

**12 CHAMBERLAIN STREET,  
PRIMROSE HILL**

**Historical Analysis and  
PPS5 Impact Assessment**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION, SOURCES, AND QUALIFICATIONS

### 1.1 Introduction and Sources Consulted

- 1.1.1 This report examines the historical development of 12 Chamberlain Street, a Grade II-listed house at Primrose Hill, and assesses the impact of proposed works to extend the house by excavating a sub-basement and modernising the interior.
- 1.1.2 Chamberlain Street (known until 1885 as Bernard Street) was built in the mid 1850s on the northern edge of the Earl of Southampton's land in St Pancras. (Indeed, the street ends at what was the parish boundary with Hampstead, which accounts for it always having been a cul-de-sac.) The street consists of two intact symmetrical terraces of 3 ½ storey houses – all listed Grade II in 1999 – and No. 12 is in the middle of the east side terrace of six houses.
- 1.1.3 Section 2 of the report explains the policy context of the impact assessment, whilst Section 3 outlines the historical context and assesses the impact of the proposed works with annotated plans, and Section 4 provides summary comments.
- 1.1.4 Very little information was found on the history of the house (or indeed, of the street), and the historical account in Section 3 is thus based upon census and directory records, the Charles Booth poverty archive, information from the current owners, and a site inspection.
- student (where I studied criteria for designating historic buildings and sites) I have spent almost 35 years in the fields of building preservation and historical research.
- 1.2.2 For the past 25 years I have worked as a consulting researcher in support of professionals and companies dealing with historic buildings and sites. My work has included documenting topographical and building history, professional assessments of the historical significance and listability of buildings and building elements, providing specialist input to policy plans, and writing policies and explanatory text for conservation management plans. The latter commissions have included the buildings of the former Royal Naval College at Greenwich and parts of the College and Chapel of St George at Windsor Castle, and I am currently drafting similar policy plans for the Royal Household's occupied palaces. I have also held continuing consultancy appointments with the Crown Estate Commissioners and, since 1995, with the Royal Household Property Section, and have provided expert witness testimony on historical property issues in the Chancery Division and at the Lands Tribunal.

### 1.2 Statement of Qualifications

- 1.2.1 My qualifications for undertaking this analysis and assessment are based on my work as a professional building and topographical historian who researches, documents, and assesses historic buildings. I hold a B.A. from the University of Ottawa (1974) and an M.Sc. in urban and regional planning from the University of Toronto (1976), and since my first involvement with architectural and urban history as a post-graduate

## 2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 This analysis and impact assessment supports an application for planning, listed building, and conservation area consents in relation to alter and extend No. 12 Chamberlain Street, Primrose Hill, London NW1 8XB. The assessment is in line with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5), published on 23 March, 2010.
- 2.2 PPS5 sets out guidelines for a proportionate response to development which impacts on the historic environment, largely defining that environment by its heritage assets. These include designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, and archaeological sites, as well as locally-identified elements such as property uses which have not been formally designated.
- 2.3 PPS5 requires applicants and LPAs to identify relevant heritage assets (whether

designated or not), and to establish the degree and nature of their significance. The evidence base for this process is set out in Policy HE6 and paragraph HE7.1 of PPS5, and it is on the basis of this evidence that an appraisal of the buildings has been made.

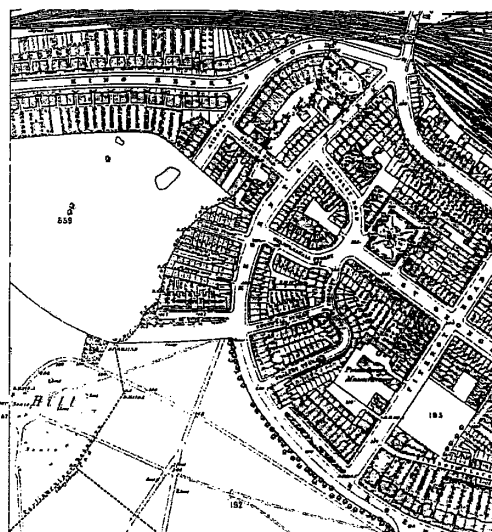
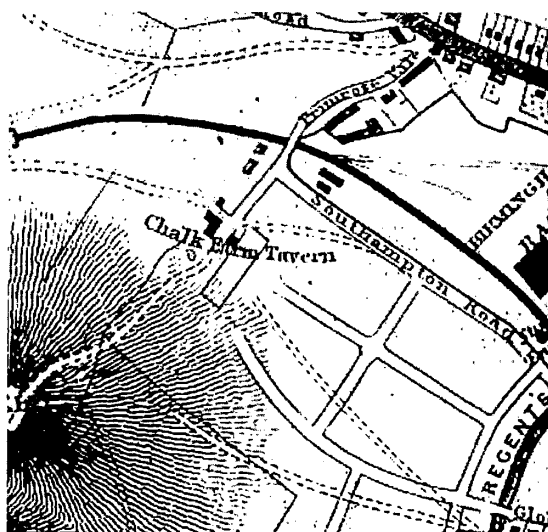
- 2.4 In terms of PPS5, 12 Chamberlain Street is a designated heritage asset, being statutorily listed Grade II since 1999 and lying within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, designated on 1 October, 1971. The house On 3rd March 1983 Permitted Development Rights relating to single family dwelling houses and minor operations were withdrawn on 3 March, 19982 by an Article 4 Direction under the Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1977 (updated as General Permitted Development Order 1995).

### 3. HERITAGE ASSETS AND IMPACT OF PROPOSALS

#### 3.1 Historical Development

3.1.1 Owned from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Fitzroy family and their heirs the Barons Southampton, the Primrose Hill area was laid out for building in the 1840s and largely constructed in the 1850s and 1860s. By this date the railway lines and the Chalk Farm goods depot of the mid 1830s were well-established, and the emerging suburb largely avoided the dis-

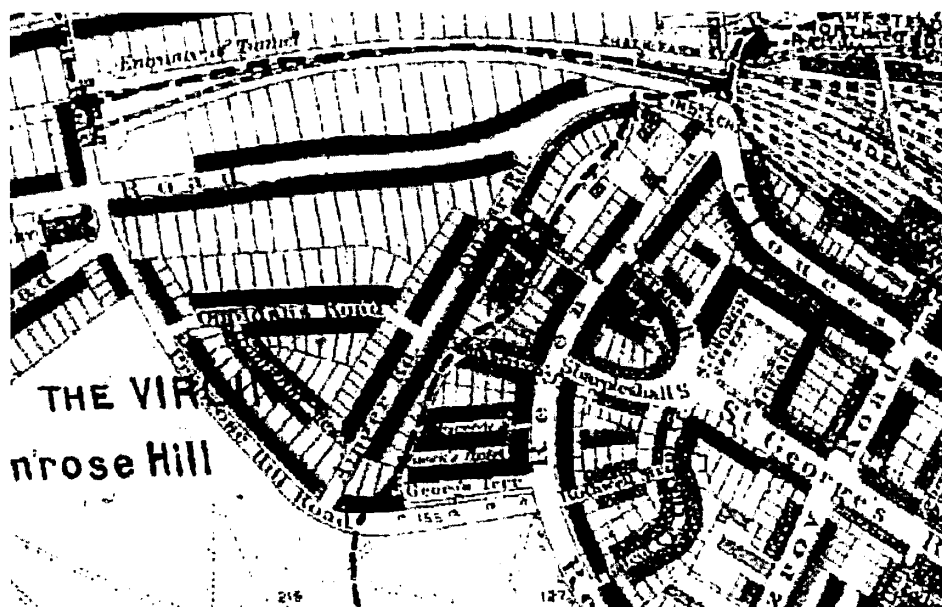
ruption caused when rail lines were driven through already-settled areas. As well, the period saw much good building: better materials and building regulations had replaced some of the more egregious building practices of the 1820s and 1830s, but the wilder excesses of late Victorian design had yet to take hold.



Davies, 1843 (left) and Ordnance Survey, 1870.

3.1.2 From the start, small trades, factories, public houses and shops sat side-by-side with the houses of Primrose Hill – a cosmopolitan mix which attracted artists, writers and artisans. The mix undoubtedly encouraged the area to be closely attuned to 20<sup>th</sup>-century artistic movements, and for 20 years after World War II buildings by Erno Goldfinger and James Stirling joined new work by Camden's municipal architects. In 1971, however, the demolition of villas for Darwin Court Flats led directly to the creation of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, which marked the start of creative re-use rather than replacement of buildings.

3.1.3 Although originally occupied as single-family homes, the houses in Chamberlain Street were reduced to lodging-house status within some 30 years of their construction in the 1850s. By the late 1890s they were described by the poverty chronicler Charles Booth as housing "rather a poorer class" than the clerks and shop assistants who lived on the other side of Regent's Park Road. (In 1891, for example, No. 12 was occupied by three families totalling 14 people.)



Charles Booth poverty map, c.1898.

The lighter colour of Bernard (now Chamberlain) Street indicates a mixed population of "Some comfortable, others poor".

3.1.4 A site inspection confirmed that 12 Chamberlain Street was heavily renovated when it was returned to single-family occupancy. The date for this work is unclear, but it is believed by the current owners to have occurred 30 or 40 years ago, which is consistent with the detailing. Internally, original features are limited to the usual surviving fixtures of the staircase, skirting boards, architraves, and cornices of the ground-floor rooms. Many other features have disappeared – the original fireplace in the front sitting-room, for example, had been replaced with a modern surround, and the existing late Victorian marble surround was installed by the present owners. Similarly, many of the windows have been restored or replaced, including replacement glazing bars to the first-floor front sashes and what appear to be fully renewed shutters and shutter recesses to the ground floor windows.

3.1.5 The internal plan has also been substantially altered. The basement has been entirely de-partitioned to form a single large room opening on to a conservatory (installed by the present owners). On the ground floor, the door from the entrance hall to the front room has been closed in favour of a large opening between the front and rear

rooms; and on the first floor the door from the staircase hall to the rear bedroom (now a bathroom) has similarly been closed and a narrow double door opened between the two rooms.

### 3.2 Historic Significance and Impact Assessment

3.2.1 As indicated by the statutory listing and Conservation Area audit, the primary historical significance is the exterior composition of the two terraces of Chamberlain Street. Significance also resides in the limited amount of surviving historic interior detail, which should be retained and protected during any future works.

3.2.2 The main impact of the proposed works on the character of the conservation area is the opening of a gate in the front area railings to access a new staircase to the basement. This was carefully detailed so as to express the existing arrangement, and has now received planning and listed building consents.

3.2.3 Internally, there are five proposals for alterations which have potential implications for the listed building:

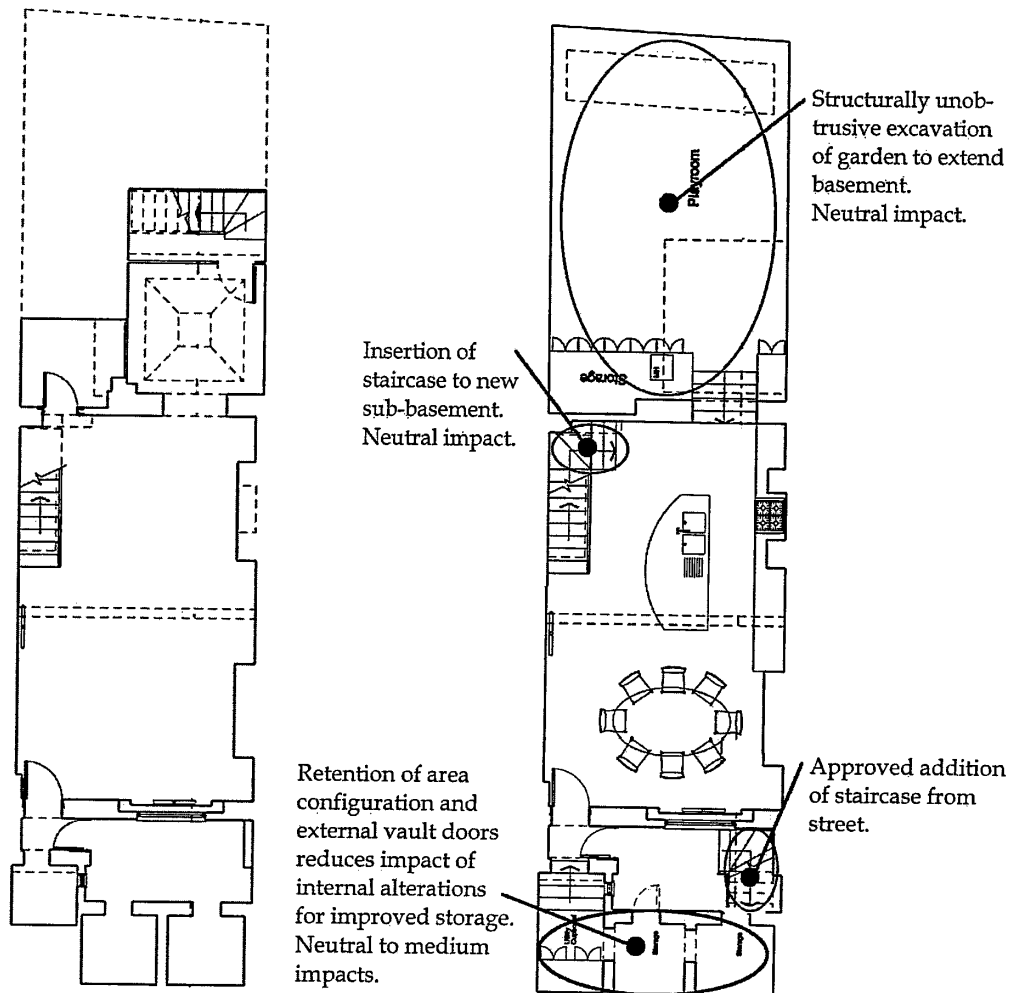
- a) excavating a sub-basement, with access under the existing staircase;
- b) excavating the garden to extend the basement;
- c) lowering the floors of the street vaults and linking them internally to improve their use for storage;
- d) removing the first-floor ensuite bathroom; reinstating the original

room proportions; and re-opening the door from the staircase hall;

- e) converting the closet off the staircase landing from an office to a bathroom.

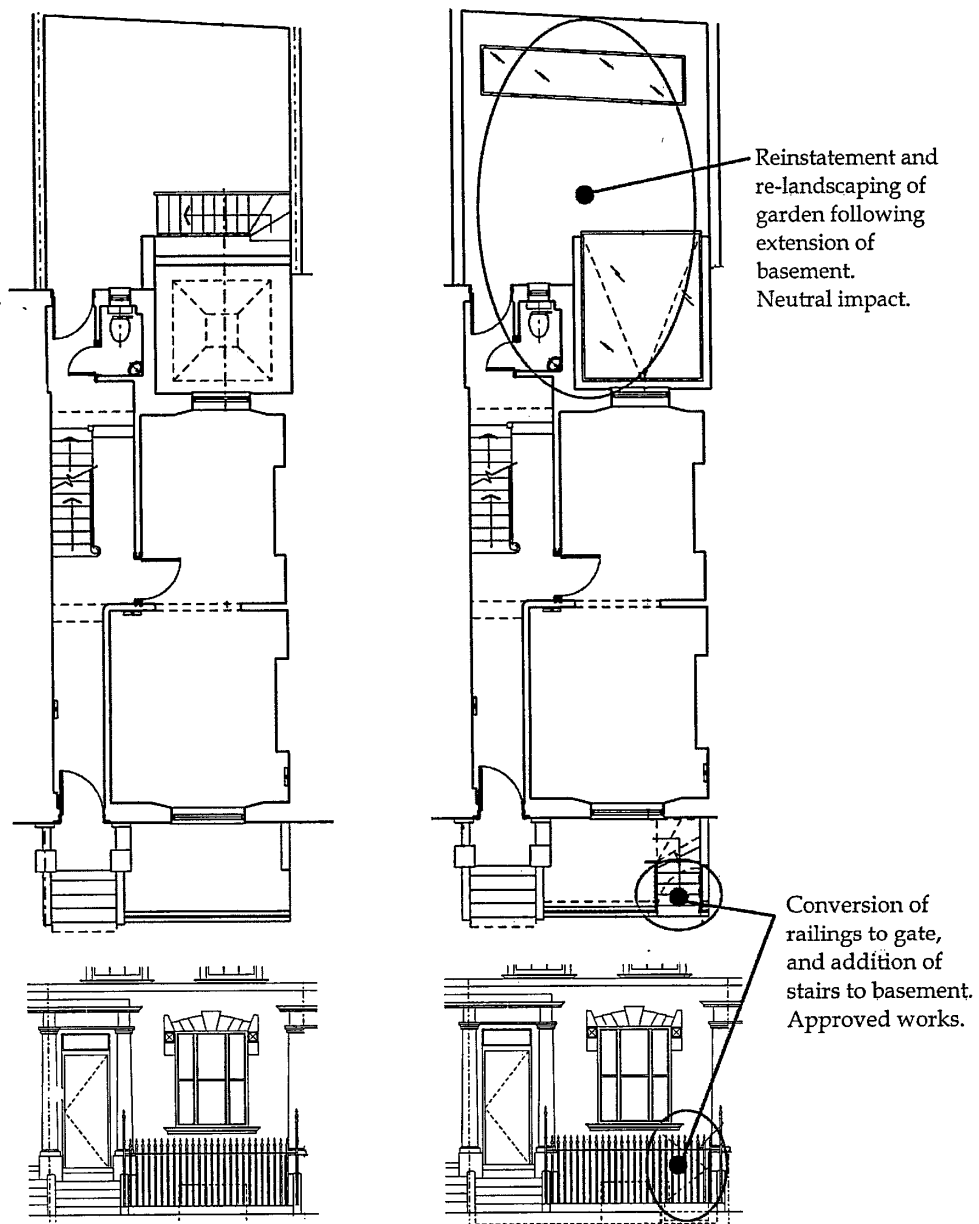
The impact assessments for these proposals are explained by the following annotated plans and summarised in Section 4.

### Basement



Impact Assessment, Basement.

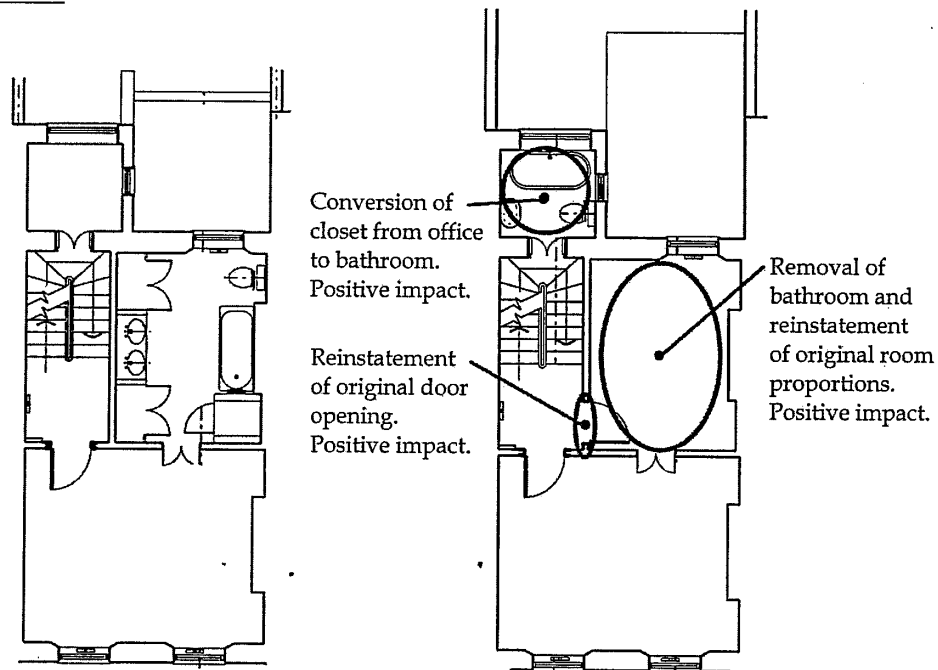
## Ground Floor



Impact Assessment, Ground Floor.



## First Floor



Impact Assessment, First Floor.

## 4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 The excavation of a sub-basement has a neutral impact on the historic significance of the building, as (a) the traditional hierarchy of the house no longer exists, as the existing basement has been completely departitioned and used as part of the primary living space of the house, and (b) the existing staircase, under which the new staircase would be inserted, is modern.
- 4.2 Similarly, the extension of the basement into excavated space in the garden does not destroy an original or early layout – the existing conservatory is a modern insertion by the current owners – and the subterranean level of the new room neutralises its impact on the rear setting and elevation of the house..
- 4.3 The enlargement and linking of the vaults is consistent with and ensures the continuation of their original use for storage. The impact on the historic building is minimised by retaining the configuration of the area, including the individual vault doors.
- 4.4 On the first floor, the removal of the ensuite bathroom, reinstatement of the rear room, and re-opening the original access to the staircase hall are all entirely positive alterations which respect and enhance the historic form and use of the heritage asset.
- 4.5 Similarly, the conversion of the closet off the staircase landing from an office to a bathroom reintroduces the original use of this space, and is thus a positive enhancement of the building.

#### 4. CHRONOLOGY

Pre Rural landholding of the Fitzroy family  
1840 (Earls of Southampton).

- Tottenhall Manor leased 1667 to Benet; passed to Fitzroy (illegitimate line of Charles II by Barbara Villiers)
- Chalk Farm Tavern first mentioned 1678 (on same site as modern inn)
- Manorial freehold purchased 1768 by Lord Southampton (Fitzroy family)
- building began at Prince Albert Road end of Gloucester Avenue, 1825-30
- railway terminus approved at Chalk Farm 1833; extension to Euston Road agreed 1835 and opened 1838; original terminus redesignated as goods depot

1840s Building on Southampton Estate lands, and designation of Primrose Hill park.

- Southampton lands sold 1840; construction in south part of estate
- Primrose Hill park established by statute, 1842
- additional land taken for railway, 1846; houses under construction in Fitzroy Road by 1847; Chalcot Square by 1849

1853 Chalk Farm Tavern rebuilt on smaller scale and gardens let for building.

1850s Development of land between Regent's Park Road and St Pancras/Hampstead parish boundary – St George's Terrace and Mews, Chamberlain Street, etc.

1861 Census. No. 12 occupied by W. Washington Evans and G. Washington Evans, a 57-year-old widower and his son; two servants listed at the address.

1865 Boys' Home built at 115-117 Regent's Park Road. (Established in 1858 as "The Boy's Home for the Maintenance by their own Labour of Destitute Boys not Convicted of Crime"; . Changed in 1865 to The Boys' Home for the Training and Maintenance of Destitute Boys not Convicted of Crime".)

1865-1870 Construction of remaining streets and introduction of commercial and light industrial uses – shops built opposite Chalk Farm Tavern; warehouses in Princess Road; piano works in Fitzroy Road.

1871 Census. No. 12 occupied by Gabriel Valpy and family (wife, 1 daughter, 2 sons), with 2 house servants.

1881 Census. No. 12 occupied by two widows, one with her two adult daughters (one possibly a grand-daughter). No servants.

1885 Bernard Street renamed Chamberlain Street.

1891 Census. No. 12 occupied by 14 people (2 families and an older couple).

1890s Charles Booth poverty description of Chamberlain Street – "lodgings but rather a poorer class than Chalcot Crescent" (which he described as a "lodging street, mostly clerks and shop assistants").

1999 Terraces listed Grade II.

CAMDEN TQ2784SE CHAMBERLAIN STREET (North side)

Nos. 9-14 (Consecutive) and attached railings GV II

Symmetrical terrace of 6 houses. Mid C19. Yellow stock brick with blue brick bands and stucco dressings; No.9 painted. Slated roofs with overhanging bracketed eaves. Nos 9 & 14 have pediments and slightly project. 3 storeys and basements. 2 windows each; No.9 with 3. Prostyle porticos; panelled doors with overlights. Ground floor tripartite sashes have channelled stucco voussoirs, keystones and triglyph with guttae drops; bracketed cornice sills. Architraved 1st floor sashes with bracketed cornices and pediments, and continuous sill band. 2nd floor sashes have bracketed sills, continuous sill band and are flanked at the top by the large enriched eaves brackets.

INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with spearhead finials to areas. The houses in Chamberlain Street form a very complete group.