

20 Church Row NW3 6UP

Significance of building and scope of proposed works

No.20 Church Row, listed Grade II*, is a terraced property, built c. 1720, of 3 storeys, plus attic and basement. The house is built in brown brick with a tiled mansard roof with dormers. The front elevation is characterised by its flat brick frontage with modestly recessed sash windows, cast iron railings, and hooded front door.

Internally, No.20 Church Row is characterised by a state of disrepair lacking modern conveniences such as integrated wiring, plumbing and heating.

The site is located within the 'Church Row/ Hampstead Grove' sub-area of Hampstead Conservation Area.

The character and appearance of the street itself is defined by the relative formality of Georgian terraces which flank both pavements, and whose value is enhanced by their grouping.

In contrast to the formality of the front, the rear elevations of the terraces exhibit an eclectic mixture of massing, style and materiality, from weatherboard panelling to hanging bay windows all of which add to the charm and creative spirit of the area.

The overall significance of No.20 includes its architectural design and materials, floorplan, townscape value and its evidential value as a early-eighteenth-century terraced building. The Council has a statutory obligation to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, to which the subject site makes a strongly positive contribution.

The railings and lower roadside front façade have been subjected to unsympathetic alterations which date from the 1960's.

The proposal is to restore damaged or missing features and upgrade the property to meet current standards to make it safe and allowing it to become a viable family home which can be enjoyed for future generations.

The proposed works include:

Restoration of period features

Front façade

- Removal of the 1960's concrete bin platform within the light well and reinstates a metal stair to the lower ground floor as per the neighbouring properties.
- Overhaul the existing windows, restoring features which have been lost and reinstating missing casements.
- Repair to brickwork.
- Repaint timber and metal elements to match the original intent.

Internal features

- Reinstatement of details included within the list description which have been damaged or removed over time.
- Restore and refurbish the existing staircase.
- Restore and reinstate original timber floorboards at ground floor.
- As part of the refurbishment of the interior of the house to incorporate influences from the exceptionally creative past occupants of the property.

Reconfiguration of Lower Ground Floor

- Reinststate the original function of the lower ground floor as a kitchen. As part of these works, it is proposed to enlarge the opening within the spine wall which has been substantially modified over the past 60 years.
- Restore the original floor coverings, fireplaces and original windows to the front light well.

Rear Extension

- The proposal includes the construction of a small, single storey timber rear extension with copper cupola roof, replacing a short flight of redundant 1960's concrete stairs. The extension is positioned between the existing closet wing and external stone stair which connects the house to the garden.

Relevant legislation, policy and guidance:

- Town and County Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023)
- National Planning Policy Guidance
- LB Camden Local Plan (2017)
- LB Camden Planning Guidance
- Historic England Guidance
- Hampstead Conservation Area appraisal and management strategy

Assessment

- The proposal is generally supported.
- The removal/ amelioration of the 1960's interventions is seen as beneficial to the significance of the heritage asset.
- The reintroduction of lost architectural features and elements is supported as the overall significance of the building will be enhanced.
- Relocation of the kitchen to the lower ground floor is seen as a constructive change. The wall that divides this floor into front and back rooms shows evidence of alteration, and therefore the current layout cannot be assumed to be the arrangement that was present originally. Thus, although a limited amount of historic fabric will be lost it is considered that the new arrangement will be to the overall benefit of the property.
- Refurbishment of the historic fenestration should be in line with Historic England guidance ([Modifying Historic Windows as Part of Retrofitting Energy-Saving Measures | Historic England](#)).
- The rear elevation of the house is already visually 'busy' and has been subjected to change. The style of the proposed, single storey, timber rear extension ties in with that of the host building. The structure is modest in scale and does not crowd adjacent architectural elements. Similar minor extensions can be said to have set a precedent for small additions. This proposed addition is therefore not opposed.
- The element that I am unhappy with and feel diminishes the significance of the building is the subdivision of the second floor back bedroom (currently labelled Bed3), and the subdivision of the third floor front bedroom (currently labelled Bed4). The historic planform for these houses includes two rooms (one front, one back) per floor. Introducing a solid full-height wall, parallel to the spine wall, into the back room of the second floor will completely cut off the sunlight from the south which bathes the rear elevation of the house and thereby dim the ambience of the front bedroom. The third floor has already seen alteration with the introduction of a central bathroom. The hierarchy of room significance within the house diminishes front to back and from the ground and first floors up and down (ie. the rooms on

the third floor have less architectural significance than those on the ground and first floors). Thus, it could be argued that although there is harm to the planform of the house, this, in the grand scheme of things, is limited harm and impacts in a minimal way on the significance of the heritage asset as a whole.

Recommendation

The submission of full planning and listed building consent applications based on this proposal is invited.