

**34 Chester Terrace,
London Borough of Camden, London**

**Heritage Statement
for Mr. Antonio Simões**

by Genni Elliott and Charlotte Procter
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CTC23/184

February 2024

Summary

Site name: 34 Chester Terrace, LB Camden, London

Grid reference: TQ 2875 8285

Site activity: Heritage Statement

Project coordinator: Genni Elliott

Site supervisor: Genni Elliott

Site code: CTC 23/184

Summary of results: 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 represents a minor alteration to the lightwell, barely visible at street level, fully reversible and can be blended with the existing wall colour to appear unobtrusive within the lightwell itself. It will have no impact on the settings of other nearby heritage assets and will not detract from the frontages of the buildings as a whole but will instead give the opportunity to bring the vault back into use where it can be more fully appreciated.

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34 Chester Terrace, London Borough of Camden, London Heritage Statement

by Genni Elliott and Charlotte Procter

Report 23/184b

Introduction

This report is an assessment of the heritage significance of the building at 34 Chester Terrace, London Borough of Camden, London, NW1 4ND, TQ 2875 8285 (Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Ms Lina Haman of Dovetail Architects, 5th Floor, Unex Tower, Stratford, London E15 1DA on behalf of Mr Antonio Simões of 34, Chester Terrace, London NW1 4ND.

Listed Building Consent is to be sought from the Camden London Borough Council for the installation of the existing air conditioning unit (currently located within the vaults) within a new plant enclosure located on the west wall of the lightwell.

The building is Grade I Listed. This document will accompany the application in order to allow an informed decision to be made regarding the proposal's heritage implications. This is in accordance with the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities's *National Planning Policy Framework* as revised in 2023 (NPPF 2023) and the Borough's local plan policies. The report concentrates only on those elements of the building proposed for alteration.

Site description, location and geology

Chester Terrace is located within the London Borough of Camden within proximity of the Borough's southwestern boundary. The Regent's park lies approximately c.50m to the west of the site, while Camden Town is located further to the north (Fig. 2). 34 Chester Terrace is located within a row of terraced houses numbering 1-42 (consec) all of which are Grade I Listed. Number 34 lies towards the northern end of the terrace, at TQ 2875 8285 (Fig. 2) The site is located on London Clay Formation (BGS 2006). It is at a height of approximately 37m above Ordnance Datum.

Planning background and development proposals

Listed Building Consent is to be sought from the Camden London Borough Council for the installation of the existing air conditioning unit (currently located within the vaults) within a new plant enclosure located on the west wall of the lightwell.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities's *National Planning Policy Framework* as revised in 2023 (NPPF 2023) sets out the framework within which local planning authorities should consider the importance of conserving, or enhancing, aspects of the historic environment, within the planning process. It requires an applicant for planning consent to provide, as part of any application, sufficient information to enable the local planning authority to assess the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by the proposal.

The Historic Environment is defined (NPPF 2023, 70–1) as:

‘All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.’

Paragraphs 200 and 201 state that

‘200. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

‘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 conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.’

A ‘heritage asset’ is defined (NPPF 2023, 70) 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. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’

‘Designated heritage asset’ includes (NPPF 2023, 69) any

‘World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.’

‘Archaeological interest’ is glossed (NPPF 2023, 69) as follows:

‘There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.’

Specific guidance on assessing significance and the impact of a proposal is contained in paragraphs 203 to 209:

- ‘203. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- ‘a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - ‘b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - ‘c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.’
- ‘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.
- ‘206. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
 - b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional⁷².

Footnote 72 extends the application of this provision considerably:

‘Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.’

‘207. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- ‘a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- ‘b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- ‘c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- ‘d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

‘208. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

‘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.’

Paragraph 211 requires local planning authorities to ensure that any loss of heritage assets advances understanding, but stresses that advancing understanding is not by itself sufficient reason to permit the loss of significance:

‘211. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly

accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.’

‘212. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.’

‘213. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.’

‘214. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.’

In determining the potential heritage impact of development proposals, ‘significance’ of an asset is defined (NPPF 2023, 75) as:

‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site’s Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.’

while ‘setting’ is defined (NPPF 2023, 75) as:

‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation) Act 1990, requires the following to be treated as listed building:

‘(a) any object or structure fixed to the (listed) building

‘(b) any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which although not fixed to the building forms part of the land and has done since before 1st July 1948 is treated as being part of the listed building.’

The London Plan, adopted in March 2021, includes the following relevant policy regarding the heritage management in central London, which should be implemented through the Local Development Framework (LDF) at the Borough level:

Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth

A Boroughs should, in consultation with Historic England, local communities and other statutory and relevant organisations, develop evidence that demonstrates a clear understanding of London’s historic environment. This evidence should be used for identifying, understanding, conserving, and enhancing the historic environment and heritage assets, and improving access to, and interpretation of, the heritage assets, landscapes and archaeology within their area.

B Development Plans and strategies should demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and the heritage values of sites or areas and their relationship with their surroundings.

This knowledge should be used to inform the effective integration of London's heritage in regenerative change by:

- 1) setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making
- 2) utilising the heritage significance of a site or area in the planning and design process
- 3) integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings with innovative and creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place
- 4) delivering positive benefits that conserve and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing.

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.

D Development proposals should identify assets of archaeological significance and use this information to avoid harm or minimise it through design and appropriate mitigation. Where applicable, development should make provision for the protection of significant archaeological assets and landscapes. The protection of undesignated heritage assets of archaeological interest equivalent to a scheduled monument should be given equivalent weight to designated heritage assets.

E Where heritage assets have been identified as being At Risk, boroughs should identify specific opportunities for them to contribute to regeneration and place-making, and they should set out strategies for their repair and re-use.

The Camden Local Plan was adopted on 3rd July 2017 (CLP 2017) contains the following relevant policy:

Policy D2 Heritage

'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

'Designated heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings. The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

'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:

- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;
- f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;
- g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and

- h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden’s architectural heritage.

Listed Buildings

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

- i. resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;
- j. resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and
- k. resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

Archaeology

‘The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

Other heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets

‘The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including nondesignated heritage assets (including those on and off the local list), Registered Parks and Gardens and London Squares.

‘The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, balancing the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’

Methodology

Heritage assets have been identified as per the guidance contained within the *National Planning Policy Framework (2023)* and the Borough’s policies, and can include both designated and undesignated heritage assets. Heritage significance is defined within the NPPF with further guidance provided by English Heritage (2015) and Historic England (2019) broken down into the following criteria:

- Evidential value which derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- Historical value which 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.
- Aesthetic value which derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- Communal value which derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

All heritage assets have a setting on which further guidance is contained within English Heritage (2015) Planning Note 3, *The Setting of Heritage Assets* which provides a checklist for assessment and may be both positive and negative.

Designated Heritage Assets

34 Chester Terrace is Grade I Listed as part of the entry: ‘Numbers 1-42 and Attached Railings and Linking Arches’ and described as:

‘Grand palace-style terrace of 37 houses & 5 semi-detached houses. c1825. By John Nash. For the Commissioners of Woods, Forests and Land Revenues. Built by J Burton. Stucco. Slate mansard roofs with attic dormers. EXTERIOR: the longest unbroken façade in Regent’s Park (approx

280m) with an alternating system of bays (ABCBABCBA). At either end projecting pavilion blocks connected to main façade by thin triumphal arches. Main Block (Nos 6-38): symmetrical composition of 3 and 4 storeys. 3 windows to each house. "A" bays, screen of 8 free-standing, fluted Corinthian columns supporting an entablature with modillion cornice above which a recessed attic storey with round-arched windows. Round-arched ground floor openings; architraved heads linked by impost bands. Recessed doorways with panelled doors and fanlights. Windows with margin glazing. 1st floors with architraved sashes and continuous cast-iron balconies. "B" bays, round-arched ground floor openings; architraved heads linked by impost bands. Recessed doorways with panelled doors and fanlights. Windows with margin glazing. Architraved 1st and 2nd floor sashes; 1st floor with continuous cast-iron balcony. Main projecting modillion cornice at 3rd floor level. Cornice and blocking course above 2nd floor. "C" bays, slightly projecting with screen of 6 attached, fluted Corinthian columns supporting an entablature with modillion cornice above which 2 recessed attic storeys with cornice at 3rd floor level and pediment above. Round-arched ground floor openings; architraved heads linked by impost bands. Recessed doorways with panelled doors and fanlights. Windows with margin glazing. 1st & 2nd floors with architraved sashes; 1st floor with continuous cast-iron balcony.

‘INTERIORS: not inspected.

‘SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas. Linking triumphal arches with round-arched vehicle entrance flanked by pedestrian entrances. Inner elevations with 4 attached Corinthian columns supporting a modillion entablature above which a scrolled frieze, cornice and blocking course. Outer elevations with 4 Corinthian pilasters supporting a modillion entablature with panel inscribed "Chester Terrace", cornice and blocking course. Nos 4 & 5 and Nos 39 & 40: to south and north of arches respectively. Channelled stucco ground floors. Square-headed doorways with panelled doors and fanlights. Recessed sashes, upper floors with architraves; 1st floors with continuous cast-iron balconies. Main cornice at 3rd floor level. Cornice and blocking course above 3rd floor. Right hand return of No.4 pedimented with blind windows. No.3: fronting on to Chester Gate. 2 storeys and basement. 4 windows. Forms the terminal return to main block. 3 central bays slightly projecting. Greek Doric prostyle portico; panelled door and fanlight. Recessed sashes, those flanking the portico with shouldered architraves (left hand blind). Right hand bay with projecting bay window surmounted by parapet with central balustraded panel. Cornice and blocking course with central feature of segmental-headed cut out block flanked by panelled dies. Left hand angle with enriched pilaster strip and surmounted by anthemion acroterion; right hand angle with anthemion acroterion only. Symmetrical west frontage to garden; 2 windows, 1st floor with balconies. Bust of Nash on bracket between 1st floor windows. Parapet with central urn.

‘INTERIOR not inspected.

‘SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to garden and flanking steps. Nos 1, 2 & 41, 42: projecting pavilion blocks fronting Regent's Park and linked to main block by triumphal arches. Similar to "C" bays. 4 storeys. 5 windows and 3-window returns. Attached Corinthian columns (paired at angles) rise through 1st and 2nd floors to support entablature with projecting cornice; Corinthian pilasters to other fronts. Round-arched ground floor openings; windows architraved with margin glazing. Upper floors with recessed sashes; 1st floor with cast-iron balconies except central window. 2nd and 3rd floor form attic storeys (2nd floor windows architraved) with cornice at 3rd floor sill level and cornice and blocking course above 3rd floor.

‘INTERIORS: not inspected. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.13 was the residence of CR Cockerell, architect and antiquary (English Heritage plaque). (Survey of London: Vol. XIX, Old St Pancras and Kentish Town (St Pancras II): London: -1938: 120.)’

It is worth noting that the interiors were not inspected when the buildings were considered for listing. This does not necessarily mean that the interiors were of no intrinsic interest, but does indicate that they were not considered of primary importance to the decision to add the Terrace to the List.

The building also lies within the Regent's Park Conservation Area which is summarized in the Conservation Area appraisal and Management Strategy document (RPCAAMS 2011). The Regents Park Conservation Area Appraisal is broken up into sections according to six sub-areas which combine to make up the

conservation area. ‘Regents Park and Terraces fronting the park and their mews’ is sub-area 1, and takes in the application site.

‘The Regent’s Park and Terraces fronting the park, and their mews

‘This area is from the northern apex of the conservation area at Cumberland Footbridge to Park Square East. At the southern end, the Adam’s design in the 1770s for a circus was not completed; the design for the circus was opened out instead to form a square (1822) which frames the entrance to the Park.

‘This character area is at the transition of park and terrace. The eastern part of the Park that lies within the conservation area contains the Broadwalk, and Nesfield’s Avenue Gardens of 1863 at its southern end, which lie on the boundary with Westminster City Council. The buildings at the parks’ edge form a triumphant classical route; buildings with giant orders and sculpture to be seen from a distance and to impress. The gates, metalwork, paving and stone details all contribute to the quality of the area.

‘The stucco terraces were originally rendered and intended to look like stone. The variation in finish was not acceptable to the Estate from the start, and over time a uniformity of finish has been achieved, by control of the paint specification by the Crown Estate along with many other details. The quality of the lighting and paving are all exceptional.’

The conservation area appraisal states the following about Chester Terrace specifically:

‘Chester Terrace

‘Chester Terrace is set back from the park with a strip of contained shared gardens with flowering plants, shrubbery and trees. Chester Terrace is the longest unbroken façade in the park (287m/840 ft) with a complex alternating system of bays (ABCBABCBA) totalling 99 bays, marked by giant Corinthian columns attached and detached in groups which rise from ground floor level. Balconies run continuously between and behind the columns. At either end are projecting wings, connected to the main façade by theatrically thin triumphal arches inset with the name ‘Chester Terrace’ across the full street width.’

It also observes that the space created between Cumberland Place, Chester Terrace and Chester Place is a complex one which is the result of Nash’s overall theatrical composition. Other than the above examples, Chester Terrace is mentioned relatively little within the document. It does mention that ‘the whole of the internal construction of each house is new’ as announced by the Commissioners in 1962.

Number 34 is located within the section identified as ‘B’ characterised by the gambrel roof as opposed to the full third storey windows (A) and those located beneath a pediment (C).

Cartographic and documentary sources

The broad background of the site is covered in the Conservation Area appraisal and Management Scheme (RPCAAMS 2011). The first detailed map of the area is Rocque’s 1746 10-mile map of London (Fig. 3). This map is prior to the development of the area with the location of 34 Chester Street and the terrace as a whole located in an undeveloped field directly to the west of Green Lane.

Thompson’s map of 1822 (Fig. 4) shows the area prior to the construction of the terrace. Substantial development is notable in the area by this time. Regent’s Park has been constructed and landscaped to the west

of the site and although no buildings have been constructed, part of the road systems for the terraces to the south of Chester Terrace have been. The site itself lies approximately in the area which belonged to the Jews Hospital and a river system which was part of a mill. The mill and millpond lie either within the site or to the immediate south with the river continuing north past the site, curving into the northern section of the site. A series of buildings of the hospital is to the south of the site, to the east of the park labelled as *Horse Barracks*.

Construction of the terrace began in the 1824 (Summerson 1980) having been designed by the architect John Nash in collaboration with James Burton and his son Decimus Burton. It seems that James Burton was also the financial patron of the construction after the Crown Estate refused to finance the project, despite the fact that it was originally the Prince Regent's idea, and he had already commissioned the development of Regent's Park and related buildings (LCC 1938).

L and G Greenwood's map of 1828 (Fig. 5) shows early development of the terrace to the east of Regent's Park. Although limited detail can be gleaned from this map, by this point Chester Terrace has been developed as has the other terraces bordering the eastern extent of the park. Further development is notable to the east of the terrace.

The 1870 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 6) shows the site after the development of the area. The full extent of Chester Terrace is visible with development having taken place on all sides including that of Regent's Park to the west. Buildings are depicted directly to the east of the house, at the rear of number 34.

The area remains the same until the Ordnance Survey map of 1968 (Fig. 7). By this point the building previously seen to the rear of the house has been demolished with a road located directly to the rear of the buildings extending the majority of the extent of Chester Terrace, likely an extension of Chester Close North. This map likely shows change having occurred in the area due to the fact that it was during the 1960s that the area was restored after having suffered significant blast damage during World War II bombing. Number 34 was somewhat fortunate, having only suffered "blast damage, minor in nature" (RPCAAMS 2011) while the neighbouring dwellings to the north and south were damaged beyond repair (Fig. 8). A photograph in the Historic England photograph archive (CC47/02064) taken in 1943 shows the second and third storeys of numbers 33 and 35 completely destroyed, with the upper floors of number 34 remaining. The terrace (including No.34) was substantially reconstructed behind the façade to a design by Louis de Soissons of Peacock, Hodges and Robertson. The stucco façade rises for three storeys with additional basement and attic floors, and is topped with a 1960s replacement slate gambrel roof. From the 1960s onwards after the terrace had been repaired it returned to residential use.

Nash's aim when he designed the terraced properties around the park was that they could be seen from it. They are statement buildings and Chester Terrace is one of the finer surviving examples, as the longest terrace surrounding the park complete. Nash's plans have been described as 'a unique planned composition of landscape and buildings, at once classical and picturesque... of national and international importance' (RPCAAMS 2011). The building is this important not only in itself but also as part of the setting of Regent's Park.

Description

Exterior (Pls 1–4)

Number 34 Chester Terrace is a part of the longest unbroken façade in Regent's Park. The majority of the terrace is a symmetrical composition, of four storeys with two windows on the ground floor, three windows on the first and second floors and two on the fourth floor. The ground floor doors and windows are round-arched with architraved heads linked by impost bands. The doorway is recessed with a black panelled door with an arched window above. The windows have margin glazing with architrave 1st and 2nd floor sashes. A cast-iron balcony runs along the 1st floor continuing along the other houses within the terrace. Cast-iron railings are notable on the ground floor containing the external steps to the basement level. The gambrel roof is covered in slate tiles and there are dormer windows. The house as seen is predominantly post-war in date, having been rebuilt following the original plans.

The area of the lower ground floor is accessed via a set of steps from Chester Terrace down to an open quadrangle. All the walls around the quadrangle are rendered and painted cream. The floor is covered in paving slabs upon which a number of potted plants are present. Drainage is present around the edges of the quadrangle. The main house lies to the east with the external steps down to the north. To the south is a room beneath the bridge to the ground floor entrance, this links the main house lower ground floor with the former coal vaults to the west which extend out beneath the pavement above. The north and central vaults have external louvered doors onto the quadrangle, whilst the southern vault is accessed internally.

Assessment of the significance of the Heritage Assets

Evidential Value

The evidential value of the building is predominantly linked to the external façade of the building due to its importance as a part of the Regents Park development. It is also a surviving example of how the wealthier classes of the early to mid-19th centuries lived.

Historic Value

The Site is listed Grade I as part of a larger terrace of 37 houses & 5 semi-detached dwellings dating to c.1825, by John Nash, and located within the Regents Park Conservation Area. Chester Terrace is of high significance as part of the classical palace-fronted terrace which can be attributed to John Nash. Nash was a prolific architect of the Regency period, having designed the layout and much of the grand architecture seen today throughout the west end of London. Chester Terrace as a whole can be considered a very fine example of his architectural style.

Although the exterior of the Site is of historic value, the inside has been considerably modernised, and includes little in terms of features of historical importance, beyond the basic layout. The area was bombed during World War II, with much of Regents Park and its surroundings having been severely damaged. Although the damage to Number 34 was not considered to be severe, unlike that of Numbers 33 and 35 which sit to either side of the site which were damaged beyond repair (Fig. 8; Pl. 9), the terrace as a whole underwent a large-scale refurbishment meaning that little of the historic fabric can have been retained. Although the external façade of the terrace was renewed to its former appearance, the refurbishment of the interior features did not follow the original plans designed by Nash, with the result that it retains no features of intrinsic historic value. The census records do not indicate that anyone of particular significance or merit has occupied the property.

Aesthetic Value

The Site is of primary architectural interest due to the quality and significance of its external form. Chester Terrace is the most complete terrace bounding Regents Park, designed by John Nash and the Burtons. Number 34 contributes to the overall external character of the terrace which displays a very high level of composition and craftsmanship. The terrace is an integral feature in the Regent's Park complex, providing a transition between the parkland and the dense 1960s housing to the rear (east) of Chester Terrace. The terrace was largely rebuilt in the 1960s after being badly damaged during World War II, the exterior shell was refurbished and renewed to the same design standard as previously seen however internally the houses have been completely altered and are not original.

Communal Value

The internal aspect of the building provides little communal value due to the residence being privately owned. However, the external aspect of the building is of great communal value, contributing to the overall character of the terrace and by extension, Regent's Park which the terrace was originally designed to enhance. The Park and its environs are valued for the rural environment in the centre of London, providing a public green space which

allows people to feel they are no longer within the city. The surrounding terraces add to this, and it is important form an aesthetic view that the houses within the terrace are the same in order to maintain the façade.

Assessment of the contribution made by the setting of the Heritage Assets to their heritage significance

Externally the Site is of very high, and primarily architectural/aesthetic, interest, as a result of the quality of its elevations and its contribution to the wider composition, and overall aesthetic, of the terrace. The interior is of limited value today, with the general hierarchy of spaces being one of the only surviving elements of interest which contributes to the property's overall heritage. In essence it is the frontage of the building that is considered grade I listed.

Impact Assessment of Proposals

The proposal (Fig. 9) seeks to relocate the existing air conditioning unit within the vaults to the west wall of the lightwell, between the two existing entrances to the external vaults. The unit would be located within an acoustic enclosure to achieve the required noise reduction of 15dB should planning permission be granted. The acoustic enclosure comes in a variety of colours that could be appropriately selected to blend in with the surrounding cream walls.

Along the length of the terrace, a number of other properties have located their air conditioning units within the lightwell, including recently (2019), 15 Chester Terrace with consent granted back in 2018 due to precedent previously been set by other properties such as 24 and there being a history of the air conditioning units being located within the lightwell when the terrace was reconstructed in the 1960's (as detailed in the planning decision for number 15 2018/6364/P).

That said whilst considering the impact of placing the air conditioning unit in the front lightwell it is necessary to consider both the positive and negative impacts of the unit in such a location and any benefits the removal of the unit may have to its existing location. Certainly the vaults are a part of the original building and they were designed for the storage of coal, not modern heating and ventilation equipment, thus its removal would open the vault back up again for use, though its location for heating and ventilation equipment is both discreet and in keeping with its original intended use. The removal of the air conditioning unit can hardly be said to be a noteworthy positive to the significance of the building given the earlier interior renovations removing much of the historic layout and features.

Such a location within the front lightwell places the unit directly in front of what is realistically considered to be the significant listed part of the building – i.e. the front façade. The actual location, below the main ground level and against the western wall means there is no physical damage or alterations to the main house frontage. The lightwell is however an original design feature, allowing for the fact that it has been reconstructed and the area under the steps infilled. These alterations are arguably sympathetic to the frontage and largely discreet. An air conditioning unit within housing cannot be said to be wholly sympathetic to the existing architecture. It is however relatively discreetly placed on the western wall, where most passers-by looking at the frontages of the buildings would not notice its addition, nor would it be visible from any distance from the building. It is only visible with a direct look downwards from directly adjacent. Additional noise would be added to the lightwell but this would fall within the permitted allowance. Importantly the placing of the air conditioning unit is fully reversible with no detrimental impacts to the building and could be considered less harmful than potential other uses for the lightwell that would not require planning or listed building consent.

Overall the location within the lightwell would be seen as a slightly negative impact on the significance of the building but have a neutral impact on the terrace when viewed as a whole, whilst also bringing the vaults into a useable space that can be more fully appreciated.

When set against the requirements of the NPPF when considering *less than substantial harm* to an asset as per paragraph 208 it is required that any harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The building is in private ownership and the current unit is not visible to the public, thus public benefit is limited to the general care and upkeep of the building any works to the building represent.

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 seeks to relocate the air conditioning unit from the vaults to the western wall of the lightwell, as has happened elsewhere along the terrace. The proposal represents a minor alteration to the lightwell, barely visible at street level, fully reversible and can be blended with the existing wall colour to appear unobtrusive

within the lightwell itself. It will have no impact on the settings of other nearby heritage assets and will not detract from the frontages of the buildings as a whole.

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