

Heritage Statement



41 Fortress Road, Kentish Town, London Borough of Camden

On behalf of Mr Massoud Tabarrok

June 2013

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CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
2.0	RELEVANT BACKGROUND	6
3.0	HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE	8
4.0	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	10
5.0	PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND JUSTIFICATION	11
6.0	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	18

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Historic Maps
- Appendix 2: Photographs October 2012

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been written by Heritage Collective on behalf of Mr Massoud Tabarrok, owner of No.41 Fortress Road, Kentish Town, London Borough of Camden (LB Camden). It considers the heritage significance of this non-designated heritage asset¹ and the affect of proposed alterations to the building in order to provide nine residential units.
- 1.2 A site visit was carried out in October 2012 when the building and its grounds were inspected, and the wider area visited, in order to understand the visibility of the building within its context. A review of the background planning history of the site was made and advice was given to the client on the potential constraints of development at the site.

The Application Site

- 1.3 No.41 Fortress Road comprises a late 19th century, brick, two storey building with basement and attic on the west side of the road. Historically, it accompanied the Hall to the Kentish Town Methodist Church. The church was demolished in 2000 and replaced with a block of flats. Nos.44-98 Fortress Road is a 19th century grade II listed terrace opposite the application site.
- 1.4 Following the proposed demolition of the building on the application site in 2011, LB Camden imposed an Article 4 direction on the building preventing its demolition under permitted development rights and citing it as a non-designated heritage asset. This direction was confirmed on 26th April 2012.
- 1.5 The front gable of the building is suffering considerable structural failure, the bowing of the brickwork evident on approach to the building from the south. Aside from this, the property is generally structurally sound. A structural engineer has assessed the building and recommends that the bowing in the front gable requires action. This application is accompanied by the relevant report.

¹ As defined by the glossary within the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2013)

Scope of this Report

- 1.6 This statement provides an assessment of the heritage significance of the building and comments on the scope of the proposed development and its impact on that significance. It appraises current national and local policy, within which the planning application is to be determined, and concludes that the proposed works will preserve the heritage significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

2.0 RELEVANT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 No.41 Fortress Road forms a historic remnant of a street scene that developed during the 19th century. It appears to the north of the Roman Catholic Church on the 1873, 1898, and 1916 Ordnance Survey Maps as a semi-detached building, square on plan. The Vicarage to the church forms a separate building to the west of the church at 16 Burghley Road. (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 By 1936 the application site building had been extended to the rear (west), linked to the main church building by a corridor. By this date a square extension was formed in the gap between the application building and the property, to the north, which is still in existence. These works may have been associated with the use of the building as a Presbytery, a place where Catholic Priests resided. It is labelled as 'Presb' on the 1936 map with the extension to the rear labelled as 41.
- 2.3 In 1960 a new bathroom was constructed to the rear of the main 19th century building on the south-west corner at ground floor level (street level). A further storey was added onto the 1930s extension, making it three storey and hiding the rear elevation of the building almost entirely.
- 2.4 By 2001 the church had been taken over by the Methodist faith which then moved away and the church was demolished. It was replaced with a four storey residential block. Similarly the vicarage, to the west of the application site, has been replaced by a larger modern building providing residential care for substance misuse patients.
- 2.5 At this time the application building was sold off and permission was granted for a series of alterations (PEX0000331). These included;
- Ground floor infill between 19th century rear and 20th century extension;
 - Enlargement of side infill (north side) to form a ground and first floor recessed infill with matching window treatments to the front elevation;

- Changes to the rear fenestration and removal of 1960s bathroom extension; and,
 - Removal of existing front gable and reconstruction to match due to structural defects.
- 2.6 Between 2005 and 2007 two applications for planning permission to alter the building by extending it were refused (2005/3723/P & 2006/5708/P). These involved substantial changes to the appearance of the building, including the removal of the front gable and its replacement with a flat roofed penthouse style extension. The 2007 application also sought to extend the side infill to the same building line as the front elevation and to rearrange the front elevation fenestration.
- 2.7 The 2007 refusal was appealed against but the Inspector upheld the LB Camden's decision noting the contribution of the distinctive front gable to the interest of the building and the character of the street scene and the variety added by the gap between the application building and No.42 Fortress Road. Reasons for refusal also rested on s106 contributions and other planning matters, not related to heritage.
- 2.8 In 2011 an application was submitted for the wholesale demolition of the building. This was refused on the grounds of the loss of a non-designated heritage and the deficiency of the proposed replacement in design terms and accommodation sizes as well as sunlight and daylight issues.
- 2.9 The most recent application of relevance is the consent granted in 2012 (2012/0304/P). This application effectively renews the permission granted in 2001, for the two small extensions to the rear and side in fill, along with some minor changes to fenestration at high level.

3.0 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 As a non-designated asset, not in a conservation area and not locally listed, this building has limited heritage value. What value it does have is manifested into its front elevation. It forms a remnant of the historic street scene on this side of Fortress Road which would have been much more evident prior to changes in the late 20th century.
- 3.2 The building adds interest to the townscape of the area and contributes to the setting of the listed buildings opposite as part of the historic environment surrounding them. Architecturally the building has some character, with the use of rendered window heads with decorative crosses indicating the buildings past function, sash, sash windows, iron railings and traditional symmetrical fenestration. The gable forms a prominent feature and gives the building a distinct character.
- 3.3 There is no archaeological interest in this building, which is of a known building type of common construction and development. Likewise, it lacks particular artistic interest.
- 3.4 The building has some historical interest as a remnant of the past street scape and architectural interest due to its late 19th century architectural style. This interest is confined to the front elevation and roof form with its chimneys as the rear elevation has been subsumed by the 1930s extension and is of no heritage significance.
- 3.5 Views of the building can be gained from Fortress Road, when looking towards the building from up and down the street. Views of its rear elevation are only available from private gardens on Burghley Road to the west. These views include the Care Home located on the land which was previously a vicarage, accessed off Burghley Road. The only part of the building visible from the public realm on Burghley Road is the top of the rear gable and the corner of the 1930s extension, seen over the top of the Care Home roof and against the backdrop of the adjacent property at No.43 Fortress Road. These rear views are of no heritage significance and do not add to the character of the area. They are currently characterised by the 1930s flat roofed addition to the

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original building, which is out if keeping with its surroundings in terms of height, bulk and design.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Having reviewed the planning history of the site and looked into the costs of implementing the extant consent the owner of the property instructed Ko and Ko Architects, to investigate opportunities for further enhancement of the site in order to make most efficient use of the land.

4.2 The proposed development has been carefully planned to pay regard to the qualities of interest, namely the front elevation of the building and its contribution to the wider street scene as an asset of local heritage significance, whilst enabling more and better accommodation on the site.

4.3 The proposed extensions include;

- i Lower ground floor infill below the already consented infill extension;
- ii Slight increase in height of side extension to accommodate a sash window with window head to match the existing first floor windows;
- iii Increase in length of side infill to the front and back but still subservient to the front elevation (set back by 1m);
- iv Excavation of a new basement to the rear of the building in line with the levels on the adjacent site at No.39;
- v Demolition of the 1930s extension and erection of new extension on a larger footprint, bringing it into line with adjacent properties;
- vi Conversion of second storey loft space and extension to the rear in a smaller pitched roof form replicating the larger original pitched roof form.

4.4 By pushing the parameters of the building outwards by c.1m to the west and north the rear of the building can be enlarged without causing harm to the street scene or the surrounding built environment. The intention of the proposed works is to improve the rear elevation of the building, which is currently formed of a low quality 1930s extension with no heritage interest, to provide a high quality replacement extension that will not be visible from the wider street scene. Section 5.0 appraises the proposed works against the policy context.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND JUSTIFICATION

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.1 The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers, and it is a material consideration in planning decisions. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration.

5.2 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in paragraphs 126 to 141. The NPPF places much emphasis on heritage "significance". The NPPF defines significance, in Annex 2, as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."

5.3 The effects of any development on a heritage asset therefore need to be assessed against the four components of its heritage significance: its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest.

5.4 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF places a duty on the local planning authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal. However, the same paragraph makes it clear that the level of detail should be i) proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and ii) no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset.

5.5 Paragraph 129 states that it is the "*the particular significance of any heritage asset*" that should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset.

5.6 Paragraph 135 applies specifically to non-designated heritage assets, such as the application building. It states that a balanced judgement will be required

having regard to the scale of harm or loss of significance and the benefits of the proposed development.

London Plan (2011)

5.7 The London Plan (July 2011) provides city wide context within which individual boroughs must set their local planning policies. Policies of relevance to the historic environment include;

- Policy 7.4 – Local Character: Buildings, streets and open spaces should provide a high quality design response that (i) has regard to pattern and grain of existing spaces, (ii) contributes to positive relationships between urban and natural landscapes, (iii) is human in scale, (iv) allows positively contributing buildings to influence the future character, (v) is informed by surrounding historic environment.
- Policy 7.8 – Heritage Assets and Archaeology: This policy seeks to safeguard heritage assets. The policy encourages development that (i) identifies, values, conserves, restores, re-uses and incorporates heritage assets, where appropriate, and (ii) that conserves heritage assets and their setting.
- Policy 7.9 – Heritage Led Regeneration: Regeneration schemes should identify and make use of heritage assets and reinforce the qualities that make them significant. The significance of heritage assets should be assessed and schemes designed so that the heritage significance is recognised

London Borough of Camden’s Local Development Framework (LDF)

5.8 The Local Development Framework is made up of a number of documents. With the Core Strategy (2011), and the Development Policies (2011) being of most relevance. While there is no specific policy relating to non-designated heritage assets. DP25 of the Development Policies states that the Council will seek to protect ‘other heritage assets’.

- 5.9 The Core Strategy aims to conserve the historic environment through the promotion of high quality development. CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage states:

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.

- 5.10 Policy DP24 – High Quality Design sets out a list of criteria against which new development is to be appraised. It states that development needs to respond to character, setting, context and form and scale of neighbouring buildings. It needs to take into account the character and proportions of an existing building, use quality materials and provide visually interesting frontages at street level as well as taking account of any existing natural features on or surrounding the site. Appropriate locations for building services equipment are required and hard and soft landscape need to be thought through and appropriate boundary treatments provided, as well as good quality amenity space.

- 5.11 Camden also has an extensive planning guidance document (CPG1-Design) that has been taken into account during the development of these proposals. Key principals that apply to extensions include;

Alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings.

Windows, doors and materials should complement the existing building.

Rear extensions should be secondary to the building being extended.

You can make certain types of minor alterations without planning permission (see below) external alterations.

Proposed Development Policy Compliance

Side Extension

- 5.12 A new side extension is proposed, conforming to the traditional fenestration of the existing front elevation. In order to maintain and enhance the character of the front elevation and to allow the new extension to be subservient and read as a continuance of the main elevation the first floor window style will be replicated and a front door will be provided in the same style as the existing entrance.
- 5.13 The appearance of what is proposed for the infilling of the gap is the same as that which has already been granted consent, save for its size. The new built form will extend downward to the lower ground floor area to make full use of the space. This will not harm the appearance of the host building as the lower ground floor area is not a highly visible area in views toward the building and is currently redundant space. A set back of 1m between the original front elevation and the infill adds to the subservient nature of the infill.
- 5.14 The delegated report produced by LB Camden in relation to the most recent application for permission to extend the property rightly pointed out that *'it is considered that the subject building has largely lost its original context as part of a discrete group with the now demolished church and the character of*

the street scene is now predominantly long runs of terraced housing'. Thus the reduction of the gap will not harm the street scene or architectural composition of the building. The proposed extension is slightly larger than that which was previously given consent. It is taller to allow for a window head to be added to the new first floor window, in keeping with the rest of the facade and it is larger to accommodate a new entrance into the rear of the building. Its subservience will still be evident by the set back and reduced height. At present the later Victorian brick bridge link is not an attractive feature and does nothing to add to the architectural interest of this building. Replacement of this feature will improve the street scene.

Front Elevation

- 5.15 The front elevation will be repaired and restored as part of these proposed works; involving the rebuilding of the front gable (which will reuse the bricks wherever possible and replicate the features in the gable end). Consent has already been granted, in the past, for this work to be undertaken due to the current state of the brickwork and the lean over the front part of the application site. In order to ensure the appearance of the building is maintained any new bricks and mortar will have to be treated with an agreed solution to provide a patina of age currently on the building. The exact nature of this treatment will have to be agreed with LB Camden.
- 5.16 The existing railings will be maintained and repaired and the light well cleaned up and restored to provide bike storage and a refuse store location, hidden from the street.

Rear Extension

- 5.17 The proposed extensions to the application building are high quality in terms of proposed finish and design. A contemporary approach to the style of the extension has been chosen to reflect an honest addition to the building, in contrast to a replication of the front elevation. The rear elevation of this form of building was likely to have been simpler in style than the front elevation originally and is able to accommodate a more modern architectural approach.
- 5.18 To the rear the proposed extension differs from that previously given consent mainly due to its size, but also in the use of fenestration and the design of the

roof form. The proposed pitched roof of the extension forms a subservient and reflective form of the main building, entirely in keeping with the host building in terms of form and size. It offers a much more sympathetic and high quality extension than the existing flat roof brick box. In order to lighten the appearance of the brick extension the gable end of this upper level will be glazed allowing the strong shape of the gable to prevail as a smaller version of the larger gables on the main building.

5.19 The aim of the rear extension is to bring the rear building line of 41 to the predominant building line of the back of this group of buildings, which is achieved by the proposed extension. Thus, when viewed in the context of the rear elevations of the properties along Fortress Road the rear extension will be entirely in keeping and of an appropriate size and bulk. Design guidelines require extensions and alterations to may due regard to context and neighbouring properties. This proposed extension fits in with the arrangement found to the south, with a lower ground floor area to the rear and a modern treatment using traditional materials.

5.20 The rear elevation of 41 has no heritage significance and the original window currently visible from the rear yard will remain visible, whilst being accompanied by a high quality new extension, rationalising the ad hoc rear extensions that have taken place over the 20th century.

5.21 The extension will be in brick to match the existing building and will make use of a variation in brick bonding to provide horizontal emphasis through the use of vertical brick bonding on bands across the floor levels. This breaks up the mass of the extension, adds visual interest and high quality detail. The windows are to be in a slate grey colour and roof lights are provided for the lower ground floor area.

Basement Extension

5.22 Additional accommodation is to be provided within a new basement, which is largely under the lower ground floor area of the 1930s building. This basement area will have no impact on the heritage significance of the building.

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- 5.23 Having due regard to the heritage significance of the host building the proposed development accords with local and national policy aims by preserving those elements that are significance i.e. the front facade, and maintaining and enhancing the asset.
- 5.24 The restoration of this building will improve the street scene and the setting of the listed building opposite. There will be no impact on the historic environment as a result of the rear extensions, which are hidden from public view and are in keeping with the form of the adjacent properties, in term of bulk, height and style, improving on the existing 1930s extension which sits awkwardly with the host building and makes no contribution to the built environment. This proposed extension is designed specifically to compliment the form of the host building and to stay subservient, being set down from the main building.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The building on the application site is assessed as a non-designated asset worthy of consideration within the planning process. It has an extant consent for two extensions and internal reconfiguration in order to provide up to nine units. Its front gable is structurally unsound and requires works to the building in order to rectify the issue and bring the building up to a better standard.
- 6.2 This report accompanies a planning application for the extension of the building to the rear, though the replacement of the existing 1930s extension with a new one and the excavation of a new basement under the rear half of the site.
- 6.3 The street presence of this building would be unaffected by the proposed development and its distinctive fenestrative pattern, built form, fabric and historic interest would be persevered and improved upon as a result of the proposed development.
- 6.4 No harm is considered to be caused given the nature of the site and its seclusion from views onto the rear and side elevation from the public realm. Views from the listed terrace opposite will be enhanced by the infill side extension with its appropriate replica windows and door.
- 6.5 The proposed development accords with guidance set out in the NPPF (Section 12) and provides a sustainable development scheme in line with local Camden policy.