22 Church Row, London NW3 6UP

Heritage Statement

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Significance of the architectural and historical interest and character of the building

Property developer Richard Hughes built 22 Church Row. Spurred on by the success of the local wells, he acquired the land in 1710, and by 1713 he had built a row of eight houses on the South side of Church Row (including Number 22) in what are now considered to be classical Queen Anne style. It was not until 1728 that the street was named Church Row. Around the same time Fenton House (1693) Burgh House (1702) and Kenwood House (rebuilt by Robert Adams in the 1760s) were also built.

22 Church Row is listed in Buildings of England, London: North by Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner:

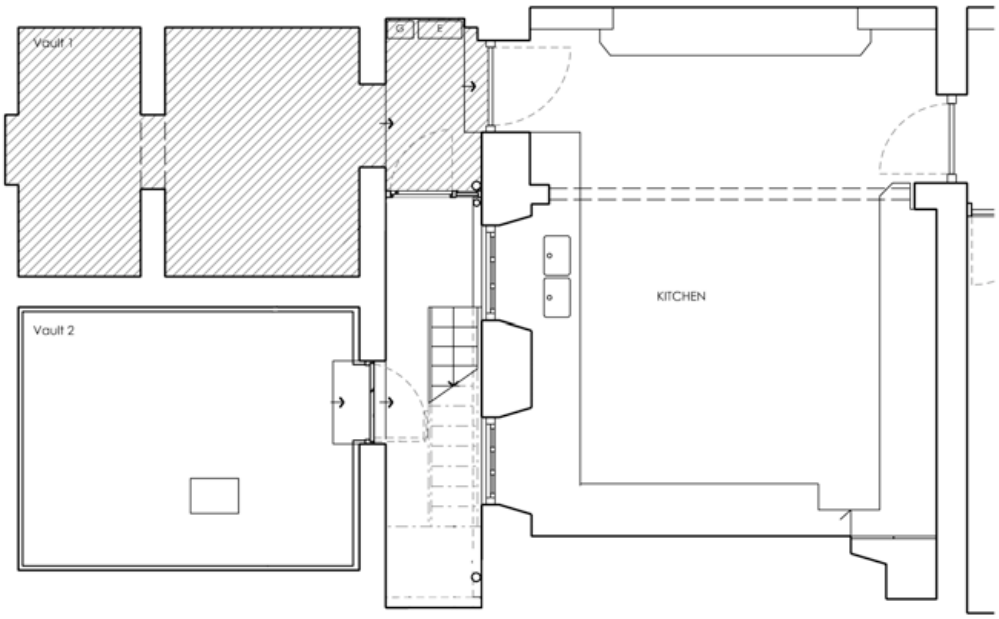
> *Church Row, leading W from Heath Street to the parish church… terrace houses, used in C18 as summer retreats by Londoners and by spa visitors, demonstrate how urban forms were beginning to invade villages around London. The S side, Nos. 28-17, gradually descends in stages towards the church. The houses built between 1713 and 1730 as a speculative development by Richard Hughes, a gentleman of Hampstead, are handsome examples of a common early C18 type. Each is of three bays, three storeys over basements, of brown brick with red dressings, with slender segment-headed windows and doorways with straight hoods on richly carved brackets. The present nearly uniform impression owes a great deal to sensitive later C19 refacing. The houses are to a standard plan, with front and back rooms, rear staircase and closet, and retain much good panelling and joinery. The backs are now very irregular, with many later bows added to take advantage of the splendid views S.*

22 Church Row, and its railings, are listed by English Heritage (Entry Number 1271915) as Grade II*. It was first listed in 11 August 1950. The entry reads:

> *"Terraced house. c1720, refaced late C19 in Georgian style. Brown brick with red brick dressings and floor bands. Slightly projecting brick pilaster strips at angles. Slated mansard roof with pedimented dormers. 3 storeys, attic and basement. 3 windows. Late C19 door case with fluted pilasters and cornice; doorway with panelled reveals, radial patterned fanlight and panelled door with wrought-iron lamp bracket over. Gauged red brick segmental arches to slightly recessed sashes with exposed boxes and glazing bars to top half of sashes only; 1st floor with cast-iron balconies. Parapet. INTERIOR: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with torch flambe finials to areas."*

Principles of and justification for the proposed works

The works relate to the metal staircase and "Vault 1" of 22 Church Row. The vault is beneath the pavement and road, and is not visible from the street. The plan, shown below, marks the vault in diagonal grey.



The vault is damp due to the failure of a water membrane dating back to the nineteen seventies, As a result surface water is penetrating from the pavement and road above. The metal staircase is corroded and nearing the end of its functional life.

List of works to be carried out

A summary of the intended works is listed below. Predominantly the works can be characterized as repairs to damp proofing, rotten timber and corroded steel, with restoration in a manner sympathetic to the history and heritage of the building.

Damp proofing of Vault 1

1. Carefully remove existing sand/cement render and mat reinforcement from walls and soffit in Vault 1. Break up concrete floor, remove polythene DPM and cart away. Carefully excavate a level base and provide new concrete slab. Do not excavate below the level of the existing brick spread footings. New waterproof cement to walls and soffit of Vault 1 and new plastic tanking membrane overall, drain to existing gulley. Clad with new tongue and grove boarding supported on treated softwood battens.

Boxing around electricity fuse box

2. Remove boxing around electricity fuse box and free from wall. Refit fuse box in new timber cabinet with front opening side hung doors.

External Basement Door

3. Carefully remove existing rotted door, doorframe and side panel and cart away. Remove brickwork over and remove zinc roof. New hardwood door and frame as per detailed drawing. New insulated timber framed panel above the door, and new timber roof with marine ply finish. Clad in code 5 Lead externally with new lead flashings at top and sides.

External staircase

4. Remove existing corroded steel staircase and cart away. New cast iron staircase as per detailed drawing.

Water Mains Boxing

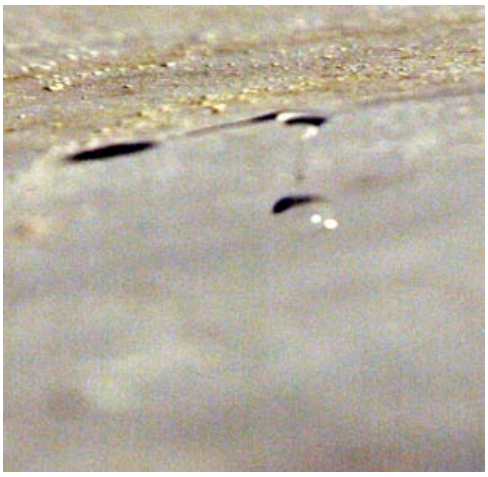
5. Carefully lift existing York stone paving and set aside for re-use. Remove existing external water main, Remove rotted timber boxing, re-route pipework underground and connect to existing inside the house. Relay York stone paving.

Cast Iron Railings

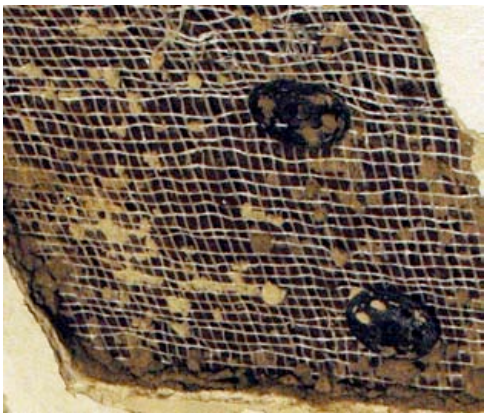
6. Remove horizontal “T” Bar to side gate at pavement level. Provide new full height bar and new spear headed finials to top of gate to match adjacent railings (see detailed drawing)

1. Damp proofing of Vault 1

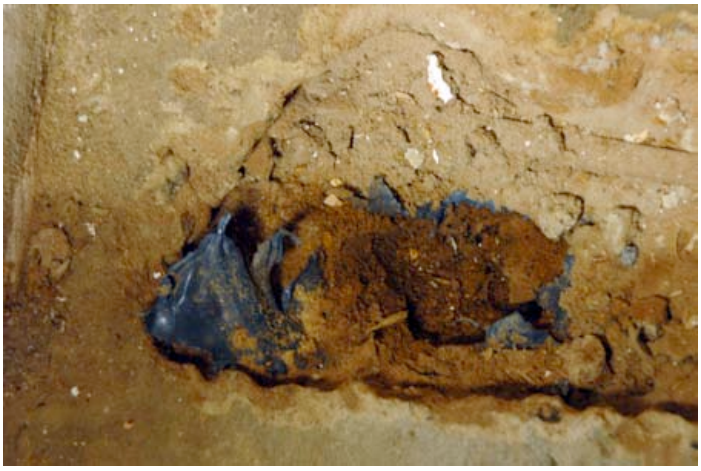
The damp proof membrane in Vault 1 is no longer functioning, making its uses extremely limited. The photographs below show water running off the ceiling, the damp blistering off the paint, and water being collected in a dustbin.



The section below shows a test patch (one foot square) of the ceiling render that has been carefully opened up to reveal that the plaster is mounted on a plastic membrane, with criss crossed ridges, secured to the arch bricks with plastic plugs.



The floor is concrete. A test area has been drilled to expose a relatively thin layer of concrete mounted on plastic sheeting supported by sand.



The intent is to replace the existing waterproof membrane and to clad the vault with white painted timber "tongued & grooved" boards (see below). Tongued & grooved boards to be used in preference to plasterboard, as wooden boards are used in other parts of the dwelling's basement, and plasterboard was not available in the 18th century.

2. Boxing around electricity fuse box

The boxing around the electricity fuse box is makeshift and was erected to prevent child access to the fuse boxes and is without architectural merit. The access panels with handles will be replaced with wooden front opening side hung doors.

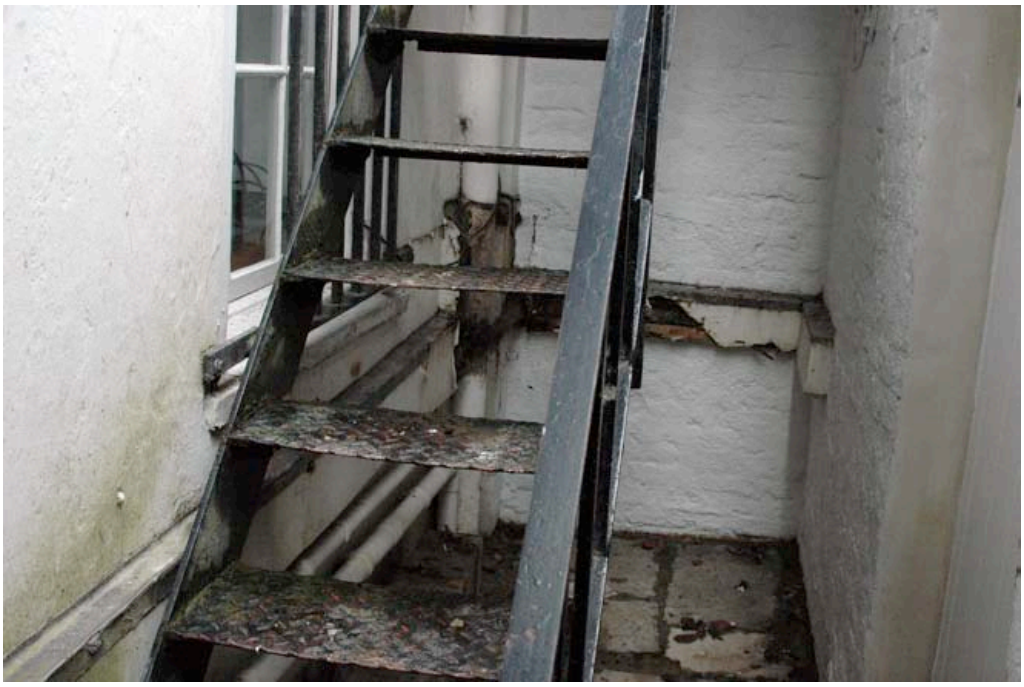
3. External Basement Door

The existing basement door dates to 1996 when it was erected in an emergency following an attempted break-in, and replaced an equally undistinguished door from the seventies. The doors footings are often surrounded by pools of water and have rotted. The cause of the rot is that the York stone floor has an inappropriate slope and no threshold. This would be corrected when the York stone floor is relayed.

The photograph below shows the course of bricks above the door, and the short stretch of zinc roofing, to be replaced with a wooden panel and lead roof. The new door will be made out of wood and designed to match the existing door to Vault 2 (bottom right).

4. External Staircase

The photograph bellow shows the staircase that leads from the basement door to the street level.



Generally the state of the metal staircase is poor. The photo below left shows the metal stringer that goes up the side of the staircase. The photo below right is taken from underneath the staircase, and shows the supports for the treads of the metal staircase have rusted through.

The new staircase will be replaced with a cast iron staircase painted in black.

5. Water Mains Boxing

The water mains run around the small courtyard outside Vault 2, and can be seen in the above photographs behind the steel staircase.

Set out below are additional photographs showing the decay of the plywood boxing.

The works envisage the water mains being re-routed underneath the York stone and the boxing being done away with.

6. Cast Iron Railings

The photograph below shows the cast iron gate, without finials, and the strange "T-Bar" that creates a square space in the gate.

While the staircase is being repaired, there is the opportunity to remove the "T-Bar" and restore the continuity of the uprights and the finials, in keeping with the existing railings and the neighbour's gate (see below) and thus with the rest of the street.

Impact of the proposal

The impact of the proposal on the special interest of the listed building or structure, its setting, and the setting of adjacent listed buildings is none.

Location of the Property