

Heritage Statement

5 Wedderburn Road, Hampstead

Introduction

1. This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Heritage Collective on behalf of and in consultation with Stiff + Trevillion Architects. It accompanies planning a listed building consent application for the like-for-like replacement of some of the original steel framed windows.

The subject heritage asset

2. Nº 5 Wedderburn Road is a detached house that is listed grade II. It dates from 1886-7 and it was designed by the architect Horace Field, as part of a group of houses that take up much of the south side of the small street block: Nºs 1; 3; 7; 9; 11 and 13. The building also falls in the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area, but the character and appearance of the area will not be affected by the proposed window replacement.

Background to the application

3. Planning permission and listed building consent for a garden room extension and alterations to the house was granted on 15 July 2013 (Refs: 2013/2672/L & 2013/2437/P). The applications were accompanied by a Heritage Statement prepared by the author of this report.
4. Further investigation has revealed that the existing windows are in a poor state of repair. Some of the frames have been damaged by rust and in some instances the opening casements have become so warped that they no longer close properly. It is proposed that these are replaced like-for-like by specialist window furnishers.

Purpose and scope of the statement

5. This statement deals with the effects on the heritage significance, or special interest, of the listed building. It should be read alongside the application drawings, the Photo Survey and the Design and Access Statement, as well as the specification drawings prepared by Clement Windows.
6. The purpose of this document is twofold:
 - i. Firstly, to provide the London Borough of Camden (LBC) with sufficient information about the significance of the heritage asset to determine the application, in accordance with paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 - ii. Secondly, to provide LBC with reasoned justification as to why the proposed window replacement is acceptable in this instance.

Assessment of significance

7. The special interest, or heritage significance, of Nº 5 Wedderburn Road is attributable to its architectural and historic interest. In essence, the building is a reasonably well preserved example of the 'Wrenaissance' movement and it provides physical evidence of this style, in particular so alongside the neighbouring contemporary buildings by the same architect(s) on the south side of Wedderburn Road.
8. The exterior displays a degree of architectural quality, although it is not a remarkably accomplished design, and much less so than Nash's The Three Gables, which it was based upon. It is nevertheless an altogether pleasant example of its style and age, and all the more so in the context of the neighbouring contemporary group, the design of which is credited to Horace Field.
9. The plan form has survived relatively well, although the internal layout does not appear to have been a critical consideration in the overall design, and it was certainly subservient to the exterior – if not to some extent dictated by the external form. There are some reasonably good features, such as the main staircase and some fireplaces, although the building cannot be said to possess particularly fine or significant features.

10. In terms of its historic significance, the house is not a particularly good or leading example of the Wrenaissance movement; indeed only one of several authors cites it is an example of Field's work. In any event, Field was not a leading exponent of the movement, although he did become reasonably well known as a late Victorian/Edwardian architect and it is an example of Field's early work. There is nevertheless substantive evidence to suggest that Edwin E Moore played some role as an architect. There is a degree of historic interest by virtue of association with Field, but such associative interest is at least to some extent tangential.
11. Finally, the house is of some historic interest as part of the original development of this part of Hampstead in the late 19th century. It is recognisable as a historic house and it makes a valuable contribution to the group it forms part of and, more generally, the character of this part of the street. Because of the street morphology and its deeply set back position, the building is recessive rather than imposing.

Impact assessment

12. In order to understand the impact of the proposed like-for-like window replacement, it is necessary to first understand the way in which the windows contribute to the significance of the house.
13. The style of the house, and the use of stone mullioned windows, would have dictated the use of steel casements with multi-pane leaded lights. Unlike sash windows, these late Victorian steel casements would not have been made by artisan workmen, but rather they would have been manufactured in a factory. Although they would have been made bespoke, with the specifications dictated by the dimensions and materials of the window openings, the process would have been industrialised.
14. That is in contrast with, for example, an elegant Georgian sash or fanlight with delicate detailing and skilfully slim glazing bars, built into the opening. The steel casements therefore do not contain evidence of craftsmanship or skills which have now become rare or lost. In short, the industrially manufactured steel windows do not have the same inherent quality, or evidential value.

15. The windows were, however, designed to complement the style of the building and to give a particular character, and that is important. It includes the attention paid to detailing, such as ironmongery and the way in which the frames were designed to fit within either their stone or timber surrounds. This also includes the particular appearance that multi-pane leaded windows give, with some natural variation in the plane of each pane so that there is an 'organic' feel that is impossible to replicate by applying lead strips to larger panes of sheet glass, which tends to appear flat and unconvincing.
16. Turning then to the proposed replacement windows, these will be made up of 3mm or 4mm single glazed glass panes set in genuine 8mm oval leads, with windows directly fixed to the openings. The company, Clement Windows, is a specialist in bespoke reproduction windows for listed buildings. The windows will be purpose made using steel sections and window furniture that replicate the original window designs. Indeed Clement Windows is capable of achieving a precise geometric match of windows on very sensitive single glazed historic replacement projects such as this.
17. When assessing the impacts, it is also relevant to consider the issue of the lifespan of the original windows. These have lasted nearly 130 years, although the inevitable consequence of annual seasonal condensation damp¹ over this period has taken its toll. Even if the windows were not replaced now as part of the present refurbishment, they would reach the end of their useful life and require replacement in the near future in any event. It is perhaps worth noting that the new windows can be treated with hot dip galvanising to help prevent corrosion in the future, as a measure to ensure longevity.
18. Taking all factors into account, it is clear that the original steel windows in this instance do not have the same evidential value as that of finely detailed built-in sashes, although they do form part of the design of the building, down to the details of ironmongery and fixing details. These can be reproduced like-for-like by a specialist manufacturer to ensure that the integrity of the building is not compromised, whilst assuring long lasting, serviceable windows that are true to the original design in every detail.

¹ The stone transoms were designed with drip troughs internally, which discharges externally, in anticipation of the inevitable condensation resulting from the combined effect of steel casements and single glazing.

19. Although the replacement of windows on listed buildings is not normally considered acceptable, in this instance there is sufficient justification and the replacements will demonstrably retain the integrity of the building. For these reasons it is respectfully submitted that the application be granted in this instance.

Ignus Froneman 20.02.2014