

14 Templewood Avenue, London, NW3 7XA

Roof – Heritage Statement

Following on from listed building consent (ref: 2024/3436/L)

April 2025

The existing listed building consent (ref: 2024/34/36/L) presented a method to replace and salvage existing historic roof tiles where possible. The proposal was as follows:

'Removal, repair and replacement of roof and dormer finishes. Repair and replacement of rainwater goods. Installation of roof, ceiling and dormer insulation and vapour control membrane and associated works including chimney repairs, repair/replacement of damaged timber and repair of water damaged internal finishes. Installation of replacement dormer windows.'

However, following the stripping of the roof, as per the approved methodology (ref: 2024/3436/L), it is now apparent that it is not possible or practical to salvage any of the existing tiles.

Physical examination on site shows that the roofing tiles are beyond salvage and are no longer fit for purpose. Most of the tiles removed were in advanced state of decay, broken or crumbled when moved as a result of spalling. Those salvaged show further signs of decay, erosion and damage as well as nail fatigue (see photographs in Appendix 1). If the tiles are re-fixed to the roof, there will be further damage as they are frail, but more importantly, it is obvious that they will continue to decay and place the listed building at grave risk of damage to the fabric. The ageing and decay process does not, of course, stop. The fact that so many of the tiles are in appalling and damaged condition indicates that the remainder will follow; and, due to the greater extremes of climate we are now experiencing, it is likely that such decay will accelerate.

Refer to a roofing expert report and executive summary prepared by RAM Building Consultancy that confirms and importantly evidence this view/ assessment. The roof as a whole has been identified to be in Bad¹ condition and Priority Grade 1².

Considerable resources have already been wasted on trying to salvage tiles that have some degree of integrity; but they may be up to 115 years old, considerably beyond the expected life of such tiles, and have been identified by RAM Building Consultancy as machine made. Almost every roof tile has damage to the continuous nib (a weak detail) and signs of erosion and decay to the underside. The continuous nib, a wayward and ineffective detail, was not adopted by the tiling industry because of its tendency to accelerate decay. A standard roofing tile either has dual nibs or holes for fixing by nails; either option allows a flow of air to ventilate the underside and the overlap on gauge of the tiles, thus dispelling moisture and reducing the risk of freeze-thaw cycle damage and also reducing the risk of rot to substrate timber. The roof at Templewood Avenue has further defective detailing by the use of feather-edge close-lapped boards used as sarking with the continuous nib hooked over the thick part

¹ Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure

² Urgent work that will prevent immediate closure of premises and/or address an immediate high risk to the health and safety of occupants and/or remedy a serious breach of legislation.

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of the wedge on the feather edge boards, without nailing. Thus, there is no ventilation either above or below the sarking, and there is no sound means of retaining the tiles as the boarding distorts as it ages or the nibs break. The varying degree of damage to the nibs on all tiles has compromised their ability to be held in position. The tiles are not of fine quality and have thus been subject to erosion and decay with age from above and underneath.

The feather-edge boarding used as sarking, is a cheap detail to avoid the cost of efficient breathable sarking and battens, has signs and manifestation of decay and rot both in the boards and the rafters due to poor detailing and lack of ventilation. There are serious and advanced manifestations of decay to structural members which are hazardous and must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The rafters, hips and other members have been relieved of the weight of tiles but cannot safely be loaded again without substantial repairs. Timber "like-for-like" splicing and jointing will be carried out where possible (which, of course do not need Listed Building Consent) by appropriate and experienced specialist carpenters. The intention is to utilise traditional methods with a minimum of bolts and screws, as seen in old carpentry work. This will be carried out by skilled craftsmen carpenters, in situ, being a pragmatic and effective method of repair which preserves the original structural regime and avoids completely dismantling and removing substantial parts of the timber roof structure. The engineer's report and details to follow.

The tiling detail cannot now be repeated in the roof reconditioning without incurring the same defects and damage. The new, approved by condition, tiles have the standard fixings intended for battens on sarking with insulation and vapour barrier and allowing ventilation to prolong and secure the fabric. It is inconceivable that tiles in a state of decay and erosion with a very limited life, could be replaced on the roof.

It is essential that the roof is covered as soon as possible to weather-proof the house and allow the interiors to be completed and is thus on a critical path. This application needs to be decided urgently to ensure that the fabric is not threatened and that the temporary roof is removed as soon as possible.

As per the submitted methodology, the existing tiles, in need of replacing, are available for inspection while the work continues, to secure the roof using all new approved tiles.

Should the listed building application be refused, and re-use of old tiles is insisted upon, the owner reserves the right to seek indemnification from the council for the inevitable damage that will occur as old roofing tiles continue to decay, and to take whatever further action may be deemed appropriate and expedient.

Signed:

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Stephen Levrant RIBA, AA Dip, FRSA, Dip Cons (AA), IHBC, ACArch

Dated: 30th April 2025



Appendix 1: Photographs of existing roofing tiles

Figure 1: Attempted salvaged roof tiles on site. Though these roof tiles did not break on removal, on closer inspection, the tiles have evidence of decay and are considered beyond salvage and not fit for purpose (April 2025).



Figure 2: Attempted salvaged roof tile showing staining, discolouring, spalling and corner breaks (April 2025).



Figure 3: Attempted salvaged roof tile showing breaks in the nib detail (April 2025).





Figure 4: Attempted salvaged roof tile showing staining, discolouring and spalling. As noted, these tiles are decaying and will continue to decay if reused (April 2025).



Figure 5: Existing roof tiles considered damaged and unsalvageable on site. The tiles broke on removal and whilst in situ on the roof (April 2025).



Figure 6: Existing damaged roof tiles showing breaks, nib breakage, delamination, discolouring and staining (April 2025).



Figure 7: Existing damaged roof tiles showing nib breakage, discolouring, and spalling (April 2025).



Figure 8: Evidence of pieces of roof tile as a result of breakage and spalling, as well as damaged roof tiles in situ (April 2025).