

**COMBINED HERITAGE STATEMENT AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**13 PRINCE ALBERT ROAD, LONDON, NW1 7SR**

**PROPOSED REMOVAL OF INTERNAL CHIMNEY BREAST ON THE SECOND FLOOR**

**AND REPOSITIONING OF THE ENTRANCE GATE (RETROSPECTIVE)**

## **Introduction**

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in relation to the combined planning and listed building application for the alterations at the Grade II Listed Building at 13 Prince Albert Road.

This statement has been produced in order to meet the requirements set out in DCLG Circular 01/2006, 'Guidance and Changes to the Development Control System' and the requirements of PPS 5 in relation to Heritage Statements. This Heritage and Design and Access Statement focuses upon identifying the design parameters and principles for the proposed physical works to the building and how the historical integrity of the listed building is retained.

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## Design Principles

### Historic Site Context & Surroundings

The application site comprises an existing building divided into two semi detached stucco villa's dating from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The building is located on the north side of Prince Albert Road, bordering Regents Park and London Zoo on the southern side of the highway.

Both No's 12 and 13 Prince Albert Road are Grade II listed and form a row of listed properties from 1 to 15. These 15 properties are all similar in their architectural and vernacular and relate to detached and semi-detached villas. The listing for these properties indicates that they were probably built by J. Guerrier and P. Pearse.

The building containing numbers 12 and 13 Prince Albert Road have a symmetrical facade of 3 storeys with attic accommodation visible to the street. The building is split with 2 windows each to the frontage, plus a later single storey, single window extension to 13 Prince Albert Road. The building has a slightly projecting central entrance bay with a double portico, having square-headed doorways with fanlights and panelled doors. The fenestration associated with these properties includes tripartite sashes with margin glazing to ground floors. The front elevation incorporates Corinthian pilasters marking bays rise through 1st and 2nd floors to support simplified entablature with a pediment over the central bay and blocking course over the outer bays. This central bay contains recessed sashes, having margin glazing to the upper floors whilst the outer bays contain tripartite sashes. At the first floor level, the building includes floating cornices. The roof structure includes tall slab chimney-stacks.

The application site comprises an area of approximately 126sqm and is located within Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement identifies the properties on Prince Albert Street as being set back from the highway with high boundary walls and substantial front and side

gardens containing mature trees. The 'Hill' was given its name, it is believed, from the primroses which flourished there in the 17th century. The 'Hill' itself remains a popular spot for picnics and outings and to enjoy the views of London.

The building is occupied as two single family dwelling houses and each has vehicular access to the site. Primrose Hill doesn't have a train/tube station itself, but the area is served by the Northern Line on the Underground with a station at Chalk Farm, while nearby in Camden Town there is Camden Road station which is on both the overland North East London Line and the Silverlink Metro network.

The proposed alterations are retrospective with the chimney breast having been removed within one bedroom prior to the current owner purchasing the property. The gate posts repositioning has been undertaken in a manner that ensures that the alterations can be integrated within its surrounding context without detriment to the character or general amenity of the Conservation Area or the historical features of the listed building as an individual and grouping. The merits of this are explored in detail within this report. Works include more specifically:

- 1) The removal of the internal chimney breast within bedroom 1 on the second floor and the replacement with matching cornicing and skirting board arrangements – listed building consent is sought for this work only as the works do not require planning consent.
- 2) The repositioning of the existing gate posts to widen the entrance way by approximately 0.6 metres – both planning and listed building consent are sought simultaneously for this work.

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## Planning and Historic Policy Context

The key planning policies relating to the principle of the proposed development are emphasised in the accompanying Planning Supporting Statement. With specific reference to design principles Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) which sets out the Government's commitment to good design. It states that:

“Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of good quality and inclusive design for all developments, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making better places for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions should not be accepted”.

Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) has recently been published superseding Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15) and is of relevance in assessing applications that affect both Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, both being defined as Heritage Assets within the statement. PPS5 aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance by ensuring that:

- Decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of that significance, investigated to a degree proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset.
- Wherever possible, heritage assets are put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation.

- The positive contribution of such heritage assets to local character and sense of place is recognised and valued; and
- Consideration of the historic environment is integrated into planning policies, promoting place-shaping.

Policy HE10 states that when considering applications for development that affect the setting of a heritage asset, 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. When considering applications that do not do this, local planning authorities should weigh any such harm against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval. Local planning authorities should identify opportunities for changes in the setting to enhance or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset. Taking such opportunities should be seen as a public benefit and part of the process of place-shaping.

PPS5 stipulates that there should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

Sections 16 and 66 of the Act require authorities considering applications for planning permission or listed building consent for works which affect a listed building to have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the building. The setting is often an essential part of the building's character, especially if a garden or grounds have been laid out to complement its design or function.

The overriding principles of PPS5 seek to preserve and conserve heritage assets such as Listed Buildings. This application seeks an extension to the side of each property and basement alterations, both of which have been designed to conserve the essential characteristics of the heritage asset that is number 12 and 13 Prince Albert Road and its setting within the group of listed buildings in Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

Within the Council's Unitary Development Plan there are specific design guidelines for all developments and this is contained within Policy B1 of the UDP as follows:

The Council will grant planning permission for development that is designed to a high standard. Development should:

- a) Respect its site and setting;
- b) Be safe and accessible to all;
- c) Improve the spaces around and between buildings, particularly public areas;
- d) Be sustainable by promoting energy efficiency and efficient use of resources;
- e) Be easily adaptable to changing economic and social requirements;
- f) Provide appropriate high quality landscaping and boundary treatments; and
- g) Seek to improve the attractiveness of an area and not harm its appearance or amenity.

In assessing how the design of a development has taken these principles into account, the Council will consider:

- h) Building lines and plot sizes in the surrounding area;
- i) The existing pattern of routes and spaces;
- j) The height, bulk and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- k) Existing natural features, such as topography and trees;
- l) The design of neighbouring buildings;
- m) The quality and appropriateness of detailing and materials used;
- n) The provision of visually interesting frontages at street level; and
- o) The impact on views and skylines.

The above guidance within the UDP has been read in conjunction with PPS1 and PPS5 to ensure that the overall scheme has been designed in a comprehensive manner which respects the intrinsic values of this site and the surrounding Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The merits of how this design has been realised to accord with the above mentioned design guidance are explored within this Heritage, Design and Access Statement.

The aforementioned government guidance is supplemented by other documents including the following:

By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice (DETR/CABE 2000).

By Design – Better Places to Live: A Companion Guide to PPG3 (DETR/CABE 2001).

Safer Places – The Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM 2004).

Planning and Access for Disabled People: The Good Practice Guide (ODPM 2003).

Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them (CABE 2006)

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## **Evaluation: Constraints and Opportunities**

### **The Design Process**

As previously identified, the main purpose of this Heritage, Design and Access Statement is to identify the design parameters and principles of future developments. It is therefore important to consider the constraints and opportunities which arise from the prospective development of the site, and how the proposed development would satisfy these criteria. This establishes the design process.

### **Constraints**

- Ensure the protection of the historical integrity of the external appearance of the existing Listed Building with the entranceway.
- Maintain the positive features of the Listed Building and overall site.
- The removal of the chimney breast within the bedroom 1 had unfortunately already been completed and thus its removal must be regularised.

### **Opportunities**

- The appropriate minor alterations of this existing listed building with which will improve the access arrangements.
- The already removed chimney breast does create a more functional building fit for a modern lifestyle, ensuring the longevity of the building.



## **Design Objectives**

After taking into account national guidance and, where relevant, the local planning policy framework, the proposals will seek to achieve a high standard of internal design and treatment within the bedroom 1 which does not compromise the external qualities of the building. The overall approach for the gate posts will be to apply design proposals which can be sensitively assimilated into the building, taking into account, the existing layout, and form of the gate posts. The architectural vernacular of the building was considered in detail and plans were formalised that reflected the work undertaken and sought to ensure the work was sensitively treated so as to respect the historic integrity of the building.

## **Overall Design Approach – Inclusive Design**

On the above basis, the design objectives relevant to the site and which underpin the development proposals are as follows:

### **Character and Context**

- Respond to the existing character of the Listed Building with the alterations.
- Respect the historical features of interest that contribute to the architectural character of the building in question and replicate where appropriate.

### **Ease of Movement**

- Ensure easy access for users within the building and outside of the building.
- To achieve access for all age groups and abilities as an integral part of the design.

### **Legibility and Diversity**

- Establish a site arrangement where design character defines the space.

### **Variety and Richness**

- Promote quality detailed design with durable materials that enliven the Listed Building whilst respecting the historical integrity.

### **Compactness**

- Ensure the development uses the building and land efficiently.

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## Design Proposals

Unfortunately having already been completed by the previous owner there was no initial design process in arriving at the submitted plans in relation to these works. Nevertheless work in relation to the gate posts did have specific regard to the most appropriate form of layout, minimising alterations, to ensure that the vernacular of the Listed Building and the surrounding context within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area was respected. The justification for these design proposals are highlighted in this section with regard to use, amount, scale, layout, landscaping, appearance, access and sustainability and how these elements relate to the historical interest of this listed building.

### Use and Amount

In terms of its use and amount, the existing building is currently divided to form the properties 12 and 13 Prince Albert Road which means that the use is confined to two family homes. These proposals would see an internal alteration and an external alteration to the gate posts of 13 Prince Albert Road; however, essentially the use would remain the same with one family home being maintained within this property.

In terms of the use and amount of the physical structure, there is no increase proposed as part of this development with no extensions proposed merely alterations which are limited in scale and impact. The historic use of this property as a single dwelling would be subsequently maintained and no resulting harm would occur.

## Scale and Layout

It is the scale of the building which is one of the key factors in the historic character of this building. The building has a grandeur about it, which derives from the scale and massing and form of the villa in a stucco style. It has a three storey appearance to the front with windows in the roof space which when combined with the Corinthian pilasters marking bays rise through the first and second floors to support a simplified entablature with a pediment over the central bay, all serve to emphasise the scale of the property. This application has been designed so that the scale of the property is respected and the alterations would have a negligible impact on the existing scale and its associated character.

Indeed the removal of the internal chimney breast is not appreciated from the outside and internally has no bearing on the scale of the building. It marginally affects the appreciation of the internal layout of this particular bedroom where the breast would have once been. The room now appears squared off with no visible appreciation of the layout having a chimney above. However this is considered such a minimal and confined change that the overall effects from this must be considered negligible with little in the way of actual harm.

The repositioning of the gate post has in fact improved the layout with a better access arrangement from the highway. The actual gate post remains visually the same as the original gate post and thus its scale is maintained and the widening of the access does not alter this appreciation of scale. The particular character of this building is not intrinsically linked with the access arrangements per se but more associated with the overall style of property as a grouping and the relationship of the buildings being set back from the highway behind the boundary treatment and frontage area. In this respect the slight widening of the entrance way by 0.6 metres has a negligible effect as this relationship is maintained.

## Appearance and Landscaping

The application will see a slight change in the appearance of the property both primarily from the frontage along Prince Albert Road, but also from internally within bedroom 1. A change in appearance in itself is not necessarily harmful simply because a property is listed, indeed in the recent appeal case at 2 Prince Albert Road, in reaching the decision the Inspector concluded that 'many listed buildings can sustain a degree of alteration and extension provided it does not detract from the special interests of the building'. This is a material planning consideration and regard must be given to the resulting change in appearance and how it relates to the special interests of the building, this is supported both within PPS5 and the council's policies within the UDP.

The proposals have sought to draw from the intrinsic features of the original building in the manner in which the alterations have been undertaken. Although the removal of the chimney breast was not completed by the applicant, the treatment of the wall internally has respected the remainder of the room with matching materials, cornicing and skirting details. The absence of the chimney breast itself is not necessarily obvious visually unless a thorough detailed examination of the rooms above and below is undertaken. Such an absence is not deemed to significantly alter the appearance and associated character of this building given the confined nature of its absence to bedroom 1 only with no difference externally.

As touched upon previously the gate post has been repositioned only 0.6 metres wider from its original position and this is unlikely to be visually appreciated from passers by along Prince Albert Road. The gate post is exactly the same as the original gate post and subsequently its visual appearance and associated effects on the character of the building are negligible. Indeed through replicated gate posts the alterations have sought to improve the access arrangements for the benefits of highway and pedestrian safety but in a manner which preserves and conserves the listed building.

The site sits within the designated conservation area however clearly the internal works would have no impact on either the setting of the listed building itself or the wider conservation area. The works to the gate posts as previously highlighted are minimal and unlikely to be recognised as a shift from the original position when viewed from public vantage points and the appreciation of the building and building group being set back from the highway would still remain. Furthermore certainly the works would not be appreciated within the wider context of the conservation area.

Overall it is considered that the proposals have been designed in a manner which would complement the existing character and appearance of the parent building without detracting from its special historical qualities and the contribution it makes to the surrounding area.

### **Access**

It is proposed that access to the application site would maintain the existing entranceway serving the premises but this would be widened by 0.6 metres which allows for improved manoeuvring when entering the site and improved visibility when exiting. No additional accesses are proposed and no alterations to the parking or internal circulation of vehicular movement are envisaged as part of the planning and listed building application. The works, although minimal, are considered to have benefits from an access arrangement perspective.

This application also seeks internal alterations in respect of the chimney breast which would have no impact on the vehicular access arrangements externally or the internal circulation of the users of the property. As discussed previously, the internal layout of this particular bedroom would be amended slightly, however, this does not impact upon the access arrangements in any way.

Overall, it is considered that the works would have limited implications in respect of the access arrangements other than through the benefits of improved circulation.

## **Sustainability**

In terms of the sustainability of the development, this application represents alterations of an existing listed building located in an existing settlement and subsequently there is limited opportunity to provide truly sustainable development. Indeed these works are retrospective which further limits the potential. Nevertheless, the repositioning of the gate post did see the original materials being reused which is inherently a more sustainable option than using new materials with their associated carbon footprint. It is therefore considered that these proposals would accord with current and emerging policy guidance in relation to sustainable development given the constraints of the listing and limited scale of works.





## Summary

On the above basis, it is maintained that this Heritage, Design and Access Statement accords with the requirements identified within PPS 5 and Circular 01/2006 and should be considered with the accompanying plans.

The adherence to the principles identified in this document will see internal and external alterations which have been designed in a manner so as to be sympathetic with the special qualities of this heritage asset within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. These alterations have respected the historical integrity of the building and replicated features, reusing the same materials in a manner which preserves the historical interest associated with this listed building. The alterations can therefore be accommodated in a manner which will blend in with the character of the Listed Building and its setting within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

Therefore, it is advised that a grant of planning and listed building consent is justified, as the works accord with local and national policies.