

MARTIN O'ROURKE

CONSERVATION - REGENERATION

martin.orourke.consult@gmail.com

tel: 0044(0)7895063839

Les Mimosas
Avenue des Orangers
34460 Roquebrun France

90 Queens Drive
London N4 2HW
UK

45 BUCKLAND CRESCENT

BELSIZE PARK NW3 5DJ

L.B OF CAMDEN

Design & Access Statement and

**A Heritage Appraisal of the existing house
and the proposed works.**

August 2012

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The aim of this report is to describe the architectural or historic interest of No. 45 Buckland Crescent in the context of the Belsize Conservation Area. The proposed works will be reviewed in terms of the current national and local policies for management and change in the historic environment.

THE BUILDING

No. 45 Buckland Crescent is one of a semi-detached pair of Italianate stucco houses dating from the mid 19th century. The house is three storeys in height over a raised basement and is three windows in width. The ground floor front is finished in rusticated stucco with two round headed sash windows and a projecting Ionic stucco porch. The floors above have a plain stucco front. The first floor windows have architraves with cills supported by blocks and cornices with console brackets. The second floor windows have architraves with raised keystones under a projecting roof eaves which are supported by moulded brackets. The full height of the elevation corner is marked by raised stucco quoins.

No. 45 is joined to neighbouring No. 43 by a plain set back stucco link block of three storeys, now much altered with a variety of windows and other changes.

The front garden is mainly laid to hard paved landscaping with an existing pavement crossover and parking space on the left hand side of the entrance steps.

As is usual with mid 19 century Italianate houses, the rear garden elevation is finished in London stock brick with the lower level of the rear garden permitting the basement storey to be at ground level. Originally, this elevation had sash windows set into the more simple brick elevation under gauged brick arches. This arrangement survives substantially on the first and second floor elevation.

The basement and ground garden elevations, however, have been greatly altered by full width extensions of generally poor design and constructional quality. The basement has a lean-to conservatory with French doors. On the ground floor elevation there is a curved oriel bay which appears to date from circa 1900. This is the only alteration to the elevation which has any design quality, a degree of historic interest and visual charm. To the right of the oriel

window is a modern conservatory which is poorly designed, grossly over-scaled and of inferior construction.

To add to this sad litany, the garden façade of the link block with No. 43 has been greatly altered in a detrimental manner. Where simplicity could be expected, there is a series of ill-considered and poor quality changes. The ground floor has an over-sized steel-framed projecting window. Above are a plain render apron and aggressively-modern French doors and window guard under an obtrusive deep lead fascia.

BUILDING HISTORY

The residential development of Belsize Park began in the early 19th century when the rural landscape began to be transformed by villas set in generous grounds. By the mid 19th century, the suburban transformation of the area was underway.

Buckland Crescent was started in 1856 and was a project by the principal developer in the area, Daniel Tidey. His developments were speculative, depending on the growing market for substantial houses for the well-off professional classes. So ubiquitous was his work here, that the area was known as "Tidey Town". Unlike the speculative stucco houses of Bayswater where the buildings were often arranged in long terraces fronting onto the pavement, Daniel Tidey's houses are typified by the paired villas with front and rear gardens. This gives a sense of space and humane scale to Buckland Crescent in contrast to the harsher urban quality of Bayswater.

THE PROPOSALS

The North (Front) Elevation

- The stucco façade of the house would be repaired and repainted in an appropriate flat stone colour.
- The existing hard standing directly in front of the house currently is paved with broken, uneven and unattractive concrete tiles. It is proposed that these be removed and the ground re-graded to remove the ugly concrete stepped feature near the basement windows. The area would be repaved in stone.
- The link block to the left of the main house would have a first floor shower room addition. This would change the uneven and unsymmetrical block so as to make a visually calmer basement, ground and new first floor structure finished in matching stucco with two matching timber sash windows.

- The basement of this link block would have the modern “Montessori” school gates removed and a painted folding door inserted so that the existing basement interior at this point could be used as a garage. The flat roof of the new section of basement garage would have a gravel finish set behind a parapet.

The South (Rear Garden) Elevation

- The existing basement and ground floor conservatory structures would be removed. At basement level, the conservatory would be replaced by a stock brick wall with painted timber French doors.
- The ground floor small terrace would retain the oriel window, with an extension to the same design detail to create a new conservatory feature.
- This balcony would have an iron balustrade of an appropriate period design with tall hedge screening at the east and west ends.
- The link block would be refaced in stock brick to match the house, with two symmetrically-placed painted timber sash windows.

General Improvements

This house is in a very poor condition;

- There is extensive rising damp in the basement.
- Considerable areas of external stucco require repair and repainting.
- The roof is in a much neglected state and will be completely renewed reusing the existing Welsh slate.
- The services (electric and plumbing) will be renewed to restore this house as a family home.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

This document offers Government guidance on 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.....

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

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.....”

Local Policy - London Borough of Camden

LB of Camden's policy to the historic environment is set out in the Local Development Framework (LDF)

DP 25 - Conserving Camden's Heritage

This policy commits the council to pursuing the protection and enhancement of heritage assets.

UDP Policy NN31

In pursuing the preservation or enhancement of heritage assets, the council will require applicants to provide sufficient information to properly and fully describe the proposals.

The council have produced supplementary planning guidance in the form of

The Belsize Park Conservation Area Statement.

This Statement contains a number of policies;

BE2

Partial demolition of a building will require Conservation Area Consent.

BE 19

New development should enhance the Conservation Area and respect existing features.

BE 22-23

Extensions should be in harmony with the original building form. Larger extensions acceptability will depend on circumstances.

COMMENTARY ON THE PROPOSALS

The overarching aim of these proposal is to restore appropriate visual calm to elevations that have been badly altered and strike a discordant note in the Conservation Area.

North (Front) Elevation

The repaving of the existing hard paved areas will bring a better quality finish to this area. The creation of a garage will conceal the vehicle from the front of the house for much of the time, improving the setting of the house.

The addition to the side link block, together with the renewed stucco finish and symmetrically-placed timber sash windows, will simplify what is now an altered and disrupted element in the house street elevation.

These proposals are environmental improvements and constitute an enhancement of the Conservation Area.

South (Rear Garden) Elevation

The poor quality and confused alterations to this elevation are very harmful to the historic character of the house and have a detrimental affect on the character of the Conservation Area.

The proposals seek to replace these unfortunate additions with brick structure, retaining the oriel window which is a later addition of character. The proposed design for this elevation will "restore the calm" through simplicity of materials and traditional details for joinery, brickwork and ironwork. For this reason, the proposals for this elevation are also an enhancement of the Conservation Area.

CONCLUSION

The proposals for both the north and south elevations of this house seek to remove unfortunate alterations which detract from the character of the Conservation Area. The proposals represent an enhancement of the Conservation Area without undue creation of new built form. The proposals

conform to the requirements of both national and local policies for the management of the historic environment.

Martin O'Rourke MARCA