



Wildwood Lodge London Borough of Camden

Commentary opinion on Planning and Heritage Case

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Wildwood Lodge North End London NW3 7HR

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Introduction

Canaway Fleming Architects have asked MOLA to consider the latest proposals for the works to Wildwood Lodge, North End, Camden in the light of comments received from the London Borough of Camden's Conservation Officer concerning recent applications for additional works, with particular reference to the proposed extension of the basement area.

Summary Conclusions

- The original form of the sub-ground element of this building has been substantially altered by approved scheme(s) currently being implemented.
- Original fabric at this level has been substantially lost via approved and implemented scheme(s);
- At no point in the preceding consideration of applications by the LPA has the matter of the form or fabric of the sub-ground been identified as a crucial element in the conservation of the heritage asset, and consents have been issued notwithstanding the extensive removal of same;
- The significance of the listed building overall is HIGH. The remnant elements of form and fabric sub-ground are, in themselves, much diminished by approved and implemented work and are subsequently considered to be of LOW significance;
- The proposed works represent minor alterations to the extent of basement space over and above the approved and implemented scheme; and
- The removal of the fragments of sub-ground heritage fabric in the light of the above, and the overall benefit of the restoration and retention of the majority, would not result in a diminution of the significance of the historic asset of Wildwood Lodge
- The proposal accords with all aspects of National and Local Policy and best practice.

Description

There are 3 listed buildings on the site, the HBR descriptions are:

1. *TQ2686NW NORTH END 798 -1/8/1210 (North side) 14/05/74 Wildwood Lodge*

GV II

Cottage ornee. Mid C19. Stucco with slated gabled roof with carved bargeboards and bracketed eaves cornice. 2 storeys. Irregular gabled frontage with 3 windows. Gothick style. Doorway with bracketed hood and half glazed door. Casement windows with mullions and labels. C20 rear extensions.

INTERIOR: not inspected.

Listing NGR: TQ2611486987

National Grid Reference: TQ 26114 86987

2. TQ2686NW NORTH END 798-1/8/1211 Garden wall and gateway with overthrow to Wildwood Lodge

GV II

Garden wall & gateway with overthrow. Mid C19. Yellow brick, stone capped wall and pedimented gate piers with elaborate cast-iron lamp overthrow having twisted supports and scroll pattern detailing with globular lamp-holder. Wooden gate.

3. TQ2686NW NORTH END 798-1/8/1213 (North side) 14/05/74 Former coach house to Wildwood (Formerly Listed as: NORTH END Former coach house of Wildwood Lodge)

GV II

Coach house, now in domestic use. Mid C19. Stock brick. Tiled gabled roof with wooden cupola. 2 storeys 1 window. Oculus over segmental-arched entrance. INTERIOR: not inspected.



Fig 1. Site Location

Key Issues and Impacts

The original building below ground comprised a modest area of brick clad cellarge comprising 2 'rooms', accessed via a (later) concrete staircase¹; it was 'in character' with the house in as much as it was part of the original and built for purpose. It was significant as an integral part of the listed building in fabric terms and also in form. However, its significance in its own right is questionable even at that time, given that it was a functional element of the whole.

Any further change needs to be seen in the light of the cumulative impact of change on the asset and its significance which has been approved and/or implemented over time; in the house and grounds there have been some 40+ successful planning and listed building consent applications and approval of details pursuant since early 1980s; far outweighing

¹ Please see Messrs Canaway Fleming Architects drawing reference 025/A/1101.

refusals in both number and potential/actual impact. These historic consents refer to extensions, new dwellings in the grounds, replacement railings (listed in their own right), a garage, a replacement garage, extensions to the stable block (also listed separately), alterations to the slope of the roof, rearrangement of rooms, swimming pool, extended basement areas and the insertion of light wells.

Even before the extant planning consent and LBC approval (2013/5202/P & 5344/L), approved basement extensions (consents including 2007/2895/P)² would in their own right have impacted on the integrity of the historic plan and would have resulted in loss of original form and fabric. Approved plans therefore would have altered the characteristics of the historical plan to a significant degree.

In addition, during the process of implementing the extant approvals, the sub-structure of the house has been the subject of extensive underpinning works³; again having a significant effect on the appearance, integrity and character of the building at this level, nevertheless approved by the LPA.

It is known that all of the above proposals were subject to detailed and expert scrutiny by the LPA prior to approvals being issued. Despite this, the issues of impact on the Conservation Area, the integrity of the sub-ground footprint or anything to do with the importance of the built fabric are largely unremarked.

An extract from the Officer's report on applications 2007//2895/P & 2896/L states:

The basement level will be under the new structures plus the rear courtyard and side driveway. It will have no impact on the stability of the existing listed building or on the adjoining house Wildwood which is set away from the new basement. The only external manifestation of this basement is the rear lightwell with grille, which is only visible in the rear garden and will have no impact on the appearance of the listed building or conservation area. It should have no impact on nearby trees subject to condition requiring approval of a method statement for tree protection.

On applications 2007/6255/P & 0476/L the Officer's report states:

The dwelling has been incrementally extended over time. The basement excavations are a further extension which would add to be gradual progression of the building and are not considered harmful in principle. The cumulative impact of the recently approved basement swimming pool, granted on 1st Oct 2007, and the basement gym, granted on 7th Nov 2006, along with the proposed basement media room need to be considered collectively however. Although the basement extension would result in a large increase in the dwellings overall floor space the design of the basement rooms allows them to function and be read separately from the main house. The media room would only be accessed from the main house by a single basement door along a narrow corridor. As such the large additional space would not be readily legible from the historic envelope and is not considered to unduly harm the attractive cottage character of the property.

In 2010 the Officer's report on the renewal applications (20910/4924/P) included the following comments:

² Please see Messrs Canaway Fleming Architects drawing reference 025/A/P/B1/D200

³ Please see Taylor Whalley Spyra 'Design Construction Statement' ref: GB/8250 – version 2.1 dated 20/06/2012 – Planning condition discharged 2012/3289/P Details of design and methods statement for below ground level construction.

English Heritage (GLAAS) – it will have no effect on any significant archaeological remains and thus there is no requirement for any investigation needed here.

With regard to the scheme's impact on the listed building and conservation area, the scheme continues to be acceptable with reference to the LDF policies (which are similar to the previous UDP ones) and to the new PPS5 guidance on heritage issues⁴.

None of these comments are in any way concerned with either the footprint/form or the integrity of the fabric of the sub-ground. It is difficult to see therefore how it has become an issue at this stage specifically; in one analysis, the retention of the fragments of the original sub-ground structure simply for the sake of it could be seen to amount to tokenism, which would, in our submission, be contrary to the spirit of the legislation and heritage practice in general.

Planning Policy

National

National planning policy guidance over the years (e.g. PPG15, PPS5) has been consistent; the current advice in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 is, in essence, a reflection of that and the development of practice through the same period. In paragraphs 128 - 130, participants in the process are required to identify and describe the significance of any asset likely to be affected (at a level of detail proportionate to that significance) and to understand the level of impact that a proposal may have (i.e. The more important the asset the greater the weight of consideration that needs to be applied. Conversely, the less important the asset, consideration need be less stringent).

Listed buildings are of high significance in their own right simply for being so. (Please see table in Appendix ...below). It is argued that in this case the foregoing consideration and opinions of the LPA have rendered the significance of the sub-ground elements of this building of low importance.

Paragraph 134 introduces the concept of works/alterations being of 'less than substantial harm'. It is our opinion that, given the extent of consented works on this site, the small amount of additional work to create the latest and final instalment of the basement extension 'programme' would be described as being of less than substantial harm to either the integrity or form of the listed entity.

Paragraph 136 requires LPAs to not grant consent for works of a significant nature unless the proposal in total is sure to proceed. As the original approved works are currently underway, there can be no doubt that the project will, proceed when approved.

It is considered that the proposal accords with the requirements of National Policy and best practice.

Local

Various, the Local Plan, the Local Development Framework and Core Strategy are referred to throughout the Officer's reports on the previous applications and extant permissions/consents. All previous proposals have been confirmed to be in accordance with local policy. There is nothing to suggest that the most recent proposals are in any way different.

⁴ Superseded by NPPF 2012, although it is still considered to be in accordance with current best practice and advice

Conclusions

It is our opinion that:

The original form of the sub-ground element of this building has been substantially altered by approved and implemented scheme(s), to the extent that it is virtually unrecognisable and any remnants of it are not easily 'read'.

Similarly, original fabric at this level has been substantially lost via the approved and implemented scheme(s) and any remaining fragments are indistinguishable within the overall scheme. Furthermore, parts of the fabric referred to in the approved scheme have been removed for access/egress of sub-ground material during the construction process and although retained for reinstatement will, when replaced, will in fact be modern fabric made of reclaimed materials, the resultant value of which will be low in any event.

At no point in the preceding consideration of applications by the LPA has the matter of the form or fabric of the sub-ground been identified as a crucial element in the conservation of the heritage asset. This is exemplified by the fact that consents have been issued approving removal of constituent parts at this level.

The significance of the listed building overall is HIGH. The remnant elements of form and fabric sub-ground are, in themselves, much diminished by approved and implemented work and are subsequently considered to be of LOW significance

The proposed works are represent minor alterations to the extent of basement space over and above the approved and implemented scheme.

The project as a whole will significantly improve the fortunes of the listed building, from its previous poor condition, and thereby sustain the heritage asset. Removal of the fragments of sub-ground heritage fabric in the light of the above, and the overall benefit of the restoration and retention of the majority, would not result in a diminution of the significance of the historic asset of Wildwood Lodge.

It is considered that the proposal accords with all aspects of National and Local Policy and best practice.

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