

24 Park Square East, Regent's Park, London

Design & Access Statement: Listed Building Application



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PURCELL MILLER TRITTON LLP

architects, designers and historic buildings consultants

St Mary's Hall
Rawstorn Road
Colchester

Essex CO3 3JH

T. +44(0)1206 244844

F. +44(0)1206 244845

E. colchester@pmt.co.uk

www.purcellmillertriton.com

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement should be read in conjunction with the following documentation as part of the listed building application:

- Purcell Miller Tritton LLP drawings nos. 232144 / 01, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705 and 706.

The property has recently been granted planning and listed building consent for change of use from office class B1 to residential dwelling house Class C3 (application reference 2008/3306/P dated 25 March 2009). It has also had subsequent planning and listed building consents for internal and external alterations (application refs: 2010/6305/L and 2010/6305/P).

This application is for a further internal alteration to the ground floor only.

A previous pre-application submission was made to Camden Council with regard to the above planning and listed building consents which included a site meeting with Alan Wito of Camden on the 15 October 2010 and Stuart Taylor of the Georgian Group on 14 January 2011.

The new application is therefore made on the basis of the recent dialogue that has taken place and as described in item 2.2 overleaf.

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DESIGN STATEMENT

2.1 Background

24 Park Square East is a Grade 1 listed building, located to the southeast of Regents Park and adjacent to the Marylebone Road. The property forms part of one of the Nash Terraces facing Park Square and was originally built as a residential town house consisting of external stucco walls and slated roofs.

The property underwent a major refurbishment in the 1990s when it was changed to office use. From the archive information available it can be seen that a great deal of the interior was refurbished using reasonable quality materials and architectural detailing and sympathetic to the original period of the property.

In a small number of instances, original features remain such as the main staircase, otherwise the vast majority of the interior including virtually all of the fireplaces is 1990s work.

The recent planning and listed building consents (refs: 2010/6305/L and 2010/6305/P) have now addressed a great deal of the poor quality changes undertaken in the 1990s and restored the building to its former elegance.

2.2 The Design Proposal

The proposed alteration of the building with this application is for the careful insertion of a new pair of painted hardwood doors between the front and rear rooms at ground floor level.

The proposed works are as detailed in the attached application drawings and are self explanatory.

The proposed pair of doors, frame and surrounding architraves, will fit within the existing pilasters to the vaulted room and are to remain. The proportion of the doors is designed to relate to both the intermediate scale of the rear vaulted room and the larger size front room. This is also reflected in the door detailing of mouldings and architraves which match the existing.

Double doors in this position are not uncommon in buildings and interiors of this period. There are existing double doors at first floor level. It is considered these would enhance the character of the rooms and would certainly assist the use and functionality of the two spaces.

The recent planning and listed building consent approvals (refs: 2010/6305/L and 2010/6305/P) allowed the conversion of the vaulted rear room to be a kitchen. This was a sensitive response to both working with the historic form of the building and also recognising the need to suit modern day living standards for the 21st century and will greatly improve the usability of the house at this level.

However the vaulted form of the rear room does make the kitchen space quite restricted, particularly with respect to the storage of food, china and utensils.

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The insertion of the double doors will make an important enhancement to this arrangement and provide a further positive response to the needs of contemporary living.

The design of the doors and opening are also a sensitive proposal which respects the Regency architectural setting.

It should also be noted that the doors and opening would be reversible if ever there was a need to reinstate the wall.

The existing plasterwork and joinery on the front reception room side are also modern.

During discussions with Stuart Taylor of The Georgian Group for the pre-application stage of the recent approvals, he showed his support of this proposal, recognising the need for modern living and use of the ground floor rooms.

3.0 ACCESS STATEMENT

Due to the historic importance, access into the building is to remain largely unchanged with the main entrance remaining off Park Square East.

Due to the listed status of the property, the existing room layouts and internal access will remain broadly unchanged and as a private dwelling, the access requirements will be sufficient for single occupancy.

4.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This section of the Design and Access Statement has been completed in accordance with Policy HE6.1 of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPS5) which states that an applicant should "provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance". As a listed building within the Regent's Park Conservation area, No. 24 is considered to be a heritage asset.

Given the minimal intrusion of the design and the clearly defined history of the building, most of the information provided here is brief. This is also in line with Policy HE6.1, which states that "The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact on the significance of the heritage asset".

4.1 Setting & Context

The immediate context of the building is within the row of terraces along Park Square East. These were constructed at the same time and to a coherent design which mirrors the design of the terraces along Park Square West. Central to the terraces is Park Square gardens, a large and attractive planned garden with mature trees and planting. This garden space creates a remarkable sense of openness which is in contrast to the highly built-up areas to the east, west and south. It also provides an important link from Portland Place and Park Crescent through to Regent's Park. The view up Portland Place past the Circus and along Park Square East is noted in the draft Regent's Park Conservation Area Appraisal as being significant¹.

¹ John Thompson & Partners (June 2010) Draft Regent's Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

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The further context of the building incorporates the other terraces surrounding Regent's Park. These buildings are contemporary and utilise similar architectural features and overall Regency style. However, each row of buildings also has distinct characteristics which make them uniquely interesting while still maintaining the overall character of Nash's stuccoed exteriors. These terraces include Chester Terrace, Cumberland Terrace, Gloucester Terrace, Hanover Terrace and York Terrace.

4.2 History & Development

4.2.1 Early Development of the Park

Up until the 18th century, the area which is today Regent's Park was an irregular tract of meadowland within the estate of Marylebone Park. It extended north from New Road (which is today Marylebone Road) to the foot of Primrose Hill. The park itself consisted mostly of open fields as well as three farms, two inns and cottages².

At the start of the 19th century, the Duke of Portland held the estate on a lease expiring in 1811. The Duke also held other land in the Marylebone area on building leases. From 1786 to 1792 several of these plots were built on, with "the additions and improvements in this neighbourhood carried out in effect in quick succession...and the buildings in the north-west part of the parish increased with equal rapidity"³.

In 1793 John Fordyce, the Surveyor General to H.M. Land Revenue, offered a prize of £1000 for the best scheme to lay out the park upon the expiry of the Duke's lease. By 1809 the only three schemes which had been submitted were by the Duke's own surveyor John White. That same year Fordyce died and control of parks development was handed over to the Office of Woods and Forests. The official architects of this department along with Land Revenues were asked to submit schemes. They were Leverton and Chawner, and Nash and Morgan, respectively. Nash's plans were chosen in January 1813 and he was awarded the prize⁴.

4.2.2 Regent's Park and terraces

Nash's park was over 400 acres, with a zoological garden to the north, botanical gardens surrounded by a circular road to the south (shown as "Jenkins Nursery" on a plan of 1824 – 6) and an ornamental lake to the west. In order to subsidise the laying out of the park, plots of land were let for the building of villas and several terraces were constructed around the perimeter of the park. Walford wrote that "These, and the gardens of the Royal Botanic Society and the Zoological Society, do not injure the general effect, but rather add to the beauty of the place"⁵.

The south edge of the park was a straight boundary running parallel to New Road (Marylebone Road). At the southeast corner was the north termination of Portland Place, with the area of Park Square and Park Crescent a garden. It was described thus in 1817:

² Lovell, Percy & Marcham, William (eds) (1938) 'Marylebone Park and Regent's Park, east side', Survey of London: volume 19: The parish of St Pancras part 2: Old St Pancras and Kentish Town, pp. 96.

³ Walford, Edward (1878a) 'North Marylebone: History', Old and New London: Volume 5, pp. 254-262.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Walford, Edward (1878b) 'The Regent's Park', Old and New London: Volume 5, pp. 262-286.

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"Portland Place is one of the finest streets in Europe. It was intended to form the opening of the new street next to Regent's Park and Mary-la-bone Park. The north end of this street is terminated by an iron railing and a gate, which separated it from a field, extending to the New Road. That field is now a garden and a shrubbery, enclosed on all sides by handsome railing, corresponding with that which encloses the Regent's Park on the other side of the road"⁶.

At the north end of Portland Place Nash had originally intended a large circus, around which would be grand terraced houses in four quarters punctuated by Portland Place, New Road and a main entrance into the park. In 1816 Nash called it "the key to Marylebone Park" and had it been completed it would have been the largest circle of buildings in Europe⁷. The north part of the circus was not built, however, and this could be due to the combination of a lack of investors and a post-Waterloo economic downturn. Only the south side was completed and this remains today as Park Crescent. Even the completion of this part of the scheme seemed troubled. In 1817 it was written that "*The new part of the road commences with a crescent on each side of the way, which is not finished, and the works have been so long in this half-built state, that grass has grown on the top of the walls, reaching, in some places, not higher than the kitchen windows*"⁸.

Park Square replaced the original design of a closed crescent. The scheme, also by Nash, was constructed 1823 – 5 and had started to be occupied from 1826. The layout of the square consisted of two rows of terraces. These terraces extended north of the crescent at the east and west ends and were separated from the crescent by New Road. Central to the square was a large garden area called Park Square, which put a reasonable distance between the east and west rows of terraces and created a direct link to the open space of the adjacent Regent's Park. Upon completion the park area was laid out with ornamental pleasure grounds. There was also an underground passage which led from the crescent into the square, which was known as "Nurserymaids' Walk". The change in design from closed circus to the open Park Square was considered by some to be a success, with Walford noting that "*This alteration is a manifest improvement of the entire design, and is productive of great benefit to the houses in the crescent and in Portland Place*"⁹.

The design of the buildings was of a standard Regency style. It was also of Regency construction, with plain brick walls being faced with stuccoed exteriors. They generally presented a continuous façade of three stages, rendered and painted white. At ground floor level are plain columns with Ionic capitals. At first floor are continuous rows of arch headed windows linked by plain pilasters and keystone arches. At second floor are flat headed sash windows with simple hood mouldings and above this a parapet with turned-style balusters. The only variations were at the ends and centre of the rows. At the south end of the east side this included a projecting terrace (number 24) with an additional storey. Adjacent to this is a recessed bay with rusticated ground floor and at first floor level pilasters with Ionic capitals and a pedimented window; this is actually the end elevation of No. 1 Albany Terrace.

⁶ Hughson, David & Reid, William Hamilton (1817) *Walks Through London*.

⁷ Walford, Edward (1878c) 'Oxford Street and its northern tributaries: Part 2 of 2', *Old and New London*: Volume 4, pp. 441-467

⁸ Hughson, David & Reid, William Hamilton (1817)

⁹ Walford, Edward (1878c)

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At the centre of the east row was the Diorama. It was constructed by Messrs. Morgan and Pugin and opened in 1823. It has a varied façade treatment from the rest of the row, but still works well with the group. The large building projecting east into the back gardens of the row and had an octagonal central space with large central sky light. The purpose of the building – which now houses the Princes Trust – was to exhibit dioramas in a technique invented by Daguerre. The success of the dioramas only lasted so long, however, and the building became a Baptist Chapel in 1851.

The park and its surrounding buildings were considered to be a great success and a marvel to those who visited. In 1835 Walker wrote that *"The beauties of the Regent's Park, both as to buildings and grounds, seem like the effect of magic when contrasted with the recent remembrance of the quagmire of filth and the cow-sheds and wretched dwellings of which they now occupy the place"*¹⁰

4.2.3 John Nash

John Nash (1752–1835) entered the office of Robert Taylor as an indentured pupil in around 1766 and later worked there as a draughtsman. After leaving Taylor's office he worked as a builder and surveyor and by 1777 was carrying out speculative building. Some of his earliest works were at Bloomsbury Square and Great Russell Street. With these buildings he established the technique of stucco, which had very rarely been used in London before. Unfortunately, the houses did not sell and in 1783 he was declared bankrupt.

Following his financial problems and a divorce from his wife (she was found guilty of adultery) Nash moved to Wales. By 1793 he was employing Auguste Charles Pugin as a draftsman and was designing public buildings along the Welsh borders. After living and working for several years in Carmarthen, he moved back to London in 1797. A partnership with Humphrey Repton designing rural and suburban villas and their grounds helped gain him favour as a fashionable London architect, though the partnership ended in 1800.

In 1806 (while still running a private practice) Nash was named as an architect to the Office of Woods and Forests. As such he designed for the crown estate and by 1813 Nash was said to be *"in great favour with the Prince"*¹¹. In the following years he carried out various works for the Prince Regent; his most notable commission was for the Royal Pavillion in Brighton (1815 – 23). In 1815 he became one of three 'attached architects' to the newly recognised Office of Works and virtually gave up private practice.

It has been said that the work at Regent's Park and its terraces were Nash's greatest achievements. He continued to work on large scale improvements for the crown estate including Regent Street, Carlton House Terrace, re-landscaping parts of St. James's Park, and the laying out of Trafalgar Square (which was eventually left to others).

¹⁰ Walford, Edward (1878b) quoting Walker (1835) "The Original"

¹¹ Geoffrey Tyack, 'Nash, John (1752–1835)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19786, accessed 30 Nov 2010]. Referencing S. Romilly, *Memoirs*, 3, 1840, 86.

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4.2.4 Park Square 19th – 21st century

Little change was carried out to the terrace through the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, much of the area was badly bombed during the Second World War. Following this the buildings were left neglected and fell further into disrepair. In the 1950s it was considered that many of the terraces around the park be demolished and a new scheme instated, but it was decided in 1957 to restore the buildings, and Lois de Soissons was appointed as architect. It was at this time that consideration was given to converting some of the buildings into use as offices, in order to make them more viable. A letter from the Crown Estate to the Secretary of State details the decision:

"We have decided to preserve and rebuild, where destroyed or damaged, Park Crescent, Park Square East and West, and York Gate, and to complete the extensive work already carried out to restore as far as possible their original facades. These Terraces, comprising 67 houses, constitute the main Southern entrances to the Park, and are, in our view, its most important features. Leases will be granted or extended, and it is our hope that the restorations can be carried out without any subsidy. We must, however, continue to be given some latitude in departing from purely residential use and, in this connection, we acknowledge with gratitude the help already given by the London County Council. We may have to ask for some further help in order to justify a return on the large capital expenditure involved"¹².

It is unclear the extent of work which would have been carried out at No 24, though it was presumably general repair and restoration work. However, it is thought that much of the original architectural features and finishes were lost either at this time or prior to it, as a great deal of the present finishes date to the 1990s.

¹² Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Home Department and Lord Privy Seal, by the Crown Estate. 18 November 1957. (National Archives: CAB 129/90).

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Greenwood Map 1824-26

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Creighton's Map 1830

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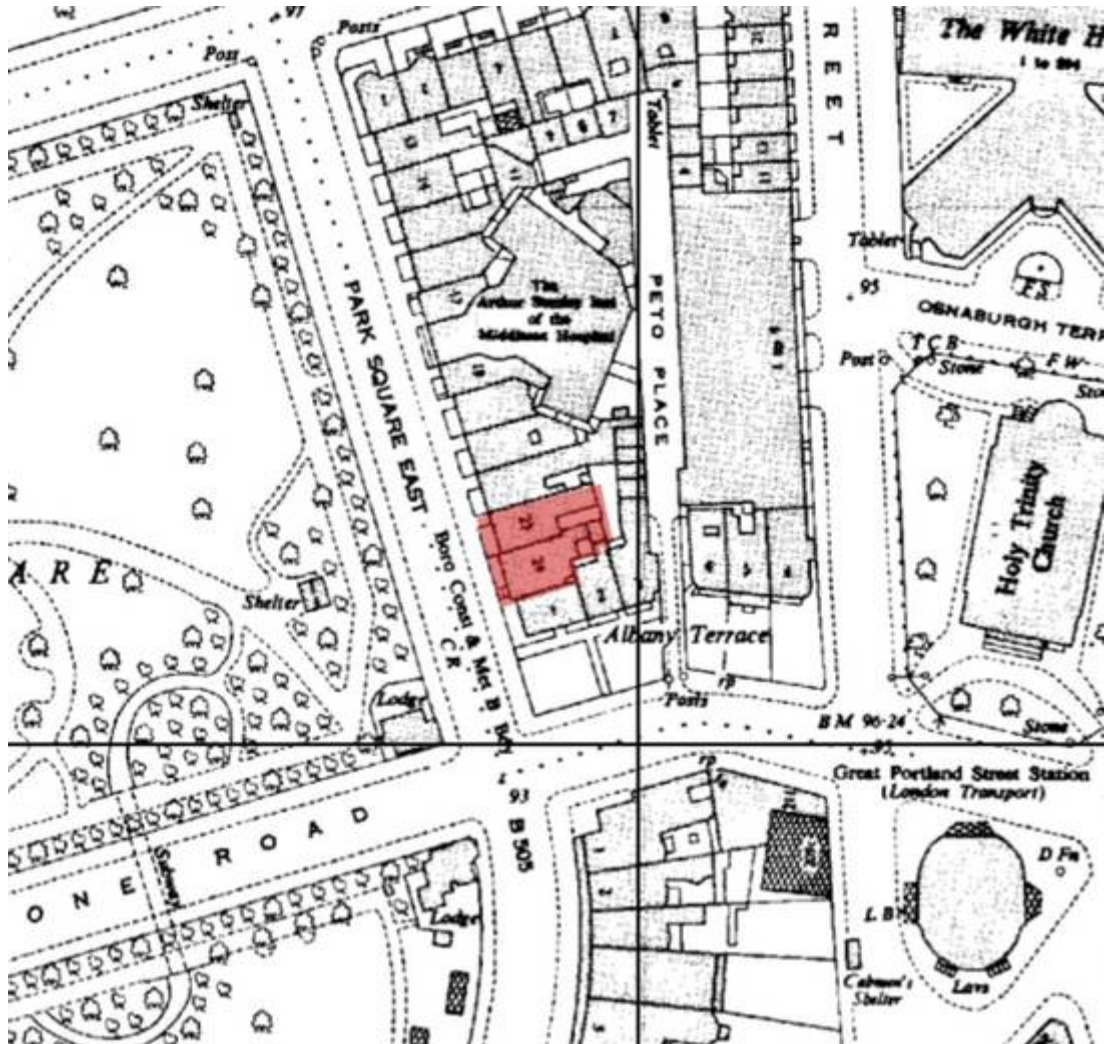


OS Map 1887

Illustrating very little change

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OS Map 1954

Illustrating very little change

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4.3 Significance

The national importance of the building is established by its Grade I listed status. It also forms an important part of the Regent's Park Conservation Area.

The building is an important part of the Park Square East terrace. The exterior design is part of the larger design scheme which maintains an architectural character. This is also reflected in the terraces to the west of the square. The building is also significant as part of the wider group of terraces which positively contribute to the historical development and setting of Regent's Park. This is arguably Regency London at its best. The bright white stuccoed facades and Classical architectural features are iconic both of the time and of Nash's personal style. These, along with the larger semi-detached villas on the north side of the park, help to create an attractive and coherent boundary between the park and the streets beyond.

With this in mind, Park Square is important as being part of Nash's overall scheme. Though the design for the space changed from a closed circus to an open square, this is arguably a positive change. The central garden space provides a link from Portland Place through to Regent's Park as well as a relationship to the park. With the continuation of green space and the landscaped gardens Nash was able to create "the country in the city"¹³. He provided an attractively landscaped park – much in the style of his former partner Repton – within the increasingly built-up area north of Marylebone Road. He was able, through his work at Regent's Park and in the West End, *"to make a greater and more beneficial impact on the capital than any other single architect since Christopher Wren. Here he demonstrated an ability to compose and group buildings for their scenic effect, and to conceive and carry out large urban planning enterprises, which has rarely been matched before or since"*¹⁴.

No. 24 has a high level of architectural value which is predominantly attributable to the exterior west façade. This elevation forms an important part of the terrace and is well designed in terms of proportion and the use of Classical and Palladian elements. No. 24 is of particular interest within the row of buildings given the subtle variations which set it apart as a finishing point to the terrace.

The rear elevation and interior design are also of interest but are less significant than the main west façade. The interior layout is typical of the period, and much of the interior finishes and fittings are 20th century replacements. Though these are attractive and of reasonably good quality, they are not original and therefore diminish to some degree the significance of surviving built fabric.

Summary Statement of Significance

No. 24 Park Square East is an important part of the larger scheme of terraces around Regent's Park. It is an attractive – albeit typical – example of Regency design and utilises Nash's favoured design of stuccoed exteriors. The greatest significance of the building is as part of Nash's larger scheme for the Regent's Park area, for its positive contribution to the overall setting and context of the park, and for the Regency design of the west façade.

¹³ John Thompson & Partners (June 2010)

¹⁴ Geoffrey Tyack

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4.4 Impact Assessment

As previously mentioned, the greatest significance of this house is its overall contribution to setting and group value both within its terrace and in the greater context of Regent's Park. Importantly, the proposal will have no impact on this significance. The main west façade of the building is to remain intact and therefore cause no disruption to the exterior setting of the building.

According to PPS5 Policy HE10, "*local planning authorities should treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset*". The current proposals meet both of these requirements. The exterior west façade and the surviving original interior elements are preserved.

4.5 Sources Consulted

In preparing the proposed scheme for the building, the Camden Council Conservation Officer was consulted, as was the Georgian Society. The Crown Estate archivist Jeremy Linton was also consulted in the early stages of the design.

In order to carry out the historical research for the Heritage Impact Assessment, the following resources were consulted:

- Archaeological Data Service
- Heritage Gateway
- British History Online
- Crown Estate archives
- National Archives Database
- Camden Borough Council Planning Department
- Oxford National Biography

Several contemporary and secondary sources were also referenced for the history and development section of this report. These include:

- John Thompson & Partners (June 2010) Draft Regent's Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy
- Hughson, David & Reid, William Hamilton (1817) *Walks Through London*
- Lovell, Percy & Marcham, William (eds) (1938) 'Marylebone Park and Regent's Park, east side', Survey of London: volume 19: The parish of St Pancras part 2: Old St Pancras and Kentish Town, pp. 96.
- Walford, Edward (1878) *Old and New London: Volumes 3 – 5*

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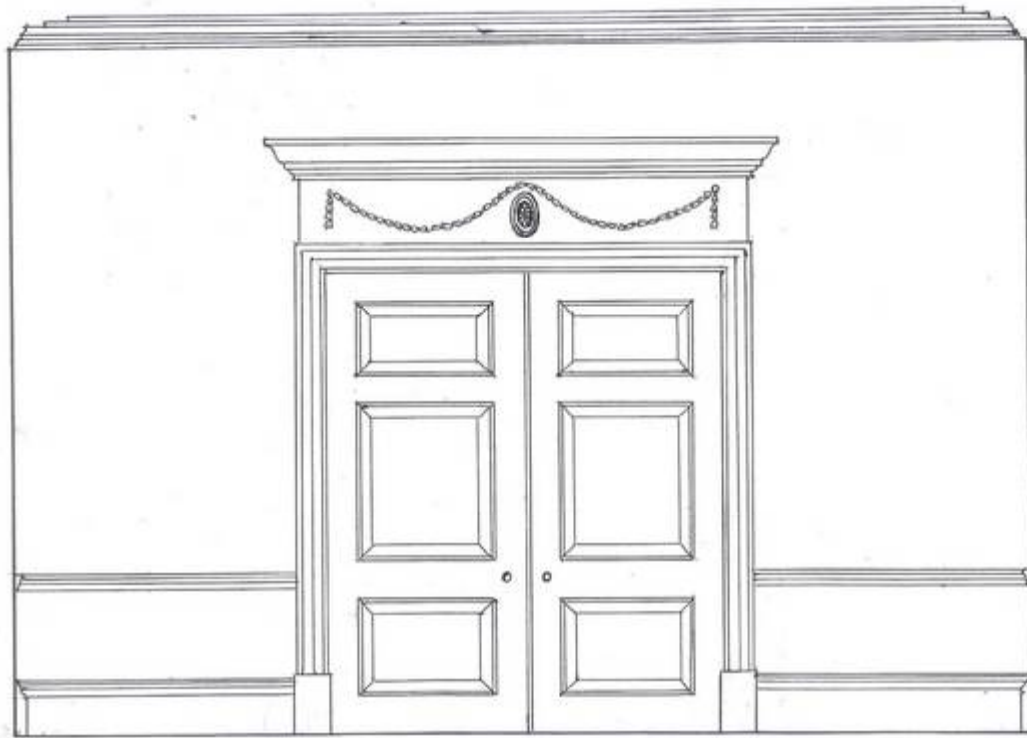
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APPENDIX ONE

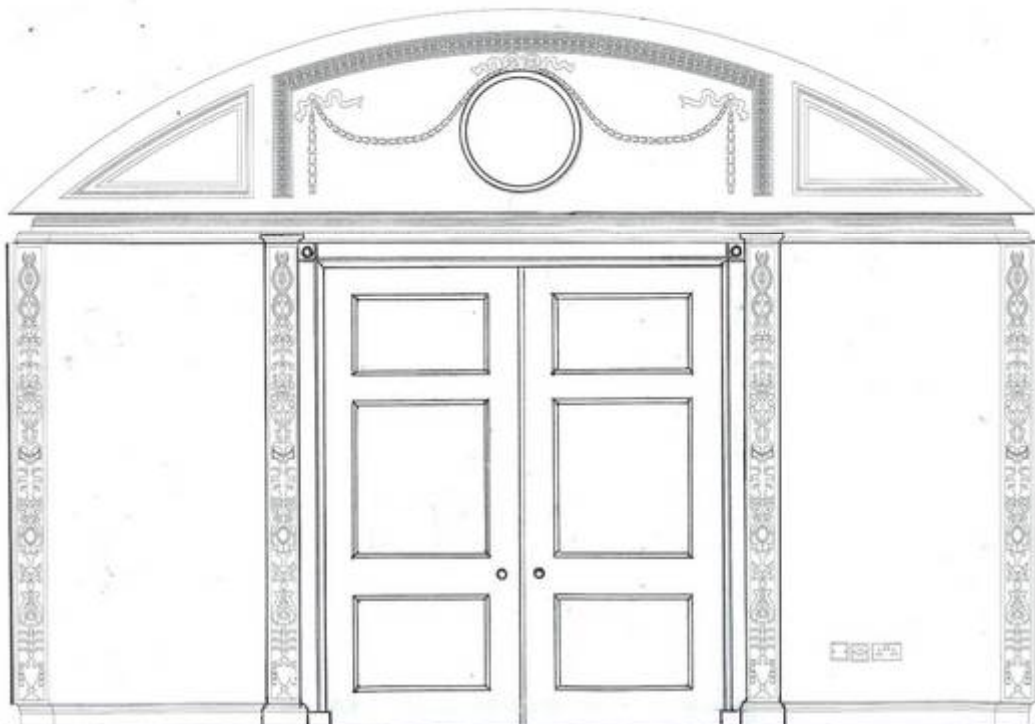
The Interior Designer proposed sketches of the ground floor pair of doors between the front and rear room – east and west elevations.

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GROUND FLOOR FRONT ROOM Proposed New Double Doors



GROUND FLOOR 'Soanian' REAR ROOM Proposed New Double Doors