

ISSUE 2

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HERITAGE STATEMENT: REFURBISHMENT WORKS TO THE KEEP, WITANHURST NWS

1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 The following Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Witanhurst Construction Management Limited (WCML) in respect of an application for Planning and Listed Building Consent to carry out conservation repairs and refurbishment works to the Gatehouse at Witanhurst as part of the current refurbishment project on the site.

1.02 Works to the main House and Orangery as well as works throughout the gardens and boundary walls have been subject to a number of consents, but there have been no applications submitted to date under this project for works to the Grade II Listed Gatehouse.

The proposal for the Gatehouse fall into 3 main areas:

- The repair and conservation of the external fabric and structure of the Gatehouse.
- The internal refurbishment of the Gatehouse to provide 'front of house' facilities for the site.
- The provision of an underground link behind the Gatehouse to provide service/site access and staff facilities linking to the existing basement staff areas to the site entry point.

1.03 Much overdue repairs are being carried out on a like-for like basis in order to maintain the appearance, character and architectural details of The Gatehouse and this Heritage Statement is intended to set out the following:

- The significance of the building.
- The nature of the works proposed, the justification for this work and the effect on the special; character of the building.

1.04 The Gatehouse formed part of the 'follow-on' phase of works undertaken by Sir Arthur Crosfield at Witanhurst following on from the main House. Plans were drawn up in 1927 for the realignment of the drive to the east end of the site, and architects Seely & Paget were commissioned 1929 to design the new gate lodge.

1.05 It has functioned in a gate house role since it was constructed, extended in the early 1970's, prior to falling into disuse when the House was left vacant, which together with listed elements of the Gardens were placed on the English Heritage 'Buildings at Risk' register. It is now intended to resume its original role as the gatehouse for the newly

refurbished House and Grounds.

- 1.06 The building currently utilised as temporary site accommodation for the WCML management team and acts as the sole site access for construction traffic and personnel. As such it will form part of the last phase of works on this project, as the team work out of the site via the Gatehouse.
- 1.07 This Heritage Statement is based upon archival research (Site History and Building Development) carried out by Robert Adam Architects in July 2009 and site inspections and appraisal carried out by Scott & Twine Architects during June 2013.
- 1.08 This statement has confined itself to an assessment of the existing building fabric, with no further exploratory work being undertaken in either archival research or invasive physical investigation works of the building fabric itself.

2.00 THE GATEHOUSE AND ITS CONTEXT

2.01 The Gatehouse is a statutorily listed (Grade II) early 20th Century Edwardian, William and Mary style structure built in 1929 - 1930 as part of final phase of development and transformation of the Witanhurst Estate by Sir Arthur Crosfield and his wife, Domini following their purchase of the site in 1913.

Sir Arthur had utilised the architect George Hubbard on the main house and employed the Arts & Crafts landscape architect, Harold Peto to prepare designs for the garden and its outbuildings.

The construction of the Gatehouse followed on from the main works, with the architects Seeley & Paget being appointed in 1929 to prepare designs for a gatehouse.

Refer to archival plans in Appendix A.

2.02 Located at the top of West Hill in Highgate, it is an important part of the 'streetscape' in this location and contributes to the character of the Highgate Conservation Area in which it lies in a prominent position.

2.03 The Gatehouse is built at the eastern end of the site on an area that was formerly occupied by Dorchester House and subsequently Grove Bank.

Grove Bank was demolished in 1927 along with its stables which stood where the Gatehouse is now constructed. It is reported that the gatehouse was partially constructed with materials reclaimed from the stables building.

2.04 It is set in the north-east corner of a 5 ½ acre site, reduced in size from the time of Sir Arthur Crosfield following land disposal by the new owners of Witanhurst in the early 1980's.

Description

2.05 The original Seeley & Paget building was a compact, 2 storey structure, with two lodges set either side of a central archway leading to the driveway up to the House. Single storey extension located to the rear of the Gatehouse flanked the archway.

It is located at the eastern end of the site leading onto West Hill at the junction with South Grove and is the sole point of day to day access to the site.

The gatehouse was further extended to the north in the 1970's to provide another access to the site and a new arch formed with a lodge created on the north side of this arch up against the boundary with The End House on The Grove.

This later extension was detailed to repeat and copy the features of the original wing to a large degree, the overall impression of a larger single gatehouse building being the presumed intention.

For the purposes of this Statement, the 'original 1930's gatehouse are referred to as the South and Middle Lodges, the later 1970's addition, the North Lodge.

- 2.06 The original building is faced in red and yellow stock brickwork laid English bond with red brick dressings and decorative brick moulding forming a cornice and caps to brick pilasters. The additional lodge to the north side was executed predominantly in yellow London stocks, with elements of red stocks interspersed and decorative mouldings to match the original structure.

The parapets are finished with stone copings; sandstone on the original gatehouse, limestone on the later additions.

Windows are generally timber sliding sash window set above stone sub-cills (pre-cast concrete) on the later 1970's addition.

External doors are timber, with arch-headed openings over a glazed fanlight and 6 panelled timber doors – a number being modern replacements.

The main roof running north-south is a pitched timber roof clad in clay plain tiles of varying design. The original lodge is surmounted by 2 No. square brick chimney stacks, without pots, which are currently not in use.

The lower roofs to the rear single storey extensions are flat roofs, with the two outer roofs being asphalt and the central roof being a lead flat roof with rolls laid to falls.

All rainwater drainage is via parapet roof outlets or chute outlets to hopper heads and downpipes in both lead and with later cast iron replacements.

- 2.07 The original entrance gates within the arches would appear from archival photographs to have been timber panelled gates, which were subsequently replaced with decorative metals gates, which are in storage.

- 2.08 The interiors arrangements have been subject to minor alterations, but the basic plan form of the original Gatehouse remains largely intact.

This building was aligned north-south with a single room flanking the arch on both sides at ground floor and bedroom accommodation running above this at first floor. There are also small single story extensions to the rear containing 'Sculleries' toilet and bathroom accommodation. Each lodge had a narrow curved timber stair leading to the first floor accommodation.

Much of the original internal detail (cornices, joinery and fittings) has now been lost, but the original plan form is largely still discernible.

- The 2 No. Existing narrow curved staircases in the original lodge (south and centre) remain and are significant elements of the gatehouse character.
- Many of the internal 6 panelled doors remain in situ, as do the external doors on the original Gatehouse.
- Windows appear to have the original 1930's fenestration on the original gatehouse, while some of the rear extension windows and those of the 1970's addition is of a more modern (slimmer) design, with decorative mouldings around the frame.

Historical Assessment

- 2.09 The Gatehouse was constructed to the designs of architects Seely & Paget to provide this further element of the Crossfield's ambitious plans for Witanhurst.

The 'Edwardian' design compliments the Queen Anne style of the main house, with the detail being subservient to the grander design of the house as one might expect for an entrance lodge.

The later extension in the early 1970's extending the Gatehouse to the north and providing a second arch, follows the same design principles, if being less well executed in terms of quality and detail.

The building has remained relatively unaltered since then, but has suffered from a combination of lack of maintenance and inappropriate repairs and alterations.

Its role as the entrance to the Witanhurst site and its position at the top of West Hill are an important part of its special historical character and importance at both a national and local level.

The Setting

2.10 While other parts of the Witanhurst Estate have been redeveloped, the eastern end of the site remains to the full extent conceived under the Crossfield's ambitious plans for Witanhurst.

2.11 The original gatehouse form of the single arch flanked by lodges on either side was dramatically changed by the addition of the second arch and North Lodge in the 1970's. This has created a significantly larger building, while still addressing the public face on Highgate.

The form of the Gatehouse has increased in size and impact on the site by these later additions and is no longer the 'simple' gatehouse of the original designs.

The rear elevation lacks unity and balance, with single storey rear extensions 'peppered' with a plethora of small utilitarian openings and services.

2.12 The forecourt area in front of the Gatehouse is an important part of the setting for this building and is linked through to a similar space in front of the older properties running along The Grove immediately to the north of the site.

It would be beneficial to have this area, with poor quality finishes (tarmac, concrete copings, utilitarian lighting, etc) re-presented to enhance the character and setting of the Gatehouse and to re-establish this important townscape feature and allow the building to resume its position of prominence.

3.00 THE PROPOSED WORKS

3.01 The proposed works to the Gatehouse fall into 3 main areas:

1. The external conservation repairs and alterations, including partial demolition and reconstruction of the south and middle rear extensions.
2. The internal refurbishment.
3. The construction of a new underground connection to the existing House basement and associated landscaping.

Conservation Repairs

3.02 These works consist primarily of the following areas of work:

1. Replacement of defective plain tile roof coverings and lead parapet gutters, including decayed elements of roof structure.
2. Repointing of the main parapet Sandstone copings, re-bedding as necessary and replacing 1 No. Missing section of broken coping.
3. Removal of redundant fixings (cable clips, wiring, railing stubs, former service apertures, etc) and limited brickwork repairs, including remedial works to structural cracks in brickwork.
4. Replacement of 'red patch' of brickwork at first floor on north arch east face, to provide better mix of yellow and red stocks to match existing elevation treatment.
5. Limited repointing of defective areas to match existing areas, coupled with mortar tests and analysis on existing pointing.
6. Selective repointing and replacement of brickwork on decorative cornices to ensure stability and water shedding capability is maintained. Limited number of 'plastic' mortar repairs to decorative brickwork dressings.
7. Removal of inappropriate modern fittings (signage, lights, vents and others services) and replacement with more appropriate period light fittings.
8. Reinstatement of period detail in joinery repairs to windows and doors.
9. Repairs of existing timber sash windows and replacement of glass with slim-line sealed units, with replacement of later 'narrow' glazing bar sash windows with new sashes to match those within the original lodges.

External Alterations

3.03 While the main body of the Gatehouse is subject only to the conservation repairs listed above to bring the building back into a well maintained state, the rear (west facing) side of the gatehouse is subject to a number of alterations, which are intended to enhance the visual appearance of the Gatehouse and presented an improved setting for the Forecourt and Main House.

These include:

1. Reconstruction of the southern rear extension to provide improved fenestration detail and accommodate a new side door on the south elevation as main pedestrian entry point – replacing a previous side door on this elevation in the original design.
2. Provision of new timber panelled gates to both arches based on previous designs (pre 1970's).
3. Rebuilding of the central rear extension to incorporate an additional storey and 're-balance' this rear elevation and the setting when viewed from the House and Forecourt. This will include new fenestration, replacement roof, new stairs and service hoist access to a new basement.
4. Excavation of area of hard standing between rear of Gatehouse and adjoining planting (existing and proposed) to form a new basement and below ground link to the existing Main house basement at its upper level.
5. Replacement of the modern railings to the steps on the North Lodge.
6. Provision of 3 No. new retractable bollards behind the entrance gates in each archway.

3.04 Roofs:

- Provision of new pitched plain tiled (Keymer reds to match existing on south pitch) roof for rear extensions over existing roof structure on North Lodge rear extension, together with lead-lined parapet gutters draining to existing hopper head positions.
- Replacement of later cast iron hopper heads and downpipes on front elevation to match original lead hopper heads and square lead downpipes remaining on other elevations.

3.05 Landscape:

- Proposals for hard and soft landscaping to the area surrounding the Gatehouse are in accordance with the

existing consent for the Forecourt and House.

- A new side pedestrian access leading to the new entrance door is proposed and is largely concealed within planting so as not to affect the main visual predominance of the Gatehouse arch entrances.
- Forecourt finishes (Porphyry setts and Yorkstone bands) are followed through to the Gatehouse setting to unify the entire Forecourt setting for both listed buildings.

Internal Refurbishment Works

- 3.06 The building interiors appear to have undergone limited refurbishment works, which resulted in the 'dry lining' of most external walls, the loss of skirting and architraves in many instances and replacement with modern profiles.

The 6 panelled internal door leafs have largely been retained, but with modern, unsympathetic ironmongery.

Other period features that may have been present, including fireplaces and cornices, are no longer in evidence.

The current bathrooms, WC and kitchens have all had modern replacement fittings installed.

Services installation are all modern, generally surface run.

The Gatehouse

- 3.07 The proposed internal refurbishment involve a number of alterations to the internal fabric of the building as indicated on the proposed drawings (refer to Owen Architects proposals listed in Appendix E):

- 3.08 Generally the scope of works described in the Design and Access Statement foresees the retention of surviving elements of historic fabric within the main part of the Gatehouse, with the replacement of modern services, dry-lining and modern fixtures and fittings.

The proposals foresee the replacement of modern fittings and fixtures with elements that are more in keeping and character with the simple Edwardian character of the Gatehouse.

- 3.09 First Floor:

- Enlargement of the former window opening on the north wall of the original lodge to create first floor connection between the original Gatehouse and the later 1970's addition.

- Formation of a new opening at the head of the centre stairs to provide access to new En-suite bathroom.
- Removal of modern plasterboard and stud partitions forming bathrooms, stair and bedroom enclosure in the later 1970's addition, in conjunction with removal of the modern staircase and closing in of stairwell.

3.10 Ground Floor:

- Removal of modern staircase to first floor (see above) in North Lodge.
- Rebuilding of South Lodge incorporating new entrance door on south elevation and replacement sash windows with doubled glazed sashes and glazing bar design to match original 1930's bar on main elevations.
- Rebuilding of Centre Lodge as two storey structure incorporating new stair and hoist to basement. New fenestration and elevation treatment as indicated to improve and enhance character of central element of Gatehouse.

New Basement

3.11 The extent of the new basement is indicated on the Owen Architects proposals.

- This space is intended to provide access to the existing service area (back-of-house) in the upper level of the basement and a route for deliveries and waste collection in an unobtrusive manner that will not detract from the setting of the House, Forecourt or Gatehouse.
- The basement is constructed in contiguous piling so as to minimise the impact and duration of the works on the Listed Building, surround properties and trees.
- Localise underpinning will be required to retain the curved brick wall enclosure to the staircase on the South and Middle Lodges.

4.00 CONCLUSION

- 4.01 The proposal to repair existing decayed elements of the fabric of The Gatehouse is allied with proposals to enhance the character, in particular of the rear (west) elevations of the Gatehouse so as to improve the setting of both the Gatehouse and that of the Listed Main House together with the forecourt setting shared by both House and Gatehouse.

The provision of an underground link from within the Gatehouse to the existing basement staff areas is intended to provide a less intrusive and more discrete access to the House and further enhance the appearance and settings of the Listed Buildings by removing these elements below ground where they will have no visual impact on the House, Gatehouse and most significantly, the Forecourt, a key setting to both of these Listed Buildings.

- 4.02 The architectural character and historical context of the Gatehouse, is of a subservient structure to the main House, but representing a key part of Crossfield's plans for the Witanhurst Estate in the early part of the last century. Some of this character has been lost through a combination of neglect and inappropriate alterations undertaken over the years since its construction and subsequent extension.

- 4.03 The proposals are intended to bring the Gatehouse back into full beneficial use in its originally intended role as the point of entry and control of access to the Witanhurst site.

The Gatehouse will be used to house the functions and personnel required to carry out this role.

In the absence of a separate service entrance to the site, the Gatehouse needs to function in both the role of formal entry point for its occupants and their guests as well as the day to day service access for staff, deliveries and others visiting the site involved in its operation and maintenance.

The proposals involve both the control (security) and separation of these two functions at the Gatehouse maintaining the hierarchy of spaces within the site.

- 4.04 The proposals are intended to enhance the Listed Building through a combination of conservation repairs to the Gatehouse, in conjunction with improvements and alterations to the 'unsympathetic' rear elevation of the Gatehouse which are intended to enhance the architectural character of this elevation and more crucially provide a more appropriate settings for the landscape of the Forecourt and the setting of the main Grade II* Listed House.

- 4.05 The proposals include below ground facilities (waste storage and delivery areas), which connect through with existing services areas envisaged in the initial proposals to service this project.

The provision of this underground link is design to eliminate any adverse visual impact as well as being sited away from the main structure and adjoining tress to avoid any adverse impact that the construction of these proposals might have on the Listed Building or adjoining features.

The reconstruction of two of the rear extensions will allow for an improved architectural treatment of these wings in a more sympathetic manner that retains and enhances the significance of this structure and the settings.

- 4.06 These proposals draw upon studies conducted into the existing condition of the buildings, its history and significance from archival reports.

The impact on the site (groundwater, existing trees, archaeology, neighbouring structures, etc) has been examined by specialists, whose finding and recommendations have been incorporated into the designs and are appended as appropriate to the application for these proposals.

- 4.07 The conclusion is that the proposals will not adversely affect the character or significance of the Grade II Listed Gatehouse, but indeed will enhance this character through a number of sympathetic improvements and enhance the historical significance of this Gatehouse by bring it back into use in its original role and a gatehouse.

5.00 **Justification for Proposed Works**

5.01 The re-alignment of site access as part of Sir Arthur Crosfield plans for Witanhurst, saw previous site access and service arrangements for the previous properties (Parkfield, Grove Bank , Dorchester House, etc) off West Hill extinguished and access realigned to the new gate lodge at the east end of the site at the junction with The Grove.

5.02 The current proposals do not seek to alter this access, but are intended to bring the Gatehouse into full operation as the point of entry and control to the Witanhurst site, a role for which it was originally designed.

The proposals are intended to re-establish separation between the front and back-of-house activities, to ensure that the hierarchy of spaces within the house are respected and maintained.

5.03 The Forecourt remains the formal entry point to the House, with the main entrance door being the focal point of the House for its occupants and guest. A number of subsidiary doors in the 4 No. Pavilions around the Forecourt act as means of escape from basement areas and garden exits from the House.

The proposals are to clearly separate service (back-of-house) access to maintain control and security of access to the site via the Gatehouse only.

It is proposed to establish a direct (underground) link to the existing staff areas in the upper basement level, through which all staff can pass and through which all deliveries can pass and waste be removed without impact of the formal front of the House and the adjoining areas.

No deliveries or waste will therefore need to be stored, albeit temporarily, externally at ground level.

5.04 It is proposed to construct this basement in the area between the Gatehouse, the existing basement and the Copper Beech Tree and line of Lime Tress that are to line the boundary with West Hill.

The basement structure is intended to be constructed with bored piles set away from the main body of the Listed Building to minimise any potential for disruption to the footings of the Listed Building and minimise the need for underpinning or structural remedial works to this structure, this being utilised to allow retention of the curved staircase structures in position.

- 5.05 In conjunction with conservation repairs to the exterior of the Gatehouse, it is proposed to improve the rather utilitarian appearance of the rear of the Gatehouse and remove surface run drainage paperwork, vents, flues, cables and other services detracting from the appearance and seek to enhance the appearance of this extended elevation by the addition of a first floor on the central rear extension and replace the small, utilitarian toilet windows with a more ordered elevation that will provide a more suitable setting for the Forecourt and House.

Alteration and the rebuilding of these simple single storey structures is an intervention in the Listed Building that is considered warranted by the improvement to the setting of both the Gatehouse and the main House as justified in terms of an enhancement to the overall character and setting of both buildings.

- 5.06 Overall, the proposals are intended to bring back the Gatehouse into beneficial use, in a role for which it was originally conceived and re-establish a separation between front and back-of-house areas.

We taking into account the improvements to the rear elevations and the conservation repairs to the other, more public, elevations, the proposals are considered on balance to be of benefit to the Listed Building and in particular it's setting in the wider context of the Witanhurst site and Highgate Village.

The basement proposal is designed to have minimum impact on the Listed Building and adjoin structures and crucially trees. This basement should therefore have no adverse impact on the setting of the Listed Building and through the separation of service access, ensure that the Forecourt and surrounding of the Gatehouse do not attract materials and functions associated with deliveries and waste collection (bin stores, pallets, containers, etc).