Donald Insall Associates

University College of London, Cruciform Building

A Short Historic Building Report (Assessment of Significance of Basement)

Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

University College London, Cruciform Building, Gower Street, London

A Short Historic Building Report (Assessment of Significance of Basement)

For University College London

Checked by: PR

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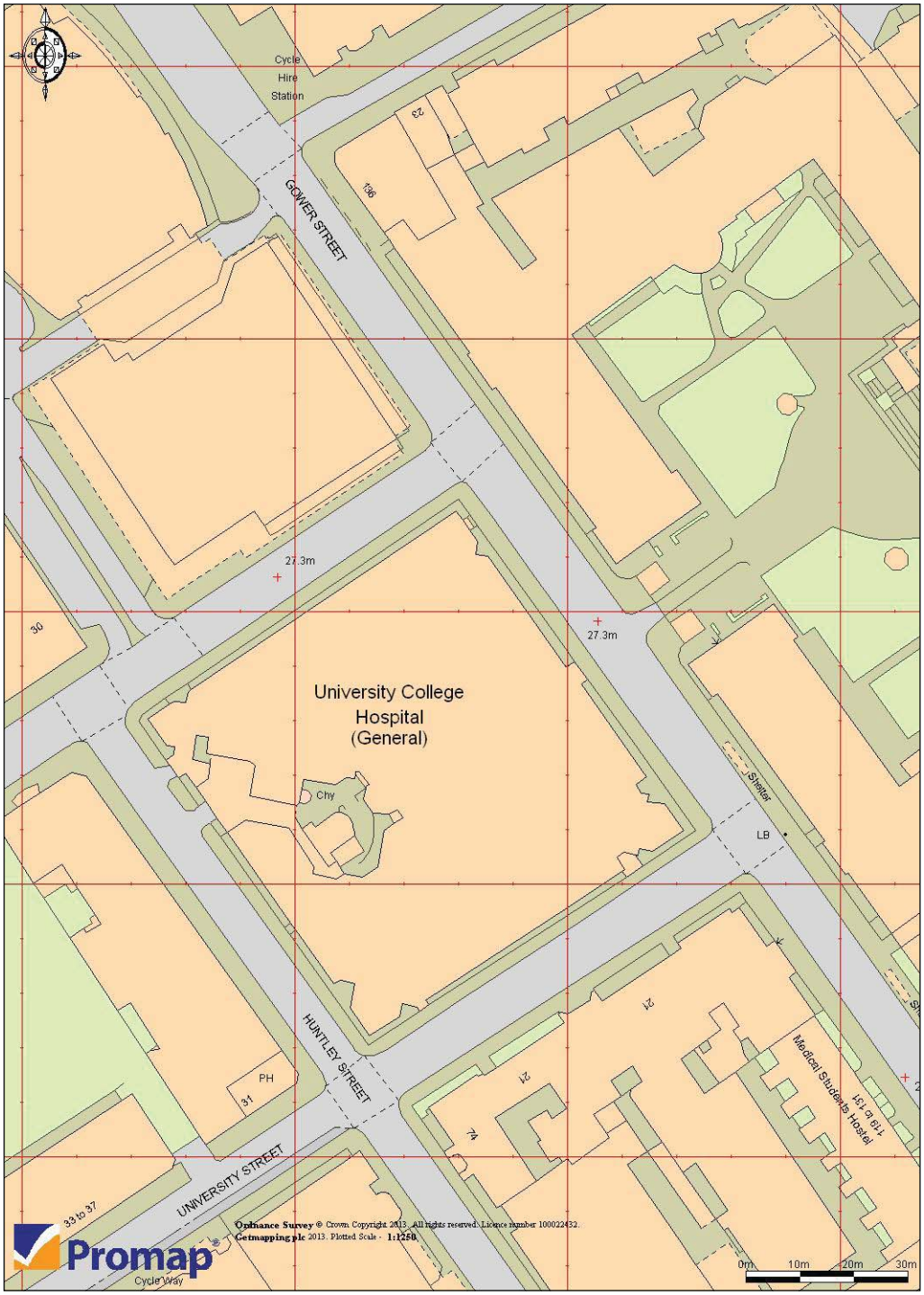

Ordnance Survey map with the site marked in red.
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1.0 Introduction

This short report has been commissioned to explain the significance of historic features which have been uncovered in the basement of the Cruciform Building, University Street, London during works following the granting of listed building consent for demolition works under reference 2012/6521/P. It is based on primary and secondary historical research and a visual inspection carried out by Helen Ensor of Donald Insall Associates in October 2013.

2.0 Background

The Cruciform Building is a four-storey (plus attics and basement) hospital block designed by Alfred Waterhouse and his son Paul. It was built between 1897 and 1906 and is listed Grade II and is located in the London Borough of Camden's Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The list description is attached as Appendix I.

Alterations to listed buildings require listed building consent, in addition to the usual requirement for planning permission. Planning permission and listed building consent to refurbish and convert the building for University College London's continued use was granted on 11 February 2013 (reference 2012/6521/P and 2012/6522/L).

Condition 7 of the listed building consent states:

Any hidden historic features which are revealed during the course of the works shall be retained in situ, work suspended in the relevant area of the building and the Council as Planning Authority notified immediately. Provision shall be made for their retention or salvage and/ or recording.

A copy of the listed building consent decision is attached as Appendix II.

Following the commencement of opening up and demolition works in line with the grant of listed building consent, several features of historic interest have been uncovered. In order to discharge Condition 7 we have been asked to outline the significance of what has been uncovered, suggest an appropriate strategy in terms of the requirement for 'retention or salvage and /or recording' (as per the wording of the condition) and assess the significance of the architectural features which have been uncovered in the context of the upper floors of the building as well as more widely in the context of the survival of basement features in other buildings by Waterhouse.

Whilst there are some features of limited significance (see below for descriptions) which have been uncovered, it should be noted that listed building consent has been granted for the demolition works as shown on the drawings and there is no provision in the 1990 Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act to informally rescind consent. Equally, it is not possible to add further restrictive conditions after a decision notice has been issued. It is therefore important for all parties to approach the discharge of Condition 7 of the listed building consent in the light of the consented scheme.

3.0 An Outline History of the Cruciform Building

The first University College Hospital building was constructed in 1833. This building was replaced in 1896-1906 by the current building designed by Alfred Waterhouse with his son Paul. It was his last major commission and was opened the year after his death.

Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1905) was the son of Quaker parents from Liverpool and set up his first architectural practice in 1853 in Manchester. Whilst his first commissions were domestic, he became increasingly well known for his public buildings which he designed in a Gothic Revival style which came to symbolise the architecture of the age. In 1865 he moved his practice to London where his most important works were also public buildings and included the Royal Courts of Justice (1865), the Natural History Museum in South Kensington (1873-81) and the National Provincial Bank on Piccadilly (1892). He was one of the most successful architects of the Victorian period and a champion of the Gothic style which became the hallmark of late Victorian architecture.

Paul Waterhouse (1861-1924) joined his father's practice in 1891 and was elected President of the RIBA from 1921-23. He took over the practice after his father's death in 1905 and was responsible for completing the Cruciform building. He continued the practice's tradition of working on large scale public buildings although his style was a more simplified version of the Gothic tradition.

University College Hospital sits within this context as the last building to be designed by Alfred Waterhouse and perhaps one of the most radical in terms of its departure from the traditions of earlier 19th-century hospital planning and its plan form. The unusual shape of the building was drawn from newly emerging ideas of health and healing and influenced by the new medications and surgical procedures which were available at the end of the 19th century. In particular the long corridor wards with windows on both sides were intended to maximise light and ventilation and were a reaction to the Nightingale 'pavilion plan' which had dominated the thinking behind earlier hospital design. The materials were designed to be robust and hard wearing, easily cleaned and to maximise light within the building.

We have undertaken a review of the drawings held in the RIBA collection for the Cruciform building. However, this has not revealed any new or significant information, partly because some of the basement drawings are missing from the collection. Of those that remain most are of the drainage and heating in the sub-basement. The drawings are all signed by 'Alfred Waterhouse and Son'. After 1905 Paul Waterhouse oversaw the completion of the hospital to his father's designs and was involved in alterations to the layout of the building in 1926.

4.0 Significance of the Cruciform Building

The principal significance of the Cruciform building is as follows:

The plan form. Radical X-shaped plan provided an entirely new type of hospital layout and a reaction against prevailing hospital planning. Particularly effective on a restricted city centre site and provided the opportunity for interesting and unusual elevations.

Earliest example of the reaction against Nightingale 'pavilion planning' and radical new approach to hospital design which maintained principles of maximising light and ventilation but which limited vertical circulation and provided centralised service core.

Materials, exterior detail and degree to which many smaller details were architect-designed. Waterhouse's favoured materials (red brick, terracotta and glazed brick interiors), often chosen for their durability and utility as well as their appearance, are utilised here to excellent effect.

Impact on street scene. The radiating arms and irregular silhouette has a dramatic impact on the surrounding streets. The extreme ends of the arms appear as dramatic towers punctuating the corners of the site.

Authorship. As one of the last buildings by one of the giants of Victorian architecture.

Group value. With other buildings associated with the University College Hospital, and indeed the University College itself, which was founded on this site and occupied it continuously since 1833.

5.0 Context: survival of historic features elsewhere in the building and survival of basement features in other buildings by Waterhouse

5.1 Description of remains of historic features elsewhere in the building

As part of the research undertaken a site visit was made on 23 October 2013 to look at the ground and first floor and one of the stair compartments of the Cruciform building. There was very limited visual access to any of the areas away from the central circulation space as these are laboratories in use.

The main entrance from Gower Street contains arch-headed windows formed of glazed bricks which are laid in contrasting bands of cream and beige (as discovered in the basement) but with additional coloured glazed bricks in green. Tesserae floors remain, and the stair compartment is a grand series of interconnecting arches, all in glazed bricks with contrasting beige and cream bands but with another colour as well – either oxblood or green. All of the arches have additional detailing – roll mouldings, dentil courses, run-out stops, cornices made from corbelled glazed bricks etc. Whilst the materials (glazed brick) and broad colour scheme (beige and cream) are similar, there is a much greater level of detail, both in terms of the additional colours and the strikingly complex detailing. The basement is a much simplified version, without the additional colouring and detail, as would be expected.

Away from the stair compartment, the building has no remaining original detailing and is institutional in appearance with suspended ceilings and plasterboard walls.

5.2 Surviving basement features in other buildings by Waterhouse

The National Provincial Bank on Piccadilly is also by Waterhouse and was constructed in 1892-94. A recent survey by Donald Insall Associates has allowed us to draw comparisons in terms of the significance of the fabric which remains and the rate of survival.

The basement of that building has similarities with the Cruciform: the internal walls are also constructed of glazed brick (white in this case) and Waterhouse has used a series of arch-headed openings. Almost the entirety of this basement is still intact, whereas at least half of the basement of the Cruciform has already been lost. Again, the decoration in the basement of the bank is simpler than that further up (which is to be expected), but the glazed brickwork has largely not been plastered over and therefore survives much better.

6.0 Historic features within the basement

The following features of historic interest have been uncovered following the implementation of listed building consent. The significance classification is based on the following methodology:

The location of the feature in the hierarchy of the building. The more important the space as originally designed, the more important the feature will be in the building's hierarchy.

The degree to which the feature has been designed as an architectural statement integral to the building's design and execution.

The degree to which the feature has survived intact and undamaged.

It is clear from an examination of the ground and upper floors, and main public circulation spaces within the building as described above, that these would score most highly in terms of significance. The basement was always a functional and secondary space and, although it was not spared architectural embellishment (for example in the use of contrasting bands of beige and cream coloured glazed bricks), the treatment of these spaces is not as highly decorated as the public parts of the building. Bearing this in mind, the features are described below and a strategy for their treatment in line with condition 7 is outlined.

1. Four large cast iron columns and riveted cast iron supporting beams. These are considered to be of medium significance in the context of the building as a whole and will be retained in situ. The consented plan has been altered to ensure that they are not re-clad and will remain visible in the newly re-ordered space (plates 9, 10 and 11).

2. Two slender cast iron columns, which may have relocated from or which may relate to Paul Waterhouse's 1926 alterations. These are considered to be of low significance (as they are unlikely to have been part of the original design) and will be retained in situ. Whilst consent has already been granted for their removal, the consented plan has been altered to ensure that they are retained and will remain visible in the newly re-ordered space (plates 12 and 13).

3. Series of glazed brick arches set within glazed brick wall forming a corridor between the new library and study rooms. These are considered to be of low significance as the faces of the bricks have previously been damaged to accept a new plaster coat and the bricks themselves were of one colour rather than the contrasting bands. Due to the configuration of the book stacks and other furniture layout in this area it is recommended that these are photographically recorded before being carefully re-covered (plates 14 and 15).

4. Two further glazed brick arches set within a glazed brick wall leading into a separate room at the extreme end of one of the eastern Cruciform arm. This room retains part of its original ceiling and some original cornice. These arches are considered to be of medium significance as the brickwork consists of contrasting coloured bands of cream and beige and the faces are in good condition. Here it is recommended that the features are photographically recorded and the new plasterwork is stopped short

of the reveals of the arches so that they can still be appreciated. The lintels will not be raised but the design altered so that the arches are retained as found.

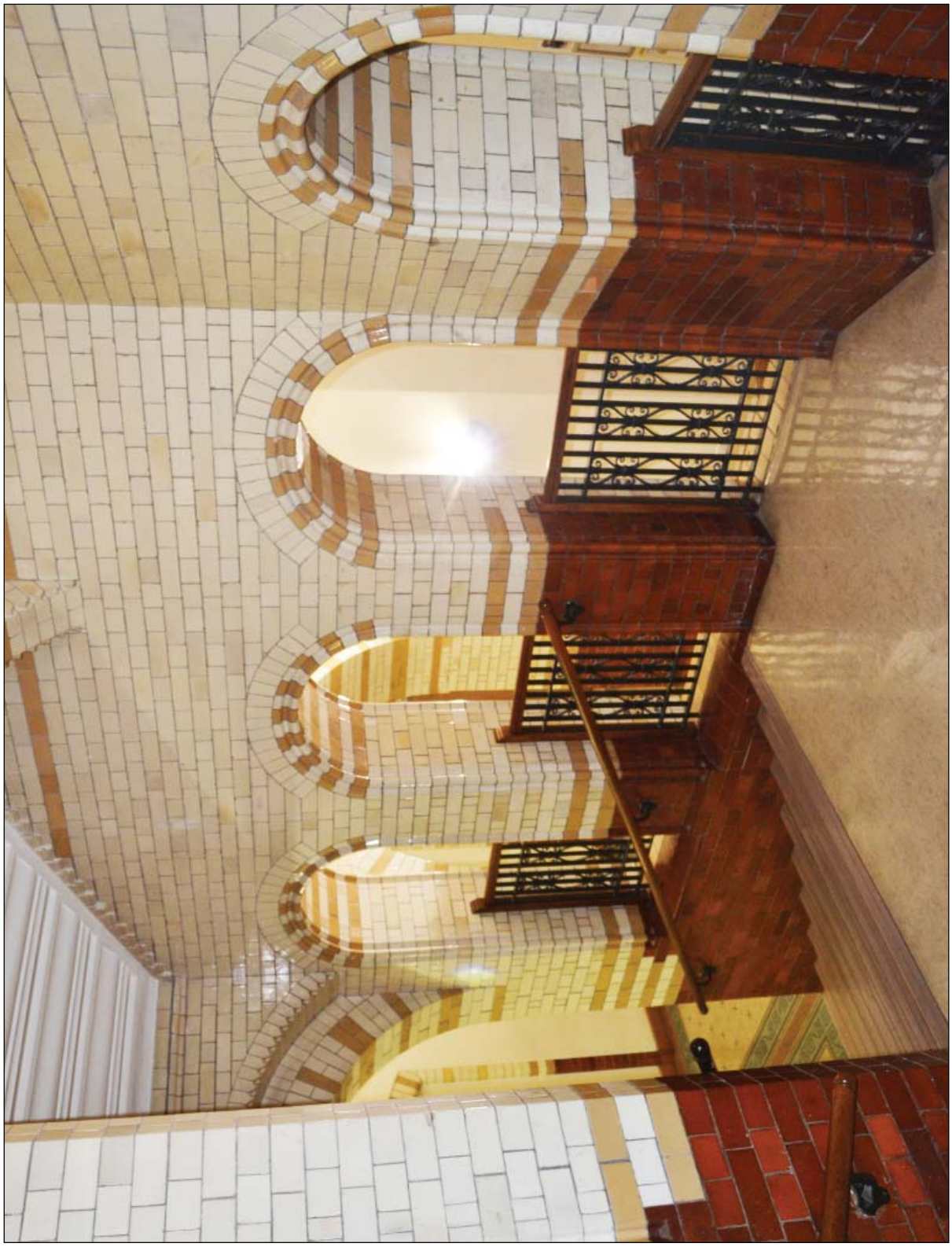
5. Two double height glazed brick arches into meeting room on the eastern side of the southern Cruciform arm. These are also of contrasting bands of cream and beige bricks but the faces are badly damaged due to previous application of a plaster coat. As a result these are considered to be of medium/low significance. This meeting room also contains an area of original ceiling and a small area of original cornice, albeit in a damaged condition. It is proposed to photographically record the arches and retain them in situ with the heads concealed above a suspended ceiling (plates 17, 18, 19 and 20).

6. A further area of walling constructed of glazed brick to the eastern side of the extreme of the northern Cruciform arm. This is considered to be of low significance as there is no evidence of arched openings and the bricks are in poor condition. It is proposed to photographically record this area before carefully dismantling, setting aside all salvageable bricks for re-use in works of making good elsewhere (plates 21 and 22).

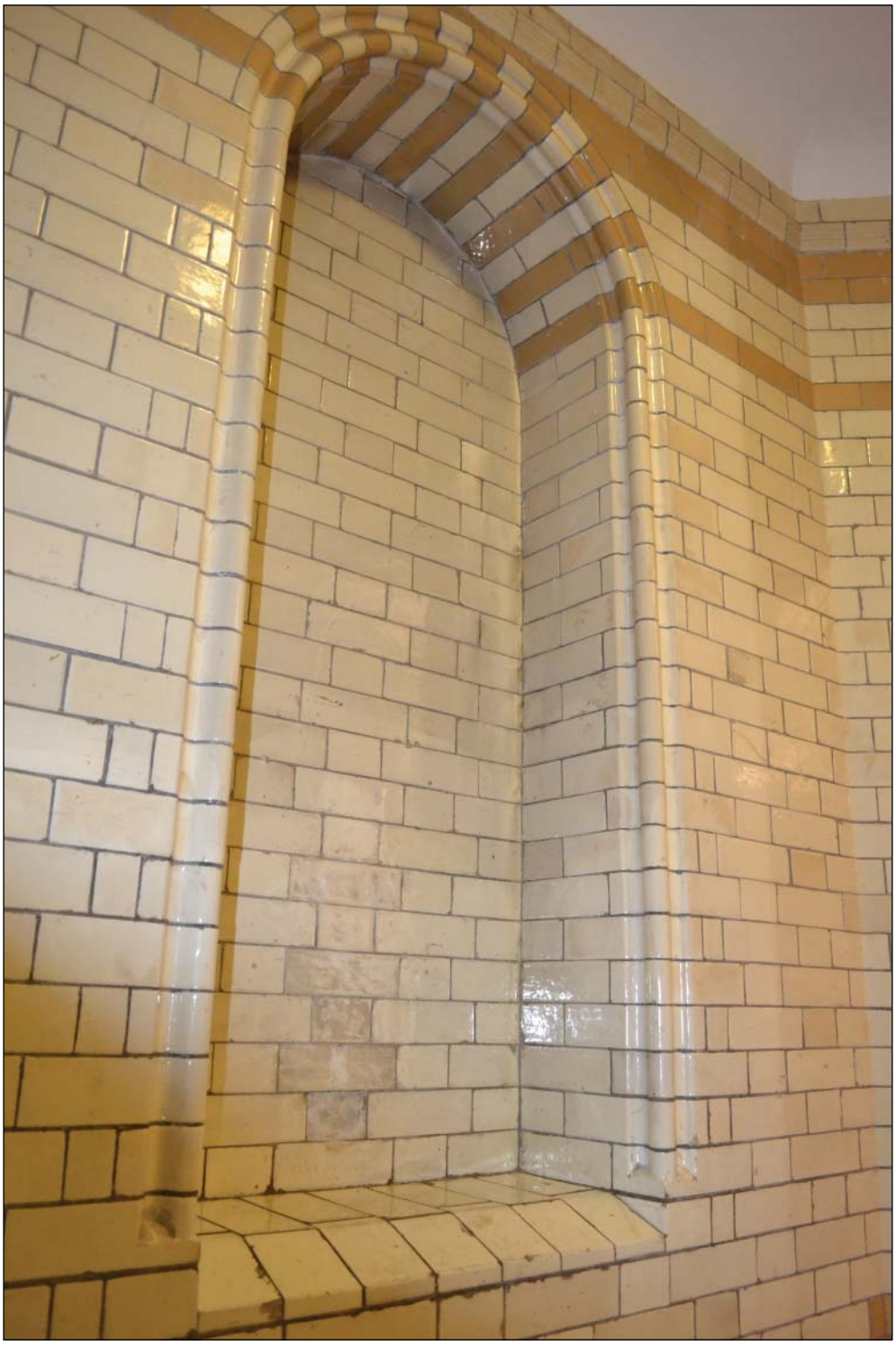
7.0 List of plates

1. Ground floor, showing glazed bricks in beige, cream and green
2. Stairs half landing between ground and first floors
3. Niche within stair compartment
4. Decorative roll mouldings typical of detailing within stair compartment
5. Series of arches within stair compartment
6. Series of decorated arches at first floor
7. Arch through to stairs, ground floor
8. Moulding detail, staircase [relates to section 6.0 above 'Historic features within the basement'
9. Large cast iron column
10. Large cast iron column base
11. Large cast iron column
12. Slender cast iron column
13. Slender cast iron column base
14. Glazed brick arch infilled
15. Glazed brick arch infilled
16. Damaged brick faces
17. Arches to room at extreme end of eastern cruciform arm
18. Arches to room at extreme end of eastern cruciform arm
19. Arches to room at extreme end of eastern cruciform arm
20. Arches to room at extreme end of eastern cruciform arm
21. Eastern side of the extreme of the northern Cruciform arm
22. Eastern side of the extreme of the northern Cruciform arm

1. Ground floor, showing glazed bricks in beige, cream and green



2. Photograph (0217) stairs half landing between ground and first floors



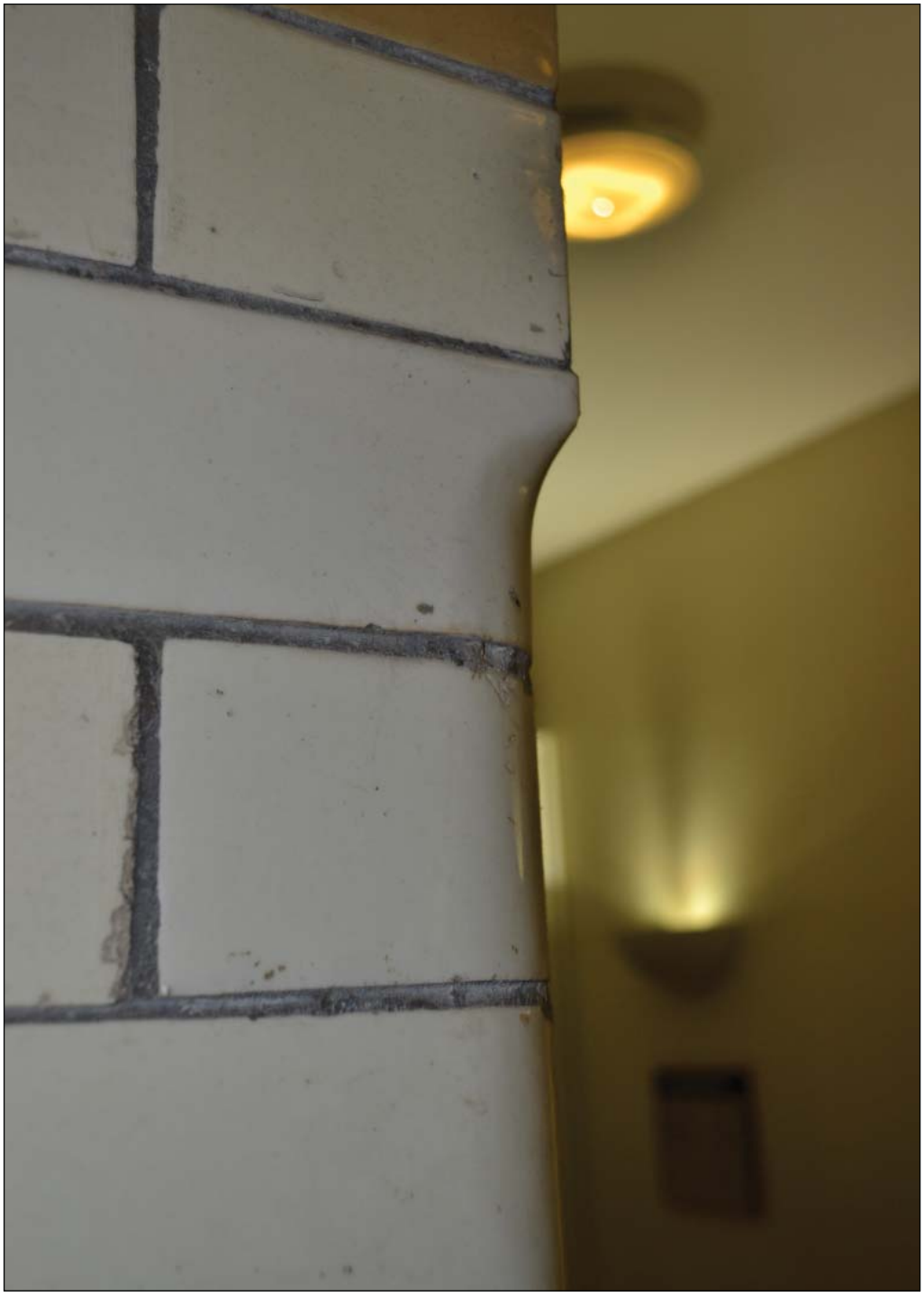
3. Niche within stair compartment

4. Decorative roll mouldings typical of detailing within stair compartment

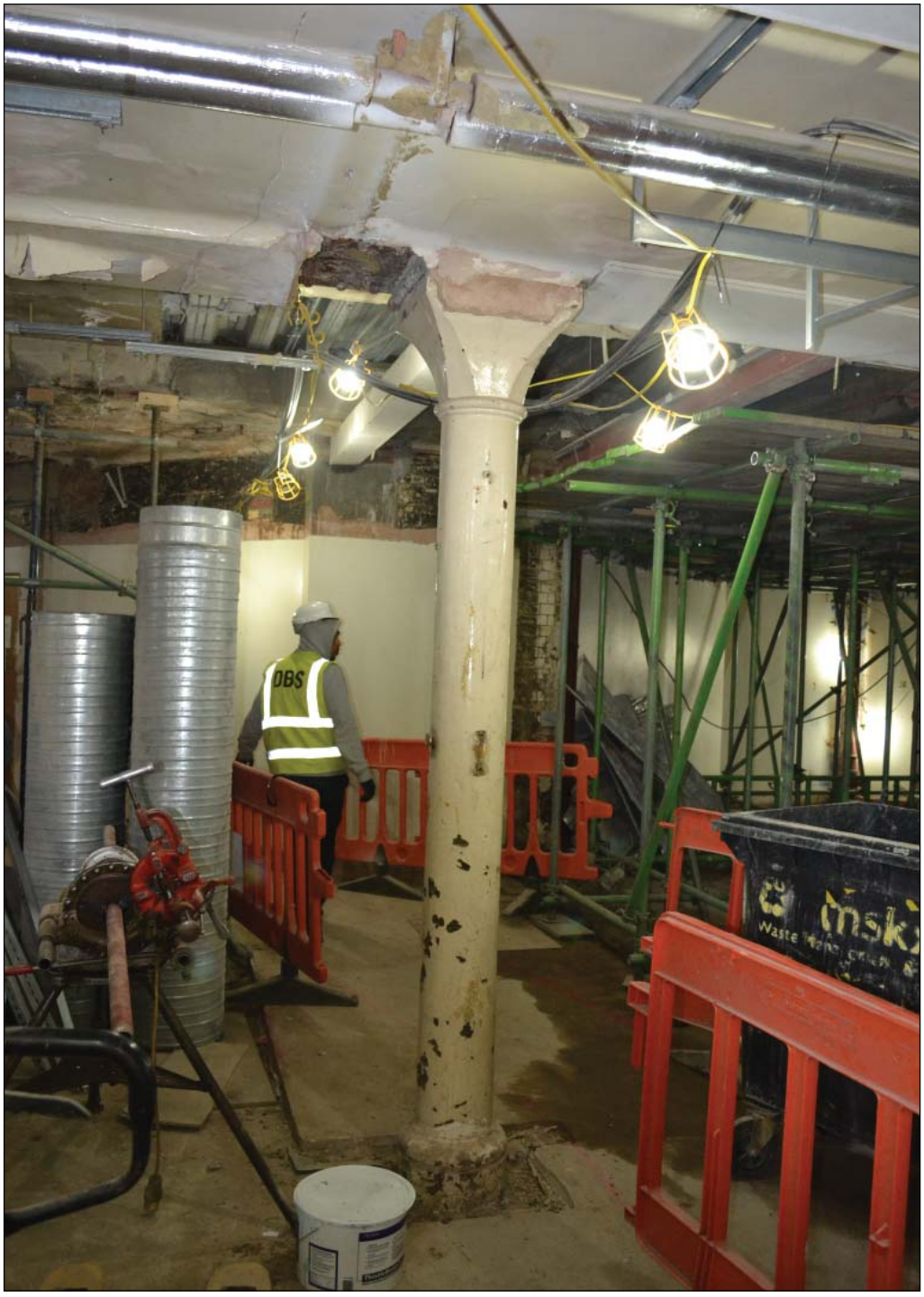
5. Series of arches within stair compartment

6. Series of decorated arches at first floor

7. Arch through to stairs, ground floor



8. Moulding detail, staircase [relates to section 6.0 above ‘Historic features within the basement’



9. 0121 large cast iron column

10. Large cast iron column base

11. 0124 large cast iron column

12. Slender cast iron column

13. Slender cast iron column base

14. Glazed brick arch infilled

15. Glazed brick arch infilled

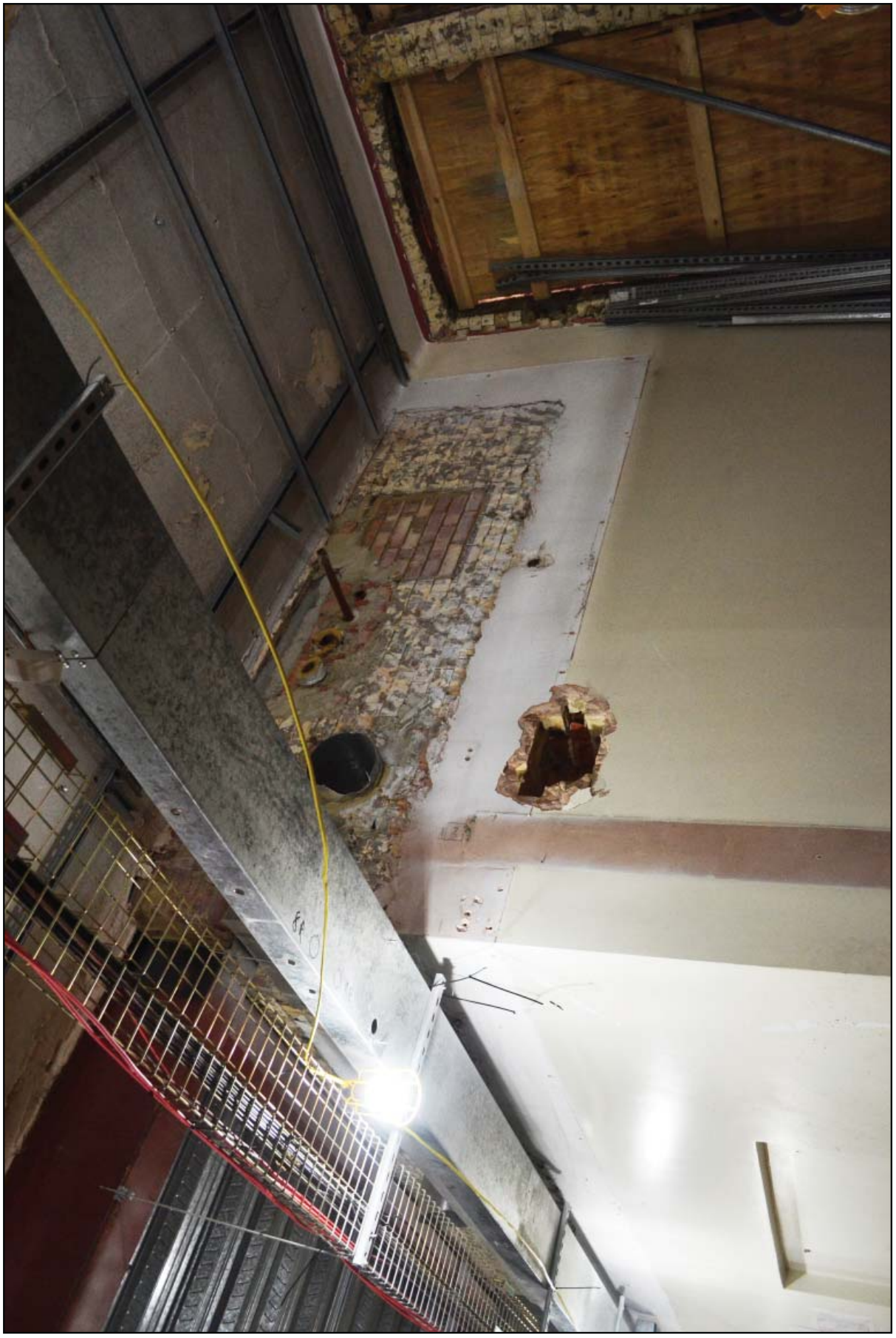
16. Damaged brick faces

17. Arches to room at extreme end of eastern cruciform arm

18. Arches to room at extreme end of eastern cruciform arm

19. Arches to room at extreme end of eastern cruciform arm

20. Arches to room at extreme end of eastern cruciform arm



21. Eastern side of the extreme of the northern Cruciform arm

22. Eastern side of the extreme of the northern Cruciform arm

8.0 Sources

English Heritage Photographic Archive: Images of England (EH)
Survey of London: Vol.XXI, Tottenham Court Road and Neighbourhood, St Pancras III: London: - 1949: 85-86.
Pevsner, N., Cherry, B .,The Buildings of England: London 3: Northwest. New Haven and London 2002.
RIBA Drawing collection held at the V&A

Appendix I
List description

Hospital block. 1897-1906. By Alfred and Paul Waterhouse. Red brick with terracotta horizontal bands and dressings. Steeply pitched slated roofs with dormers. Cross-shaped plan set diagonally to Gower Street.

EXTERIOR: 4 main storeys, attics and basements. Central entrance lodge; 3 bays, 2 storeys and attic with terracotta bands and rounded angles. Round-arched ground floor openings. Central entrance flanked by columns supporting an entablature with parapet and ball finials. Segmental arched 1st floor sashes separated by pilasters supporting a projecting dentil cornice and pediment over the central bays. Pediment flanked by full size sash window dormers in steep mansard roof. Main buildings with central staircase projection with 3 lancet windows and steep pointed roof behind which a bell tower with spire. To either side, tall chimney-stacks and pots. Diagonally from this feature, wings with projecting 2-window, pedimented bays. Main range of windows with enriched surrounds and pierced decorative grilles to aprons. Wings terminate with a bay of balconies to each floor and 3-window rectangular towers, with dormers corbelled at the angles, and surmounted by pointed roofs with rectangular, louvred features. Main cornice at attic level.

INTERIOR: not inspected.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with parapet wall behind area basement blocks.

HISTORICAL NOTE: important as the first reaction against Florence Nightingale's long-pervasive pavilion planning, and the first importation of American ideas on 'towers of healing' for city sites."

Appendix II
Relevant local and national policies

Camden Borough Council Core Strategy 14:

The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;

b) preserving and enhancing 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;

c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;

d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;

e) protecting important views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views.

Camden Borough Council Development Plan Policy no 25:

Conserving Camden's heritage

25.1 Camden has inherited a rich architectural heritage with many special places and buildings from many different eras in the area's history, from the historic villages of Hampstead and Highgate to Georgian squares and John Nash's Regent's Park terraces, from the Victorian engineering of St Pancras Station to iconic modern structures such as Centrepoint. These places and buildings add to the quality of our lives by giving a sense of local distinctiveness, identity and history. 39 areas, covering much of the borough, are designated as conservation areas, recognising their special architectural or historic interest and their character and appearance. Also, thousands of buildings in Camden are nationally listed for their special historical or architectural interest (see map 3). We have a responsibility to preserve and, where possible, enhance these areas and buildings. This policy helps to implement Core Strategy policy CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage.

Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;

b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;

c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;

d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and

e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

Listed buildings

To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;

f) only grant consent for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building; and
g) not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

Archaeology
The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.
Other heritage assets
The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and London Squares.

National Planning Policy Framework section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, 29 including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

128. 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.

129. 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 assessment 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.

131. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
● the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

● the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
● the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

132. 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

134. 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 securing its optimum viable use.