



Heritage Impact Assessment

51 Downshire Hill,
London

September 2024 | Project Ref 9963A



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Appendices

App. 1 Scale of Harm table (HCUK, 2019)

1. Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of Ronan Daly. It relates to an application for alterations to 51 Downshire Hill, Hampstead Heath, London. Camden Council (CC hereafter) are the determining authority.

1.2 51 Downshire Hill is a grade II listed building (UID: 1078269) which was designated in 1974 alongside its semi-detached pair, no.50, and attached area walls and railings. The building is also located within the Hampstead Conservation Area.



Figure 1: 51 Downshire Hill (grade II) with no.50 (left)

1.3 In accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2023) this statement describes the significance of the identified heritage assets.

The Proposals and Relevant Background

1.4 Proposals at 51 Downshire Hill relate to proposals for the general refurbishment and alteration of the grade II listed building. These proposals are shown in full detail as part of the drawn submission of the application but can be summarised as:

- Full refurbishment of the dwelling including kitchens, bathrooms and introduction of replacement lighting and radiators and repairs and replacement of ceilings and cornices as required.
- Replacement of single glazing to existing windows with Historglass Mono laminate.
- Creation of a new bin storage area to the front of the building.
- Various changes to the later side extension including removal of the redundant sealed lightwell, rationalisation of rainwater goods, changes to fenestration and rendering of brickwork.
- Minor changes to the plan form of the building.
- The replacement of and introduction of period appropriate fire surrounds to the lower ground, ground and first floors of the building.

1.5 The proposals have been based on a thorough understanding of the significance of the identified heritage assets and recent pre-application advice with the Council and seek to refurbish the grade II listed building suitable for its use as a dwelling in the 21st century while preserving if not enhancing its unique heritage values.

1.6 While also located in the Hampstead Conservation Area, as noted above, the primarily internal nature of the proposals means that the significance of this heritage asset (and other listed buildings located near to the site) would not be affected and have been scoped out of this assessment).

Purpose of this Assessment

1.7 The purpose of this Heritage Impact Assessment is to assist with the determination of the application by informing the decision takers on the effects of the proposed development on the historic built environment. Value judgements on the

significance of the identified heritage assets is presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised. Particular regard is given to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The report also sets out how the proposal complies with the guidance and policy of the NPPF (December 2023) and local planning policy. The site and heritage assets affected have been observed and assessed following a site visit made by the author in July 2024.

2. Relevant Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1** The decision maker is required by sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting when exercising planning functions. The decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the significance of the listed building, and there is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm its heritage significance.¹
- 2.2** There is a broadly similar duty arising from section 72(1) of the Act in respect of planning decisions relating to development within conservation areas.
- 2.3** Measures being implemented as a consequence of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2024 will have the effect of making the desirability of preserving or enhancing other types of designated heritage asset a statutory consideration.
- 2.4** For the purposes of this statement, preservation equates to an absence of harm.² Harm is defined in paragraph 84 of Historic England's Conservation Principles as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.³
- 2.5** The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as being made up of four main constituents: architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The assessments of heritage significance and impact are normally made with primary reference to the four main elements of significance identified in the NPPF.
- 2.6** The NPPF requires the impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset⁴ to be considered in terms of either "substantial harm" or "less than substantial harm" as described within paragraphs 207 and 208 of that document. National Planning

¹ Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited v East Northamptonshire District Council and others [2014] EWCA Civ 137. This principle has recently been confirmed, albeit in a lower court, in R (Wyeth-Price) v Guildford Borough Council.

² South Lakeland v SSE [1992] 2 AC 141.

³ Conservation Principles, 2008, paragraph 84.

⁴ The seven categories of designated heritage assets are World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefield and Conservation Areas, designated under the relevant legislation.

Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.⁵ The Scale of Harm is tabulated at **Appendix 1**.

2.7 Paragraphs 207 and 208 of the NPPF refer to two different balancing exercises in which harm to significance, if any, is to be balanced with public benefit.⁶ Paragraph 18a-020-20190723 of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) online makes it clear that some heritage-specific benefits can be public benefits. Paragraph 18a-018-20190723 of the same NPPG makes it clear that it is important to be explicit about the category of harm (that is, whether paragraph 207 and 208 of the NPPF applies, if at all), and the extent of harm, when dealing with decisions affecting designated heritage assets, as follows:

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

2.8 Paragraphs 205 and 206 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance, irrespective of how substantial or otherwise that harm might be.

2.9 One of the overarching objectives of sustainable development, as expressed in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, is mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. Historic England has a Climate Change Strategy, and has published Mitigation, Adaptation and Energy Measures. More specifically, Historic England has published a Heritage and Climate Change Carbon Reduction Plan (March 2022). These and similar strategies run in parallel with heritage-specific methodologies relating to the assessment of significance, and the effect of change on significance.

2.10 A new consultation draft of the NPPF was released in July 2024 however no changes were made to the sections concerning built heritage assets and the historic built environment.

⁵ Bedford Borough Council v SSCLG and Nuon UK Limited [2013] EWHC 4344 (Admin).

⁶ The balancing exercise was the subject of discussion in City and Country Bramshill v CC SLG and others [2021] EWCA, Civ 320.

2.11 Local policy for Camden is contained within the Camden Local Plan (adopted in 2017). Relevant policies from that document are discussed below.

2.12 **Policy D1 Design:** While not a heritage policy, this general design policy notes that the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development and that there is a requirement for development to respect the local context and character and preserve or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage.

2.13 **Policy D2 Heritage:** This policy notes that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's heritage assets and their settings. The policy notes that 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. Of conservation areas, the policy notes that the Council will:

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

2.14 With regards to listed buildings, the policy notes that to preserve or enhance listed buildings, the Council will:

- Resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;
- 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
- Resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

- 2.15** The London Plan 2021 is the spatial development strategy for greater London and as such a piece of relevant planning policy. Of specific relevance is policy HC1 Heritage Conservation and Growth which notes that *"Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings."*

3. Background and Development

3.1 The first map to show the area around the application site in any detail dates from c.1813 (**Figure 3**). This shows that while the western end of Downshire Hill had been laid out, there were no buildings present along the road. A slightly later map from 1822 (**Figure 4**) shows the full extent of Downshire Hill having been established and, while little information is provided, a number of dwellings along the length of the road can be seen, including evidence of built form around the location of nos. 50 and 51.



Figure 3: Extract from a c.1813 map by J & W Newton



Figure 4: Extract of 'A new map of London and its environs' (Mr Thompson, 1822)

3.2 On the basis of available evidence (both documentary and on site survive of historic fabric) nos.50 and 51 Downshire Hill appear to date to the c.1820s/30s. See below description of 51 Downshire Hill where evidence of this date is provided.

3.3 The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS hereafter) map of 1871 provides a clear assessment of built form present on the site in the mid 19th century (**Figure 5**). This shows no.50 very much as it is today facing directly onto the road but indicates that, at this time (and likely originally), no.51 faced south west onto its main gardens. It seems likely that the building had a flat front (south west) elevation perhaps with a raised access bridge leading from a set of stairs parallel to the road. The building is roughly rectangular but appears to have a small projecting section to its eastern end.

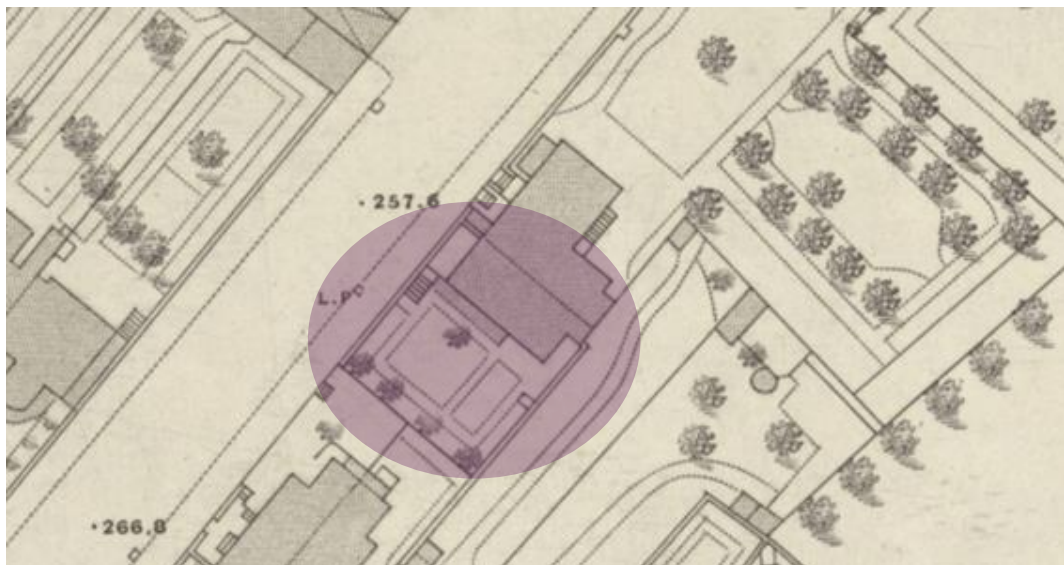


Figure 5: 1871 OS Map (surveyed 1866). Reproduced with permission from the National Library of Scotland

3.4 Historic sources have been searched but no documents providing a full assessment of what the front (south west) elevation looked like have been sourced.

3.5 By the time of the 1895 OS Map (**Figure 6**) a similar arrangement can be seen though some small scale extensions can be seen to the rear of no.50.

3.6 The next OS Map to show the site (from 1915, **Figure 7**) shows a notable change. It appears as though the former gardens associated with no. 51 (to the south west

of the dwelling) have been subdivided from the dwelling and developed upon with a new building of roughly square footprint. This building is no. 52 Downshire Hill, a three storey (with basement) red brick dwelling.



Figure 6: 1895 OS Map (revised 1893). Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland



Figure 7: 1915 OS Map (revised 1912). Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland

3.7

At the same time a new side extension has been introduced on the south western elevation (former frontage) of no.51 which is the two storey set back entrance bay present today. This has effectively reorientated the building so that it now faces onto the road with its former side elevation now the frontage. The resultant effect is that, after these changes, the original front elevation of no.51 is lost and that the

building has been left with a very small courtyard garden to the rear. This arrangement remains present on site today.

3.8

The original front elevation, as discussed above, is now partly concealed by the recessed side entrance bay (which dates from 1893-1912). As noted above, there is no known documentary evidence of the character and appearance of the former front elevation but some evidence of the placement of windows survives and can be seen on what is now the flank elevation. The surviving elements of this elevation appear devoid of detailing (for example plain window openings without architraves) and it therefore seems likely that when the entrance bay was constructed the former decoration on this elevation (the former frontage), which may well have been consistent with that present to the side of no.51 and front of no.50, was removed. The roof on this elevation slopes down with a low eaves line and it is not clear whether this was the original roof form or whether, as with the side fronting onto Downshire Place, a parapet line hid this edge of the roof.



Figures 8 and 9: Former front elevation of no.51, now the side elevation, with surviving earlier window openings present

3.9

At the time of the 1915 Map (surveyed in 1912) the large plot to the rear of the building is shown as being empty but this is known to have been redeveloped in 1913 as a Police Station and Courthouse by John Dixon Butler, surveyor to the Metropolitan Police. This structure is now separately grade II listed and boundary

Description of 51 Downshire Hill

- 3.10** The building was listed (alongside no.50 and the attached walls and railings) in May 1974. It's list description reads:

Pair of terraced houses. Mid C19 with later alterations. Stucco. 3 storeys, attics and basements. No.50: 4 windows. Central prostyle portico; doorway with pilaster-jambs, cornice-head, patterned fanlight and panelled door approached by steps with attached cast-iron railings. Architraved casements; 4-light to left of porch, 2-light with margin glazing and cast-iron balcony to right. 1st floor architraved casements with console bracketed pediments, margin glazing and continuous cast-iron balcony; right hand pediment replaced by later architraved 4-pane sash. Cornice and blocking course with C20 dormer. No.51: 1 window plus 1 window 2 storey recessed entrance extension. Doorway with pilasters, bracketed hood, fanlight and panelled door. Casements similar to No.50; 1st floor with 2-light window above pediment. Cornice and blocking course. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached to both houses, a stucco balustrade on dwarf brick wall to areas.

- 3.11** The list entry provides a good description of the primary elevation, i.e. its road frontage, but does not provide any detailed description of the building's phasing of its side and rear elevations. As noted above, the side elevation (formerly the building's front) is now concealed by the later recessed two storey side entrance and those exposed areas are now devoid of detailing but do provide some evidence of the former window openings. This elevation features two dormer windows serving the second floor.

- 3.12** The rear elevation of the building is of a more modest character than the front and retains a number of non matching windows including a six over six sash to the lower ground floor, two tripartite sash windows to the ground and second floor and a six over two sash window to the first floor. The main body of the house on both the side and rear is rendered matching the front.

- 3.13** The recessed side extension is a later addition to the building, dating to between 1893 and 1912 and may well have been introduced at this time as a means to introduce sanitary ware into the dwelling. This structure is rendered to the front elevation (featuring the main entrance door with pilasters and bracketed hood) and

a two over two sash window above. To the rear the extension is rendered to the lower ground floor and brickwork to the first floor with a large window present (**Figures 10 and 11**). More evidence is visible here of the extension cutting across former windows that would have served the building's original front elevation.



Figures 10 and 11: Rear elevation of the side entrance bay

3.14 As described above, despite the list description referring to the building as mid 19th century, an earlier date of c.1820s/30s is ascribed to the building. Alongside the potential presence of the buildings on the 1822 map, this date is based on the nature of much of the internal detailing present in no.51. This includes:

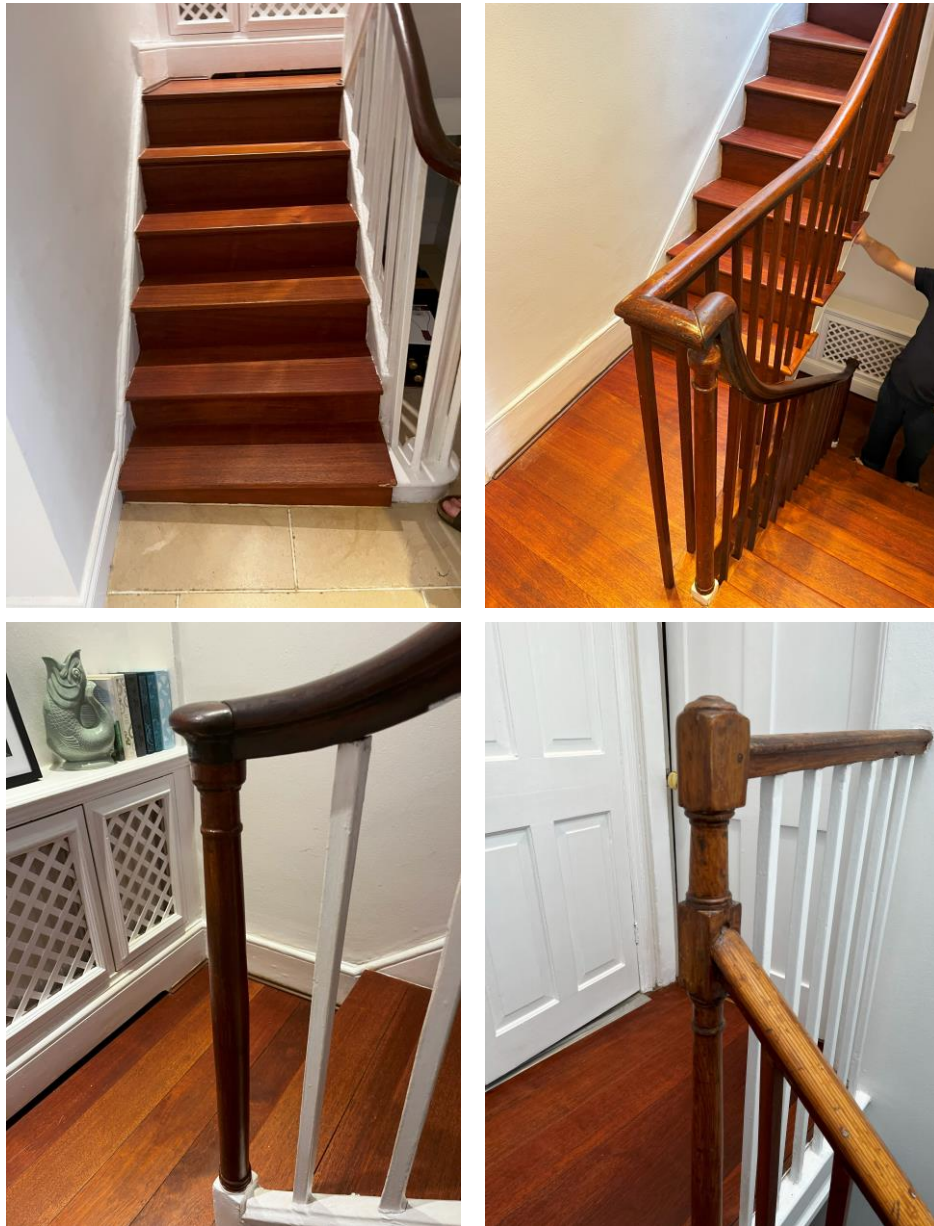
- Surviving decorative plasterwork (particularly to the ground and first floors) which indicates and late Georgian/Regency period due to their simplistic form and appearance (**Figures 12, 13 and 15**);
- Joinery details (including skirting boards, architraves, window boxes and shutters) which all have a late Georgian/Regency character (**Figures 13-15**); and
- The staircase which, while altered (see below) possesses the characteristic form (handrails, newel posts and balustrade) of the early 19th century (**Figures 16-19**).



Figures 12 and 13: Photographs showing the decorative cornice and window architrave/shutters present to the ground floor front room



Figures 14 and 15: Photographs showing the window boxes and shutters present to the first floor rear room



Figures 16-19: Photographs of the staircase present within 51 Downshire Hill

3.15

While original cornices do survive within the building it is clear that all ceilings have been boarded over (no visible lath and plaster is present). While the ground floor cornices survive relatively well, those to the first floor have been significantly altered. This is as a result of changes to the finished ceiling height which have essentially eaten away at much of the depth and profile of the original cornices but also as a result of poor quality repairs which have eroded the quality of these cornices significantly (**Figures 20 and 21**).



Figures 20 and 21: Photographs of the cornices present to the first floor front and rear rooms showing damage occurred through the over boarding of ceilings and poor quality repairs

3.16 As alluded to above, the staircase has also seen considerable change. Various elements (particularly the ground floor newel post and ground to first floor spindles) have been replaced and the staircase as a whole has been over clad with modern treads and risers which appear to have replaced the original, prohibiting appreciation of its original form and appearance (**Figures 16-19**).

3.17 Though chimney breasts survive throughout the building, no original (i.e. c.1820s/30s) fire surrounds are present at 51 Downshire Hill. Fire surrounds can be summarised as follows:

- No fire surrounds present to the lower ground floor level and the chimney breast in the kitchen is no longer present (**Figures 22 and 23**);
- Fire surrounds present to the ground floor level are modern (**Figures 24 and 25**);
- No fire surrounds are present to the first floor and indeed the rear room's chimney breast has been built out against providing a flush wall (**Figures 26 and 27**); and
- While fire surrounds present to the second floor date to the late 19th or early 20th centuries and are a matching pair (**Figures 28 and 29**).



Figures 22 and 23: Lower ground floor kitchen (left) without a chimney breast and rear lower ground floor room with bare chimney breast (right)



Figures 24 and 25: Fire surrounds present to the ground floor front (left) and rear (right)



Figures 26 and 27: Front (left) and rear (right) rooms at first floor level showing the bare chimney breast to the front and built out chimney breast to the rear



Figures 28 and 29: Later 19th or early 20th century fire surrounds present to the second floor front (left) and rear (right) rooms

3.18 While the building has been clearly altered through its re-orientation and introduction of a new two storey entrance bay, the original plan form of the building with its central staircase and hall and two flanking rooms on either side survives well.

4. Statement of Significance

Assessment of Significance

- 4.1** This chapter of the report establishes the significance of the relevant heritage assets in the terms set out in the NPPF. In accordance with paragraph 194 of the NPPF, the descriptions are proportionate to the asset's significance and are sufficient to understand the nature of any impact the proposals may have upon that significance.
- 4.2** It is recognised that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. In some cases, certain aspects or elements could accommodate change without affecting the Government's objective, which includes the conservation of heritage assets and which seeks to ensure that decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of significance of heritage assets. Change is only considered to be harmful if it erodes an asset's significance. Understanding the significance of any heritage asset affected is therefore fundamental to understanding the scope for and acceptability of change.

51 Downshire Hill (grade II)

- 4.3** **Architectural Interest:** 51 Downshire Hill is a building of architectural interest as part of an example of early 19th century domestic suburban architecture. Externally, (alongside no.50) this interest stems from the building's high quality and well surviving detailing which is typical of the early 19th century and includes the decorative window surrounds, windows, use of stucco and the attached boundary walls. The rear elevation of no.51 is also of some architectural interest as a less formal arrangement of restrained early 19th century architecture, characteristic of back of house areas. Change to the building's exterior have eroded its architectural value, for example the loss of its original front elevation, but these changes all form part of the building's history and development and provide some legibility and evidential value as to how built form was adapted and altered in the later 19th century when Hampstead grew in population and density. Surviving original and

historic internal features also contribute to the architectural interest of the grade II listed building and this includes the plan form, the staircase and surviving decorative features including joinery, plasterwork and fire surrounds.

- 4.4 Historic Interest:** The historic interest of 51 Downshire Hill relates to its group value with no.51 and the way in which these buildings illustrate and provide tangible evidence as to the past, specifically of modest domestic development of the early 19th century insofar as surviving historic fabric and plan form. The building provides evidence as to domestic, social and economic practices of the early 19th century and illustrates characteristic architectural practices of that period and the later 19th century when notable alterations to the building were made. The building also provides some evidential value demonstrating early 19th century development in this part of Hamstead. There are no known historic associations, such as famous residents or a known architect, associated with no.51 which would elevate the historic interest of the building. However, it is known that no.50 was occupied by Jim Henson, creator of The Muppets, between 1936 and 1990 and this provides that specific part of the listed building with an additional layer of historic (associative) interest, a blue plaque marks this on the exterior of no.50).
- 4.5 Artistic Interest:** While of aesthetic merit, this more clearly relates to the building's architectural values and there is no particular artistic interest associated with 51 Downshire Hill.
- 4.6 Archaeological Interest:** The listed building does not have any specific archaeological interest.

5. Heritage Impact Assessment

- 5.1** This chapter of the report assesses the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets identified in the previous chapter, including effects on the setting of those assets. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the preceding chapter, and drawn submission of the application.

Proposed Development

Building Wide and External Alterations

- 5.2** This section of the report discusses changes proposed to the building as a whole and external alterations.
- 5.3** Throughout the building proposals include the replacement of existing modern kitchen and bathroom fittings. The replacement of these modern fittings would have no bearing on the significance of the listed building and would not, in and of themselves, likely need listed building consent. For the most part existing service runs etc. would be maintained avoiding any physical effect on the fabric of the listed building but where new openings etc. are required these would be sensitivity accommodated to avoid effect on character of loss of significant fabric.
- 5.4** With regards to floor finishes within the building proposals are found to be wholly beneficial and are summarised in the table below.

Lower ground floor	All non-original timber and stone floor finishes are proposed to be replaced with traditionally inspired floorboards providing a coherent finish throughout the ancillary floor level
Small yard to the front of the house	Existing out of character slate tiles proposed to be replaced with York stone providing a far more appropriate character to this part of the site
Front garden area	Existing out of character slate tiles proposed to be replaced with York stone providing a far more appropriate character to this part of the site and this part of the conservation area

Ground floor	Existing original and historic floorboards within the main body of the house are proposed to be retained and refurbished then left exposed reinstating the historic floor finishes
Ground floor WC and study	All non-original timber and tile floor finishes are proposed to be replaced with new floorboards to match those original on this level and provide a coherent finish throughout the ancillary floor level
First floor bedrooms and hallway	All non-original timber floor finishes are proposed to be removed and the original floorboards, present below, are proposed to be refurbished and left exposed reinstating the historic floor finishes
First floor bathroom	The non-original tile floor finish is proposed to be removed with a new tiled floor introduced
Second floor	All non-original tile floors and carpets are proposed to be removed and the original floorboards, present below, are proposed to be refurbished and left exposed reinstating the historic floor finishes
Staircase	As noted in Section 3, the staircase's risers and treads have been replaced with modern timber which contrasts with the historic character of the staircase. Proposals seek to reinstate new treads and risers to the full height of the staircase reinstating a period appropriate character to this important element of the building.

5.5 Overall, these works amount to a notable enhancement to the character of spaces reinstating the building's original flooring and character.

5.6 Lighting proposals for the grade II listed dwelling can be summarised as:

- Retention of existing and introduction of a small number of additional downlights to the lower ground floor area. Ceilings are modern plasterboard meaning there would be no loss of historic fabric to these spaces.
- Removal of inappropriate recessed ceiling downlights to the ground floor with new pendant and wall lights added providing a far enhanced character to this principal floor of the listed building.

- Removal of inappropriate recessed ceiling downlights to the first floor hallway and introduction of new pendant light in this location. Existing pendant lights to bedrooms retained and new wall lights added. Existing recessed downlights to bathroom retained. These works will lead to an enhanced character to this principal floor of the listed building.
- Existing pendant and recessed downlights retained to the second floor with new wall lights added to the bedrooms.
- New wall lights added to the staircase.

5.7 While retaining some of the existing downlights and adding a small number of additional examples, the lighting proposals taken as a whole are clearly beneficial with the removal of recessed downlights from principal spaces and the introduction of period appropriate pendant and wall lights throughout the building.

5.8 As identified in Section 3, where historic ceilings and cornices do survive in the building (specifically with regards to the main rooms at ground and first floor level), the ceilings have been overboarded with modern plasterboard at some point in the 20th century. This has concealed both the original lath and plaster ceilings and partly concealed/built over the cornices present (**Figures 20 and 21**). The reason why the ceilings were overboarded in the first place is not known but it is very likely that this was due to the failure of the lath and plaster ceilings with the key between the plaster and the laths failing (overboarding is a common response to this).

5.9 As a first step, it is intended to attempt to remove the overboarding to reveal the lath and plaster ceilings and full extent of the cornices, undertaking localised repairs and replacement of existing fabric where necessary. If this proves to be possible, this would result in a clear heritage benefit reinstating original ceiling heights and detailing to the main rooms at both ground and first floor levels. However, in acknowledgement of the level of damage present (particularly to the first floor level) it may not be possible to repair the ceilings. If that is the case, proposals seek to replace the existing ceilings with new lath and plaster and introduce new, period appropriate, cornices in place of the existing.

5.10 While the intention is to retain the existing, replacement cornices are specified in case replacement is required. These have been specifically chosen taking into account the design of the existing deteriorated features (plain run cornices) with a

clear understanding of the period and character of the building. Based on these factors, two cornices from Stevensons of Norwich are found to be appropriate RG02 and RG03. Both are well suited to an early 19th century building such as 51 Downshire Hill and replicate the simply plain run but overhanging character of the existing cornice. It is proposed to use the slightly larger (RG02) cornice for the ground floor living and sitting rooms with the slightly smaller (RG03) cornice for the first floor bedrooms and hallway to provide an appropriate character and sense of vertical diminishing hierarchy as was characteristic of buildings of this date and status.

5.11 All ceilings to the lower ground floor and second floor are plasterboard and proposed to either be retained or replaced in a like for like fashion.

5.12 New ceiling roses are also proposed in the following locations

- Ground floor hallway;
- Ground floor living and sitting rooms;
- First floor hallway; and
- First floor bedrooms.

5.13 The proposed ceiling roses have been chosen from the Stevensons of Norwich range to match both the existing and potentially required proposed cornices. These ceiling roses are of the same plain moulded design but with a larger diameter (CC25) for the ground and first floor rooms and a slightly small diameter (CC21) for the ground and first floor hallways.

5.14 Modern radiators of varying styles are present throughout the building and proposals seek to replace these with a coherent set of traditional cast iron radiators which are more in keeping with the character of the building. Minor changes to the location of some of the radiators are proposed but this is not capable of affecting the significance or special interest of the listed building and any new service routes needed would be carefully accommodated. The replacement of radiators as proposed was welcomed at pre-application stage.

5.15 A small number of existing windows within the side extension are proposed to be replaced (separately discussed below). Other windows are proposed to be retained with some glazing replaced where no historic glass is present. This specifically

includes three front elevation windows and (front door fanlight, first front window to side extension, small second floor front window) and four windows to the main rear elevations. Windows proposed to be retained as existing (ground and first floor front main windows) contain historic glass which is proposed to be preserved. The replacement of the modern single glazing from the windows as proposed would not result in the loss of any historic fabric of heritage value and would notably improve the acoustic and thermal performance of the existing windows while ensuring the retention of historic window frames. The acceptability of this element of the scheme was established at pre-application stage.

5.16 To the front of the listed building there is a current issue concerning bin storage meaning bins are often left in full view of the listed building's front elevation in a detracting manner. In order to address this, proposals seek to create a new ledge (steel grate) over the lower ground floor access stair where bins can be stored out of sight. Railings in this location which would need to be removed are not historic and the alteration would have a clear beneficial effect with regards to appreciating the front elevation of the building. This change was welcomed at pre-application stage and would result in only positive (albeit it limited) effects with regards to the significance of both the listed building and conservation area.

5.17 The majority of external proposals concern changes to the late 19th or early 20th century side extension. These changes, and their effect on significance are considered in the table below.

Proposed Change	Effect on Significance
Existing sealed off lightwell to be removed internally with its lead roof replaced with slate to match the existing	As shown on the plans, a small angled lightwell is present in the side extension at ground floor (does not survive to lower ground floor level) which has then been capped off at roof level with a lead roof, contrasting with the remaining slate roof present in this location. This lightwell was likely introduced at the same time as the side extension and provides further evidence that the side extension was added to introduce sanitary fittings into the house for the first time with the lightwell able to conceal the necessary pipework etc. The lightwell is no serving no functional

	<p>purpose and is not found to be a feature of any particular heritage merit and is certainly not of special interest in and of its own right. While the removal of this will cause the loss of some late 19th or early 20th century fabric, for the reasons identified, this is not found capable of resulting in any harm to the significance of the grade II listed building.</p> <p>Proposals to re-finish the roof in consistent slate are positive providing a more coherent finish to this part of the roof structure of the listed building.</p>
Redundant UPVC rain water goods removed and rationalised with new rain water goods proposed in cast iron	The rationalisation of rain water goods and replacement of poor quality UPVC fittings with traditional cast iron represents a clear visual enhancement and therefore amounts to a heritage benefit to both the listed building and conservation area. These works were welcomed as part of the pre-application discussions.
Replacement of an existing ground floor rear window within the side extension with a set of French doors	The proposals seek to replace the sash window with a new set of French doors of the same width. This change was deemed to be appropriate at pre-application stage with the officer concluding " <i>the window sits within a later extension to the building and has little historic value</i> ".
Small blocked first floor window to the rear to be removed and replaced with a new window of in keeping scale and design	A small blocked window is present to the rear of the side extension serving the first floor level. Proposals seek to remove this window and reinstate a new timber four over four pane double hung sash which better relates both to the character of the existing building and the later date of this extension.
Refinishing of all brickwork portions of the side extension's rear elevation with render	At present a mix of brickwork and render is present to the rear elevation of the side extension. As a result of the various changes discussed above which would further create an ad hoc character to existing brickwork, proposals seek to refinish the rear elevation in render, providing a consistent character

	with the rear elevation of the main building and the existing lower ground floor part of the side extension.
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Lower Ground Floor Proposals

- 5.18** Aside from those works discussed above changes to the lower ground floor primarily relate to alterations within the later 19th or early 20th century side extension. In this location various partitions and the existing WC are proposed to be removed to create a smaller boiler room, a new study and a re-worked store room. These partitions are modern and of no heritage value either in terms of their inherent fabric or plan form. As such, the changes proposed would not affect the significance or special interest of the listed building in any way.
- 5.19** Within the original core of the house changes include the opening of the rear room fire place and introduction of a period appropriate fire surround and hearth in this location. These works will restore an appropriate traditional character to this space and reinstate visual prominence to the chimney breast. In response to the lower ground floor location of this chimney breast, any fire surround proposed will be suited to both the date of the building but also the ancillary character of this service level so to maintain an appropriate hierarchy of spaces.
- 5.20** Also within the historic core of the building, it is proposed to replace an existing modern set of double flat doors from the hall into the kitchen. These are clearly not original and not well suited to the character of the building due to their scale and form. Proposals seek to replace these with a slightly narrower set of glazed double doors. While still a deviation from the original configuration, the narrowing of the opening and use of a more appropriate style of door is beneficial.
- 5.21** The final change to the lower ground floor is a positive one with the removal of a partition of brick windows and solid door (dating to 2007) which are proposed to be replaced with glazed windows and doors. The steel framed fenestration proposed is represents a far higher quality arrangement than the existing and as a result, while still contemporary in design, better suits the character of the grade II listed building while maintaining a clear visual difference between old and new.

Ground Floor Proposals

- 5.22** At ground floor level (aside from those changes discussed above) are relatively minor and do not include any notable changes to plan form or historic fabric.
- 5.23** A number of these changes would have neutral effects with regards to the significance of the listed building, for example the re-handing and/or reversing of a number of doors (the front door, door to the rear main room and door to the proposed powder room). In these circumstances the existing doors are proposed to be retained avoiding any loss of fabric and the minor changes to swings etc. will have no bearing on the significance of the grade II listed building or the conservation area (specifically with regards to the front door).
- 5.24** Another neutral change relates to the existing ground floor WC in the side extension where proposals seek to remove the existing sanitary fittings and convert this space into a small boot and coat room with the door to the space removed. As identified in the preceding section, this part of the building dates from 1893 and 1912 and as such is a later addition to the building. While the door and architrave are likely contemporary with its construction (i.e. late 19th or early 20th century in date), these features are not of any special interest in and of their own right and the removal of the door and architrave (creating open access into the space) would not cause any harm to the significance of the listed building. The minor change would also have no effect on the plan form of the original dwelling and no material effect on the plan form of the extension with the partition wall retained in full.
- 5.25** The final change considered to have a neutral effect on the significance of the listed building is the conversion of the rear part of the side extension from an office into a powder room. Aside from external alterations (discussed above) the physical changes to this space include the introduction of new sanitary fittings and associated services etc. This later part of the building is found to be capable of accepting these minor changes without affecting significance all new services required for the bathroom would be carefully accommodated within the building to avoid any detrimental effect on fabric or character.
- 5.26** Other changes at this level are wholly positive with regards to the significance and special interest of the grade II listed building and can be summarised as:
- The removal of out of keeping modern fire surrounds from both the front and rear rooms and introduction of period appropriate fire surrounds to both

chimney breasts. These works would better reveal the character of the ground floor principal rooms and reinstate an appropriate internal character and visual prominence to the chimney breasts; and

- The reinstatement of a historic opening between the rear sitting room and new powder room which is currently blocked with modern joinery. While a minor change this would reinstate historic circulation patterns within the building having a minor positive effect.

First Floor Proposals

5.27 At first floor level the main changes (aside from those building wide and external changes discussed above) can be summarised as:

- Opening up of both the front and rear room fireplaces (currently both sealed over) and introduction of period appropriate fire surrounds to both chimney breasts. These works would better reveal the character of the first floor and reinstate visual prominence to the chimney breasts;
- The removal of the modern infill plasterboard either side of the rear room's chimney breast which currently conceal the projection of this important feature. Removing this modern fabric will reinstate the historic proportions of this room and reinstate prominence to the chimney breast;
- The removal of modern in built joinery wardrobes from both bedrooms and introduction of new appropriately designed and scaled (stopping short of the ceiling) wardrobes either side of both rooms' chimney breasts. These works would to better reveal the plan form and proportions of these spaces; and
- The re-handing of the door to the rear room would have no effect on heritage values.

5.28 These works are found to be wholly beneficial and capable of better revealing the architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed building through introduction of period appropriate features and restoration of lost elements of plan form.

Second Floor Proposals

5.29 At second floor proposals (aside from those changes discussed above) seek to create a more functional residential layout without extending the side extension

upwards (as this element of the pre-application submission was resisted by the council). In order to create the more functional layout, the existing bathroom and its associated partition (which is particularly small but also occupies a large portion of landing) is proposed to be removed and the rear bedroom converted into a bathroom.

- 5.30** The existing bathroom in and of itself is not of any value and the removal of the modern bathroom fittings would not result in any effect on the heritage significance of the building. While the partition itself may be of some age (the door is modern), it is likely that the introduction of this bathroom is a later 19th or early 20th century change to the building, perhaps indicating the first introduction of sanitary wear into the structure, with the landing likely to have been left open, as per the arrangement at first floor level. The loss of a small portion of historic fabric and the minor change to plan form in this location would not, result in any detrimental effect on the significance of the listed building as a whole and enhances the functionality of the listed building freeing up additional floorspace at this level.
- 5.31** The new bathroom has been carefully considered to ensure that the character of the space would be preserved with the new freestanding bath proposed to celebrate and draw attention to the retained late 19th century fire surround. All new services required for the bathroom would be carefully accommodated within the building to avoid any detrimental effect on fabric or character.
- 5.32** Other minor changes at this level internally include the removal of modern built in wardrobes and the introduction of new built in joinery cupboards as required. Importantly, the later 19th century fire surrounds present to this part of the building will be retained and the new joinery proposed would not prohibit views of or obstruct the chimney breasts which would remain the prominent feature of the rooms.

Summary and Policy Compliance

- 5.33** The proposed development is based on an understanding of the character of 51 Downshire Hill, its historic development and significance. The proposed development has been informed by this alongside desk based research and on-site

assessment of surviving historic fabric with the proposals being specifically designed to ensure the continued viable use of the building as a dwelling in the 21st century while being sensitive to, and where possible, enhancing the significance of the assets.

5.34 As identified above, the proposals are found to entirely preserve the significance of the assets identified. Indeed, various elements result in enhancements to the significance of the listed building as follows:

- Restoration of original floors including the staircase risers and treads;
- Improvements to lighting and radiators;
- Reinstatement of fire surrounds, lath and plaster ceilings, cornices and ceiling roses suited to the character and period of the property;
- Introduction of a bin store area to avoid bins being left in front of the main house;
- Rationalisation of rain water goods and replacement of existing UPVC elements with cast iron; and
- Various works which better reveal the historic proportions of rooms and spaces within the listed building.

5.35 As such, it is the findings of this report that the proposed works would fall outside of the remit of paragraphs 207-208 of the NPPF insofar as they will not result in any harm to, or loss of significance. There would be preservation for the purposes of Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

5.36 The proposals are also found to accord with the following local planning policies:

- **Policy D1 Design:** In accordance with the requirements of this policy, the proposed development is of a high quality design that has been designed to respect and preserve the historic environment and identified heritage assets.
- **Policy D2 Heritage:** The proposals would preserve and enhance the significance of both the listed building and conservation area, avoiding harm, and be entirely in accordance with the various components of this policy.
- **London Plan Policy HC1:** In accordance with the requirements of this policy, the proposed development would conserve the significance of the

identified heritage assets by being sympathetic to their significance and appreciation within their surroundings.

6. Conclusions

6.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment presents an assessment of significance of 51 Downshire Hill and is followed by an appraisal of the effects of the proposals upon these heritage assets with consideration given to local and national policy and guidance.

6.2 51 Downshire Hill is a grade II listed building (UID: 1078269) which was designated in 1974 alongside its semi-detached pair, no.50, and attached area walls and railings. While also located in the Hampstead Conservation Area, as noted above, the primarily internal nature of the proposals means that the significance of this heritage asset (and other listed buildings located near to the site) would not be affected and have been scoped out of this assessment).

6.3 As identified in the Introduction, proposals at 51 Downshire Hill concern the general refurbishment of the grade II listed building with minor changes as follows:

- Introduction of replacement lighting and radiators and repairs and replacement of ceilings and cornices as required.
- Replacement of single glazing to existing windows with Historglass Mono laminate.
- Creation of a new bin storage area to the front of the building.
- Various changes to the later side extension including removal of the redundant sealed lightwell, rationalisation of rainwater goods, changes to fenestration and rendering of brickwork.
- Minor changes to the plan form of the building.
- The replacement of and introduction of period appropriate fire surrounds to the lower ground, ground and first floors of the building.

6.4 Section 5 of this report presents an assessment of the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the identified heritage assets and concludes that while amounting to physical alterations to the grade II listed building and in some cases resulting in unavoidable loss of historic and original fabric (replacement of ceilings and cornices), no harm to the significance of the listed building, or conservation area) would be caused. Indeed, when considered holistically taking into account the

benefits secured by the application (as outlined in paragraph 5.32), it is clear that the proposals would result in an enhancement to the significance of the grade II listed 51 Downshire Hill.

6.5

In summary, the proposed works to the grade II listed building and within the conservation area are considered to be proportionate and compliant with relevant policies contained within Section 16 of the NPPF and relevant local planning policy and guidance. There would be preservation for the purpose of the decision maker's duty under sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

Appendix 1

Scale of Harm (HCUK, 2019)

The table below has been developed by HCUK Group (2019) based on current national policy and guidance. It is intended as simple and effect way to better define harm and the implications of that finding on heritage significance. It reflects the need to be clear about the categories of harm, and the extent of harm within those categories, to designated heritage assets (NPPF, paragraphs 207 and 208, and guidance on NPPG).⁷

Scale of Harm	
Total Loss	Total removal of the significance of the designated heritage asset.
Substantial Harm	Serious harm that would drain away or vitiate the significance of the designated heritage asset
Less than Substantial Harm	High level harm that could be serious, but not so serious as to vitiate or drain away the significance of the designated heritage asset.
	Medium level harm, not necessarily serious to the significance of the designated heritage asset, but enough to be described as significant, noticeable, or material.
	Low level harm that does not seriously affect the significance of the designated heritage asset.

HCUK, 2019

⁷ See NPPG 2019: "Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated." Paragraph 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723.

Standard Sources

<https://maps.nls.uk>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

www.heritagegateway.org.uk

<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>

www.history.ac.uk/victoria-county-history

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition). Historic England (2017 edition)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990

National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

National Planning Practice Guidance, 2019

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, Historic England (2008)