden Town Conservation Area.

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

6.28 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, whilst putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. New development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. 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.

6.29 This Heritage Appraisal has provided an analysis of the significance of the listed building. The proposals will cause no harm to this significance through the careful handling of the siting, scale and detailed design of the extension. The proposals will make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness through the introduction of a bespoke, sympathetic and high-quality addition which responds carefully to the form, layout and original character of the listed building. In this case, the proposals will improve the layout and amenity value of the property and thus its attractiveness to current and future occupiers. This will ensure the ongoing occupancy and maintenance of the listed building without harm to its significance or special interest. Consequently, the proposals are considered to comply with the requirements of the NPPF.

The London Plan 2021

6.30 The proposals are considered to comply with the adopted London Plan (2021). The thrust of Policy HC1 - Heritage conservation and growth is that the significance of heritage assets should be conserved. For the reasons outlined above, the proposed extension will be sympathetically designed and will preserve key architectural and spatial characteristics of the listed building. Because of its discreet siting and appropriate design, the proposals will sit comfortably within their wider townscape setting. Overall, the affected heritage assets (the listed building and the surrounding Camden Town Conservation Area) will be conserved.

Local Policy

London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

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

6.32 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 conservation areas and listed buildings. Any less than substantial harm must be outweighed convincingly by the public benefits of the scheme. In conservation areas, development is required to preserve or where possible, enhance their character or appearance. 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.

6.33 The proposals are considered to respect local context and character through a carefully designed scheme which responds to the particular characteristics of the listed building, and which locates the proposed extension in a discreet, low-level position where it will have no impact upon neighbouring properties. The siting, building line, scale, height, materiality and design of the proposed extension are all considered acceptable and will allow the original architectural character of the listed building to remain fully legible and appreciable. No harm will be caused to the building from any public realm vantage points and the proposed extension will sit comfortably in relation to its surrounding context. Consequently, the special interest of the listed building, and the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area will be preserved, in compliance with policies D1 and D2.

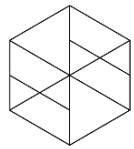
Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2007

6.34 The proposals will comply with the guidance contained within the Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Where this relates to 'New Development' the proposals will be of high quality in terms of their design and execution. This policy is clear that *"Successful modern design can be of the 21st century and enhance the conservation area, by carefully assessing and responding to the form and qualities of surrounding buildings and spaces."* This is considered the case here. The siting, scale and massing of the extension have been carefully considered and will be clearly subordinate to the scale and massing of the listed building. The use of a simple, contemporary design will provide an appropriate contrast between the original building and the modern infill, ensuring that its original architectural quality and expression retain their primacy.

6.35 With regard to 'Rear Extensions', the proposals will cause no harm to the pattern of development along the NW side of Oakley Square, partly because such a pattern does not exist on the adjacent mid 19th century terrace and partly because no.52 is a distinct, stand-alone building which is differentiated from its neighbours due to its age, form, profile and architectural character. Notwithstanding this, the proposed rear extension is sensitively designed and appropriately sited so that the rear elevation of the listed building is preserved and remains fully legible and appreciable.

Camden Design Guidance (2021)

6.36 The proposals comply with the thrust of this guidance. They will respond positively and sensitively to the exiting context and integrate well with the host building (para 2.10). The scale of the proposed rear extension is now entirely appropriate, nestled at lower ground floor level where single storey rear additions are a very common addition to buildings, including those which are statutorily listed. The proposed rear addition will be of a subtle contemporary, glazed design which allows the original brickwork and neo-Gothic detailing of the building to remain the primary feature.



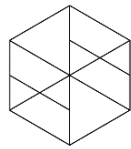
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Camden Home Improvements 2021

6.37 In line with paragraph 2.1.1, which relates to rear extensions, the proposals will be subordinate to the host building in terms of footprint, height, building line and detailed design, utilising high quality, complementary materials. The height of the proposed extension is proportionate to the substantial scale of the listed building and will allow the vast majority of the rear façade to remain appreciable and legible. Whilst the tripartite window opening at lower ground floor level will be modified, this is already compromised by the high adjacent ground levels and is an area of lower significance. No notable architectural features on the rear façade or to the flank wall of the rear wing will be obscured or harmed. The proposed rear addition will be contained within the space between the original rear wing of the house and the party boundary with no.53 and will make use of an under-utilised part of the rear garden. There will be no harm to the townscape to the rear of the buildings along the NW side of Oakley Square due to the lightweight and visually permeable character of the proposals as well as their discreet siting. In any case, no.52 is distinct from the adjacent mid 19th century terrace and there is no well-established pattern of additions to its rear façade.



7 Conclusion

7.1 This appraisal has been produced in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent at no.52 Oakley Square. The proposals consist of a single storey rear addition at lower ground floor level and associated alterations to the rear windows at lower and upper ground floor levels.

7.2 The character of the listed building will be preserved and an under under-utilised area to the rear of the house will be incorporated into a new, high-quality extension which provides enhanced living accommodation and improved connectivity with the rear garden.

7.3 The proposed rear addition representing an attractive and high-quality addition to the listed building, preserving its special architectural and historic interest. The concerns of officers during the previous round of pre application discussions have been fully digested and the scheme revised to address the issues raised. This includes significant reductions in the height, scale and massing of the proposals and a simplification of the design concept. The proposed extension is now well setback from the original rear wing and fully proportionate to the scale of the original rooms within the listed building. By restricting the extension to lower ground floor level, the high significance upper ground floor rear room will no longer be internalised, and its existing character will be preserved. The historic circulation pattern from the house through the rear wing to the garden has been maintained at both upper and lower ground floor levels, including the re-provision of the external flight of steps. The modifications to the windows have been minimised, whilst still allowing practical access through to the lower ground floor extension and upper ground floor terrace area. Whilst there will be a very small loss of historic fabric, this is minimal in relation to the overall scale and extent of the house.

7.4 The house was fully refurbished in 2021 by the current owners and this has significantly enhanced the quality and internal character of the listed building. The proposed works represent a further modest phase of upgrading to the house and will be set within the context of the careful custodianship of the current owners.

7.5 The proposed works will preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area in line with s.16 and s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. They fully comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, the London Plan 2021 and the London Borough of Camden's Local Plan 2017, as well as guidance contained within the Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2007, Camden Planning Guidance - Design 2021 and Camden Planning Guidance - Home Improvements 2021.

Appendix A – Relevant historic environment policy

National Planning Policy & Legislation The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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.”

Section 72 requires that:

“...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

The 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 200

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 201

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 203

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 205

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.

Paragraph 209

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

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.

Local Planning Policy

London Borough of Camden Local Plan (2017)

Policy D1 – Design is a key policy and has various parts that are relevant to the proposed development in heritage terms;

The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:

- respects local context and character;*
- preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with “Policy D2 Heritage”;*
- comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*

Policy D2 – Heritage has relevant parts:

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.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed ‘designated heritage assets’. In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas. The Council will:

- require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*

Camden Planning Guidance - Design (January 2021)

This document has various generic policy and guidance on new development within the Borough.

Paragraph 2.9

In order to achieve high quality design in the borough we require applicants to consider buildings in terms of:

- *context*
- *height*
- *accessibility*
- *orientation*
- *scale and massing*
- *siting*
- *functionality and layout*
- *detailing*
- *materials*

Paragraph 2.10

- *Development should respond positively and sensitively to the existing context*
- *Development should integrate well with the existing character of a place, building and its surroundings*

Paragraph 2.11

Good design should respond appropriately to the existing context by:

- *ensuring the scale of the proposal overall integrates well with the surrounding area*
- *carefully responding to the scale, massing and height of adjoining buildings, the general pattern of heights in the surrounding area*
- *positively integrating with and enhancing the character, history, archaeology and nature of existing buildings on the site and other buildings immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area, and any strategic or local views, vistas and landmarks. This is particularly important in conservation areas.*

Paragraph 2.14

Materials should form an integral part of the design process and should:

- *Be contextual – the texture, colour, pattern and patina of materials can influence the impact and experience of buildings for users and the wider townscape. The quality of a well-designed building can easily be reduced by the use of poor quality or an unsympathetic palette of materials. Decisions on the materials used in a development scheme should be informed by those used in the local area.*
- *Respond to existing heritage assets and features by relating to the character and appearance of the area, particularly in conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings.*

Camden Home Improvements CPG (2021)

The Home Improvements CGP 2021 contains a range of guidance with regard to rear extensions and outbuildings.

Para 2.1 – Ground extensions

As part of your preparation to extend your property at ground level, a preliminary site assessment is recommended, to consider the following:

- *The existing rear elevation and any previous extensions to it;*
- *The rear elevation's visibility and prominence in relation to gardens, streetscene and wider area;*
- *The pattern of development of neighbouring buildings to include historic extensions and new types of development;*
- *Other rear extensions present at the neighbouring buildings which obtained permission through a planning application or permitted development.*

Para 2.1.1 Rear extensions

Rear extensions should:

- *Be subordinate to the building being extended, in relation to its location, form, footprint, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing;*
- *Be built from materials that are sympathetic to the existing building wherever possible;*
- *Respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;*
- *Respect and preserve existing architectural features, such as projecting bays, decorative balconies, cornices and chimney stacks;*
- *Be carefully scaled in terms of its height, width and depth;*
- *Allow for the retention of a reasonably sized garden.*
- *Respect and preserve the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area, including the ratio of built to unbuilt space;*
- *Retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity, including that of neighbouring properties, proportionate to that of the surrounding area;*
- *Have a height, depth and width that respects the existing common pattern and rhythm of rear extensions at neighbouring sites, where they exist.*

Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2007)

The Conservation Area Statement has a series of guidelines relating to new development within the Camden Town Conservation Area.

New Development

Change in the residential part of the area will be more narrowly defined in terms of use but in parts of this area the pressure to increase the capital's housing stock will produce proposals for new development of a greater scale. Again, high quality design and execution will be paramount and the design statements supporting such applications will be expected specifically to address the particular characteristics identified in the appraisal including the formality and regularity of much of these streets. Successful modern design can be of the 21st century and enhance the conservation area, by carefully assessing and responding to the form and qualities of surrounding buildings and spaces.

Rear Extensions

Within the Camden Town Conservation Area there are many interesting examples of historic rear elevations. The original historic pattern of rear elevations within a street or group of buildings is an integral part of the character of the area and as such rear extensions will not be acceptable where they would compromise the special character.

