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55 Gloucester Avenue

Design, Access & Heritage Statement

18 August 2014



Heritage, Design & Access Statement

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1. Heritage

View at the junction between Gloucester Avenue & St Mark's Crescent

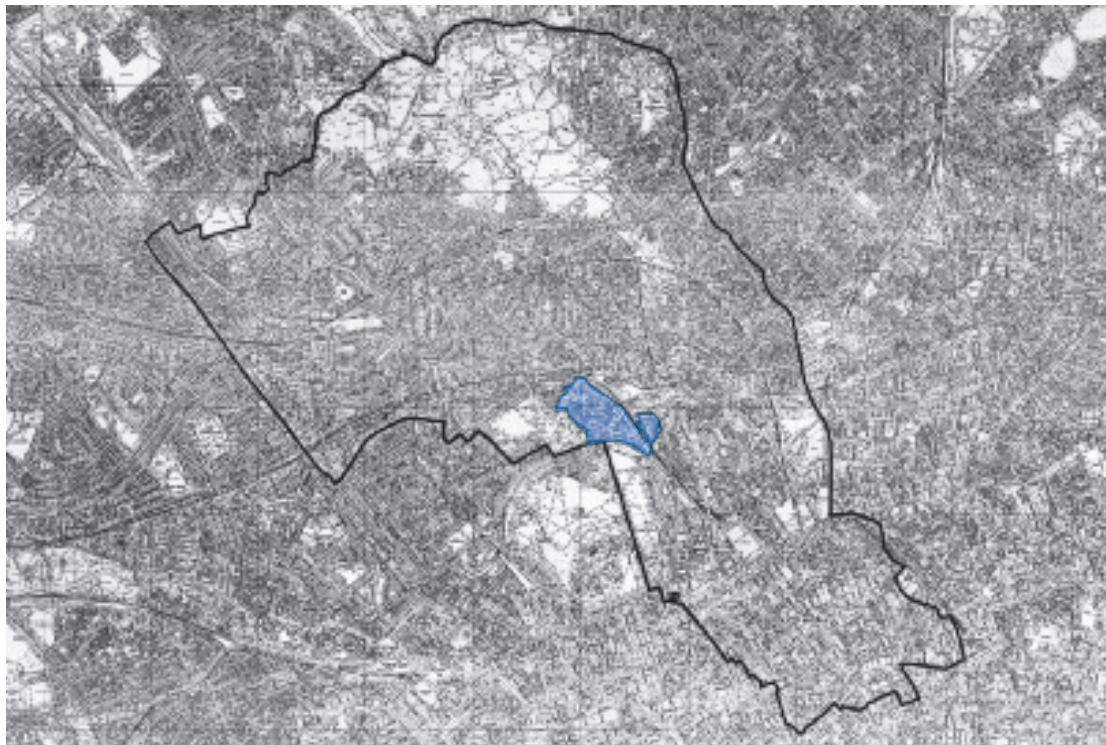


1. Heritage

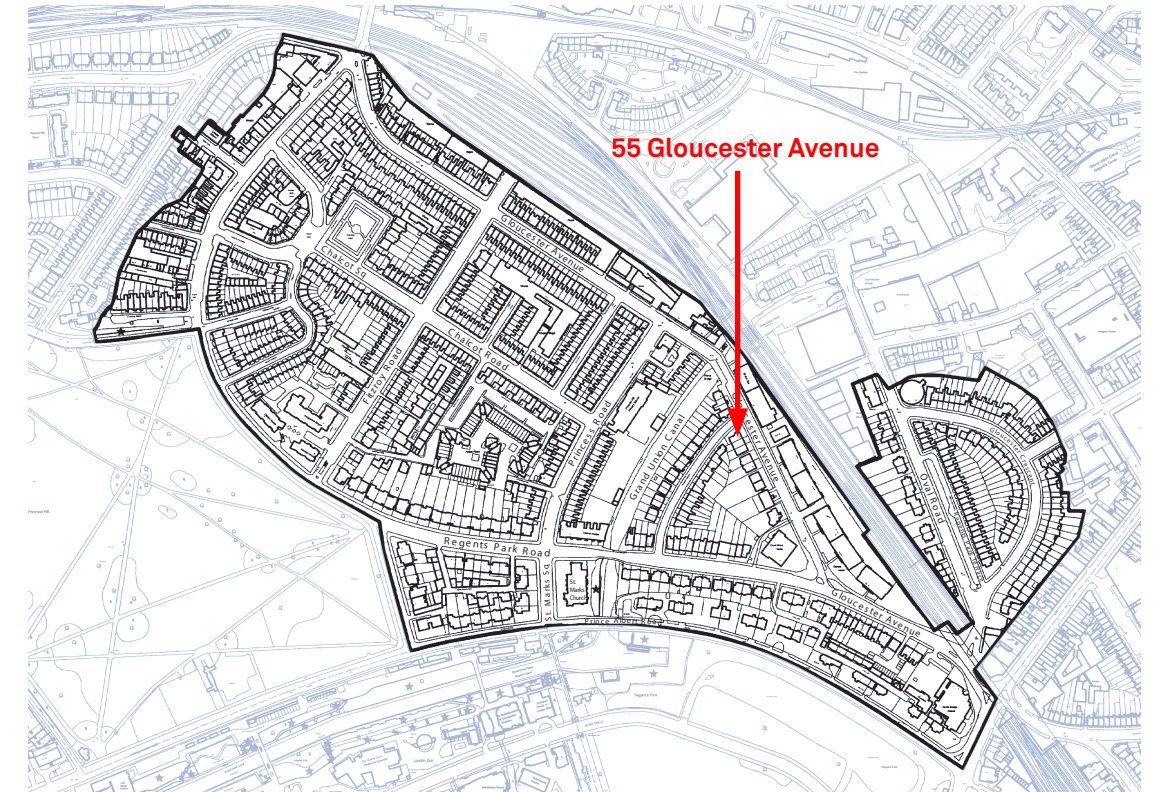
Camden

1.1 Location

55 Gloucester Avenue is a residential property located within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, as designated on 01.10.1971.



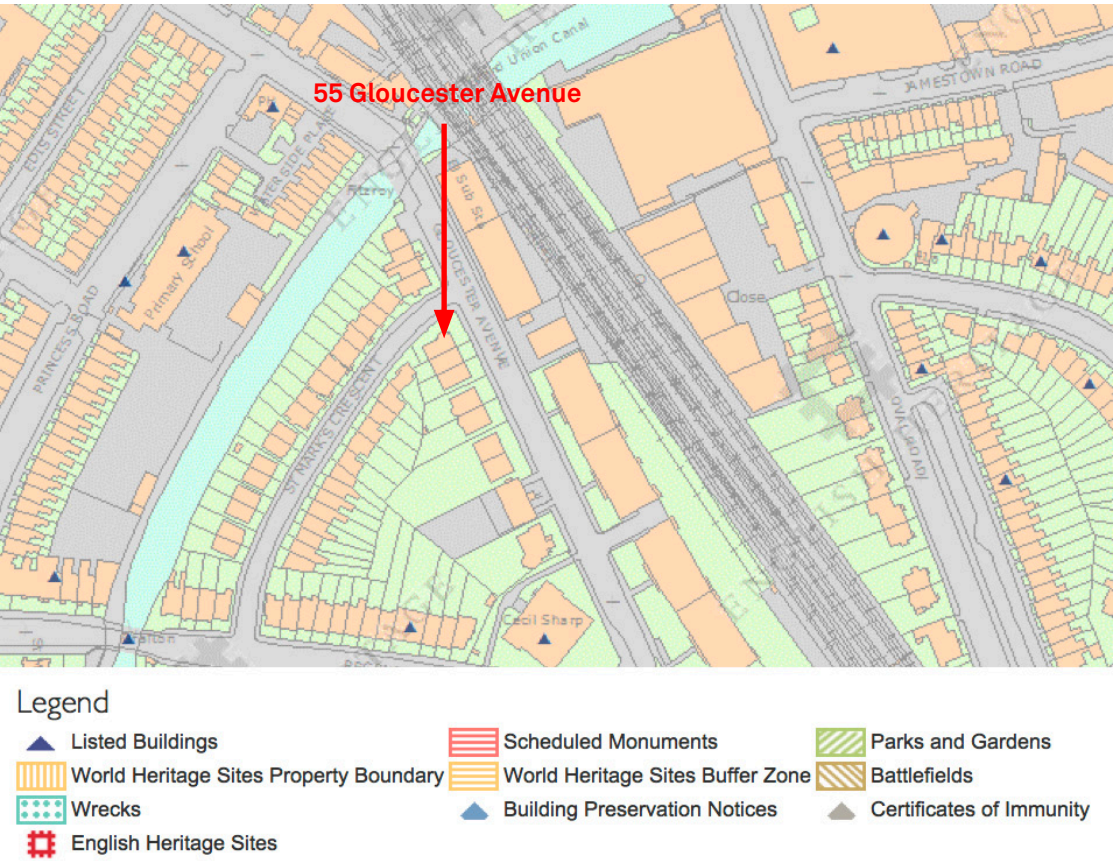
Borough of Camden Map - illustrating location of Primrose Hill Conservation Area



Primrose Hill Conservation Area Map

1. Heritage

Listed Buildings



Listed Building Proximity Map

1.2 Heritage Assets

Within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area there are a number of buildings assessed as being of national importance. However, these properties would not be adversely affected by the alterations to 55 Gloucester Avenue, as they do not lie within the immediate vicinity of the building and the alterations would not be visible from them.

1.3 Site Development

The following extracts are taken from the Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement:

“From Medieval times, the area covered by the Primrose Hill Conservation Area was open fields with small lanes running alongside. The land ownership of the area was irregular and largely defined by field boundaries and small streams. The existing Conservation Area is primarily located on land owned by Lord Southampton, while land to the north and west was owned by Eton College and to the south by the Crown Estate.

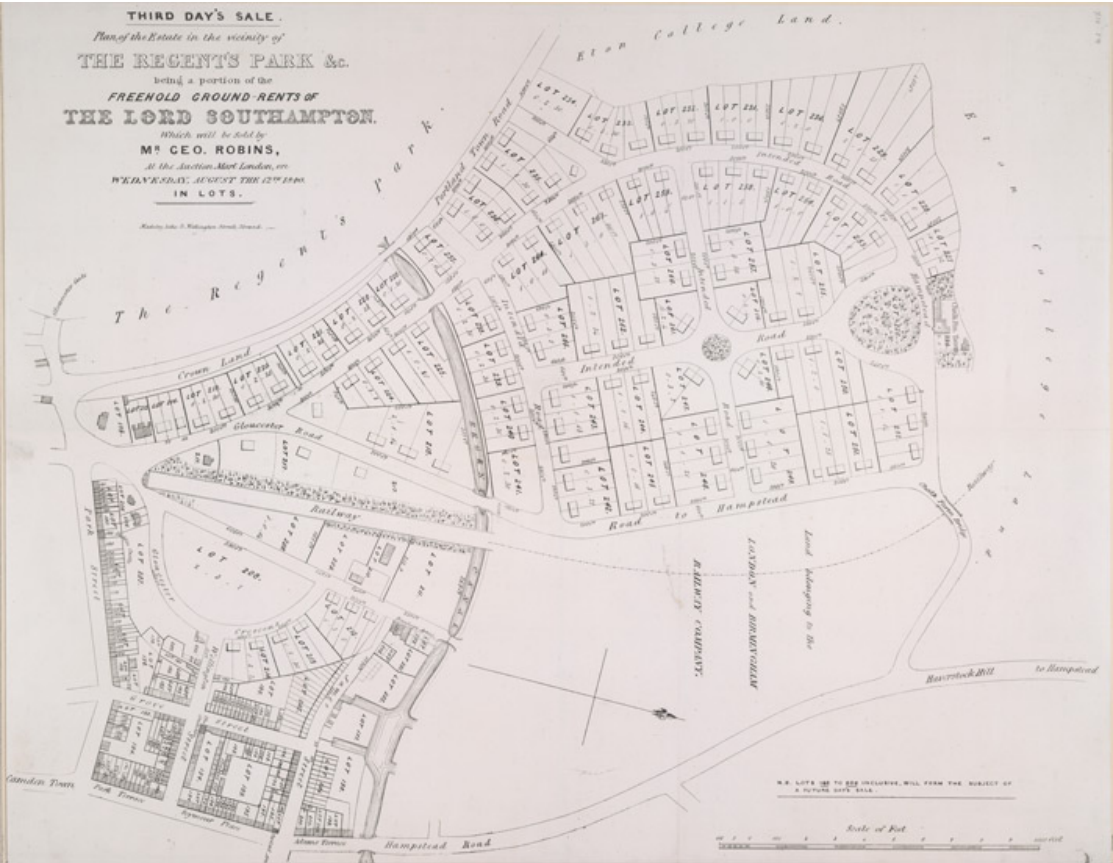
From the 17th century, the Chalk Farm Tavern was located on the site of the current building at No.89 Regent’s Park Road. The tavern was famous for its shooting grounds and large pleasure gardens to the area now surrounded by Berkley Road, Sharpleshall Street and Regent’s Park Road.

It was not until the mid 19th century that extensive development of the area began, in response to the expansion of London as both a trade centre and fashionable place to live. The first major development was the Regent’s Canal, which linked the Grand Canal Junction at Paddington and London Docks. The completion of the canal in 1820 was followed by proposals to develop Lord Southampton’s land for housing. As with Nash’s development surrounding Regent’s Park, the canal was not seen as a hindrance to development, and an estate was envisaged of large suburban villas with substantial gardens.

The estate was developed in the 1840s after the building of the London and Birmingham Railway in the 1830s. A map dated 1834, shows a railway terminus located at Chalk Farm. However, it soon became obvious that the railway needed to terminate closer to the heart of London, and Euston Square was chosen for the site of the new station.

1. Heritage

Historical Significance



Lord Southampton Estate Sale Map, 1840

1.3 Site Development (cont.)

The railway line extension to Euston had to negotiate a steep incline and consequently, a winch was used to haul trains as far as Chalk Farm. The straight track required for the winch meant the line had to run directly to Euston, necessitating the purchase of part of Lord Southampton's land. This entailed the repositioning of the northern section of Gloucester Avenue, with a sharp bend west of the canal bridge and a steep curve to the junction with Regent's Park Road.

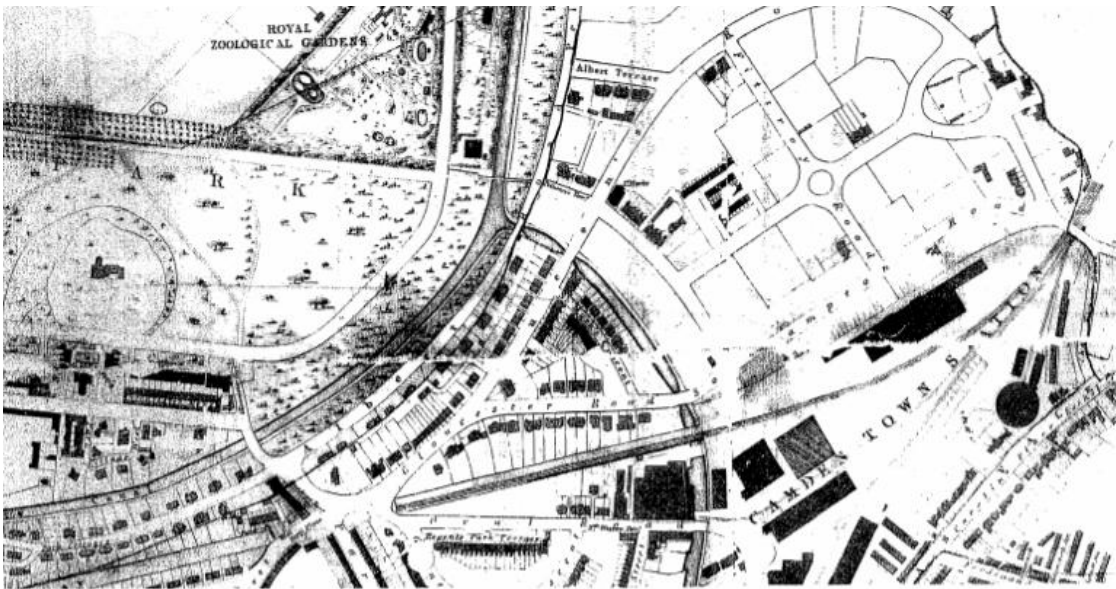
In 1840, the Southampton Estate was sold in freehold portions for development. The sale map shows a grand estate consisting of large semi-detached and detached villas located in generous gardens. The layout reflects the current street pattern of the area and incorporates the sweeping curves of the villa development with the addition of a formal intersection and garden at the centre and retention of the Chalk Farm Tavern gardens. Notably, a number of villas were even planned to address the railway line, which, with the use of winches to pull the trains from Euston to Chalk Farm, was then far less busy or noisy than it was eventually to become.

A number of well known purchasers of the Southampton Estate included entrepreneur builders, wealthy citizens and the Crown commissioners, who purchased between five and six lots in order to form part of the Primrose Hill, which was opened to the public in 1841.

Development of the buildings occurred sporadically throughout the 1840s. During this time, the last remaining strip of Crown land to the north of Nash's Regent's Park layout was developed as villas, involving the purchase of small lots of land from various owners of the Southampton freeholds. A map dated 1849 shows the majority of development concentrated around Regent's Park and towards Camden Town. Smaller developments had also been completed and included a pair of semi-detached villas at the north end of Fitzroy Road and a villa terrace at the north end of Regent's Park Road. The majority of these developments took the form of villa style properties set in their own grounds, or grand terrace compositions with formal landscaped areas. However, this development differed considerably from that shown in the original plans for the area. The houses were much less grand and the pattern of development much denser than had been envisaged. Notably out of character with the original concept was the incorporation of the small terraces of railway workers cottages to the rear of Chalcot Road.

1. Heritage

Historical Significance



Area Map, 1849



Area Map, 1860

1.3 Site Development (cont.)

A map dated 1860 shows that the development of villa style properties had extended westwards along Regent's Park Road, opposite Primrose Hill Park. Elsewhere, however, the large villas had been abandoned for more formal terrace compositions following a variety of styles. The new layout included symmetrical terraces, St George's Terrace and Chamberlain Street, a formal square, Chalcot Square, and a sweeping crescent, Chalcot Crescent. The latter is particularly of note as the crescent sweeps gracefully to its east side at the expense of the quality of individual buildings, which are shallow in depth and have small rear garden spaces. Such variety of layout reflects the architectural fashions of the time, whilst the compromises to layout may indicate competitiveness between the architects and conflict between the new landowners.

The importance of the railway grew throughout the 19th century. The winch was abandoned as more powerful train engines were bought into use, large railway sheds were erected alongside Gloucester Avenue and the track area increased in size. A number of businesses were located within easy distance of the railway, with access also to Gloucester Avenue. A notable example is the former "Electric Telegraph Company" complex at No.44 Gloucester Avenue, which includes the house at No.44A Gloucester Avenue. As a consequence of the growth of the railway and associated activities, noise, vibration and smoke pollution increased, at the expense of the surrounding environment. It quickly became apparent that grand villas could not be placed near the railway line and instead, simple terraces were erected in Gloucester Avenue and adjoining streets. It was only in the 1970s, when the railway line was electrified, that the environmental quality of the estate began to improve.

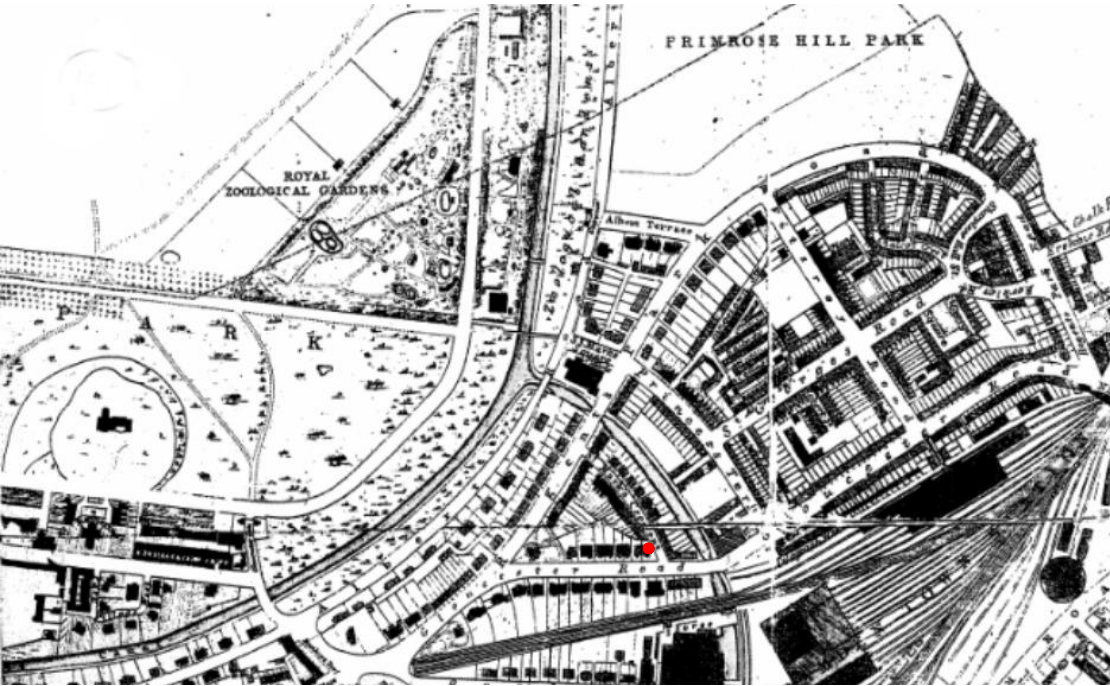
By 1870, the Southampton Estate land had been largely developed. Whilst the wide roads of the villa layout were retained, the density of development, particularly in the later phases, was significantly higher than originally intended, particularly in locations close to the railway line. The Chalk Farm Tavern gardens had been built upon and the large circular garden space to the centre of the estate was lost. Further streets and mews buildings were introduced to the planned layout, such as Kingstown Street (then Fitzroy Place), Edis Street (then Eton Street) and Egbert Street. These later developments were of regular town-style residential terraces. At the rears of these properties, the long villa gardens were exchanged for small gardens backing onto industrial units or stables.

1. Heritage

Historical Significance



Area Map, 1870



Area Map, 1880

1.3 Site Development (cont.)

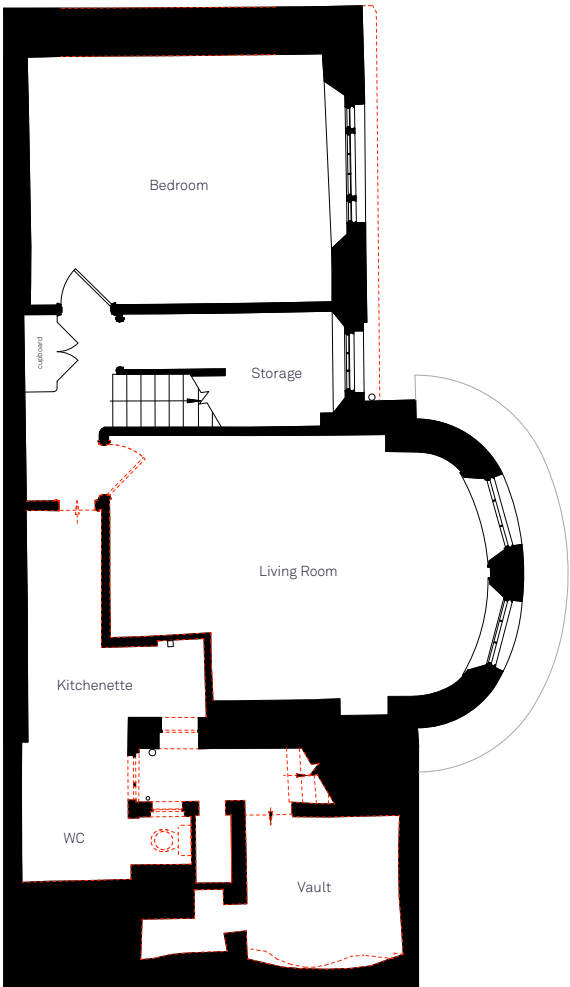
Manufacturing and the arts played a large part in the development of the Conservation Area. Alongside Camden Town and Kentish Town, the Primrose Hill area became a centre for piano manufacturing. Notable manufacturers included J Spencer and Co, which were located at the end of Egbert Street, John and James Hopkinson, located in Fitzroy Road, and Collard and Collard, located on the corner of Gloucester Crescent and Oval Road. The area became well known for its association with the arts, and in 1877 a group of 12 artists studios, the “Primrose Hill Studios”, were erected by Alfred Healey to the central block behind Fitzroy Road. The studios have housed a number of famous artists including Arthur Rackham, illustrator, and Henry Wood, conductor.

Other uses incorporated into the area in the 19th century included a boys home, located on the corner of Regent’s Park Road and Ainger Road, St. Marks Church in St. Mark’s Square, Primrose Hill Primary School in Princess Road and various shopping parades to Regent’s Park Road, Gloucester Avenue, Princess Road and Chalcot Road.

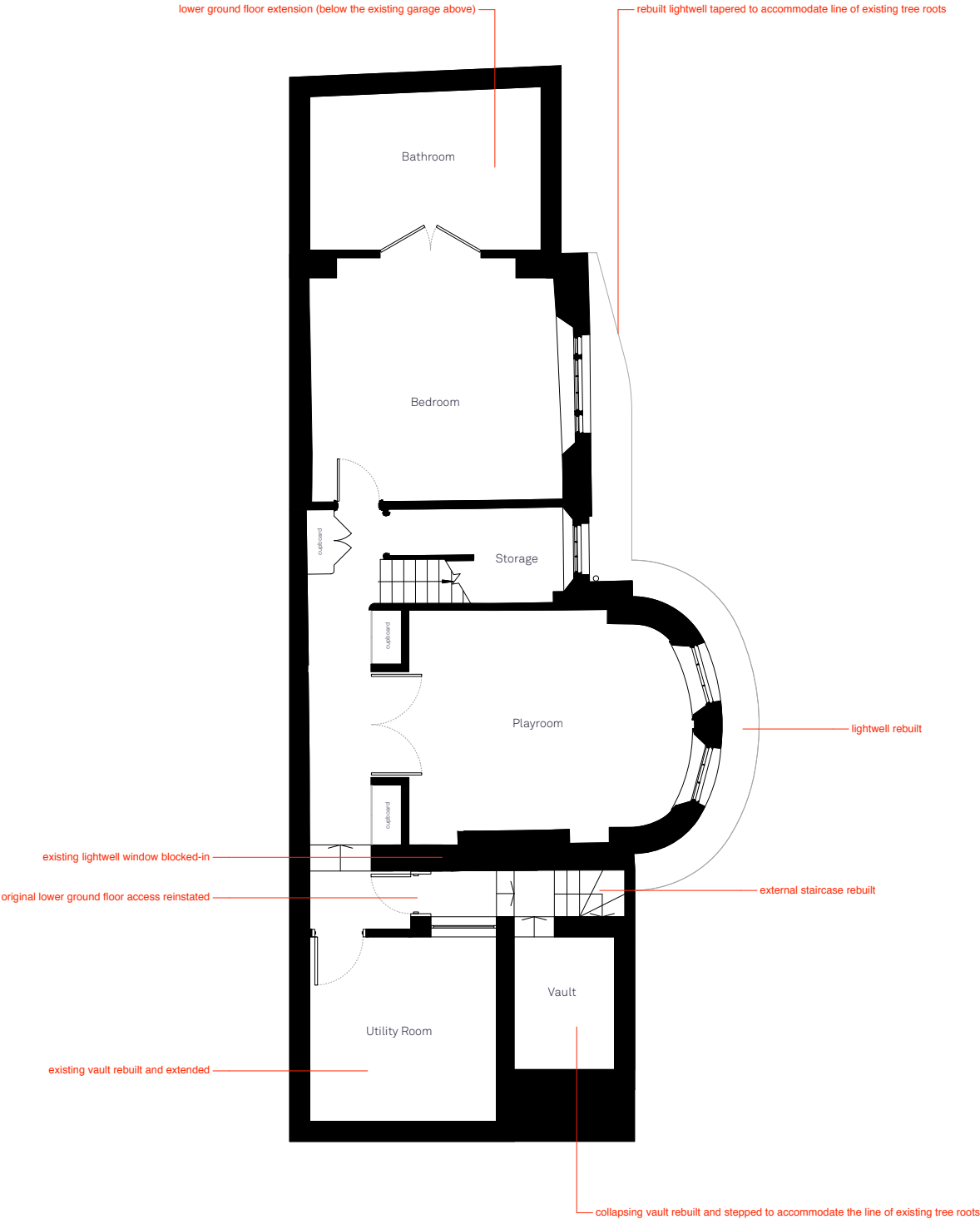
The final built form of the Conservation Area varied considerably from what was originally intended by the Southampton Estate planners, due to a number of factors. The neighbouring railway line had a significant impact upon the physical layout and environmental quality of the area. This was apparent as many of the buildings which were located close to the railway fell into disrepair, as the poor state of the environment discouraged investment. This was a trend that was only reversed on electrification of the railway line in the 1970s. Other factors included the increased pressure for development due to the fast growth of London, changing architectural tastes and the differences in land ownership across the Southampton freehold.

In the 20th century, the estate experienced a number of changes. World War II bomb damage required substantial repairs to a number of buildings, whilst others were completely destroyed. Redevelopment of bomb sites occurred throughout the latter half of the 20th century and included 10 Regent’s Park Road, redeveloped in 1954-6 as a block of flats and studios; Auden Place, former railway workers cottages, redeveloped in 1970 as housing; and Waterside Place, off Princess Road, redeveloped as housing. Other sporadic developments occurred throughout the 20th century.”

2. Design
Proposals



Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan

2. Design Proposals

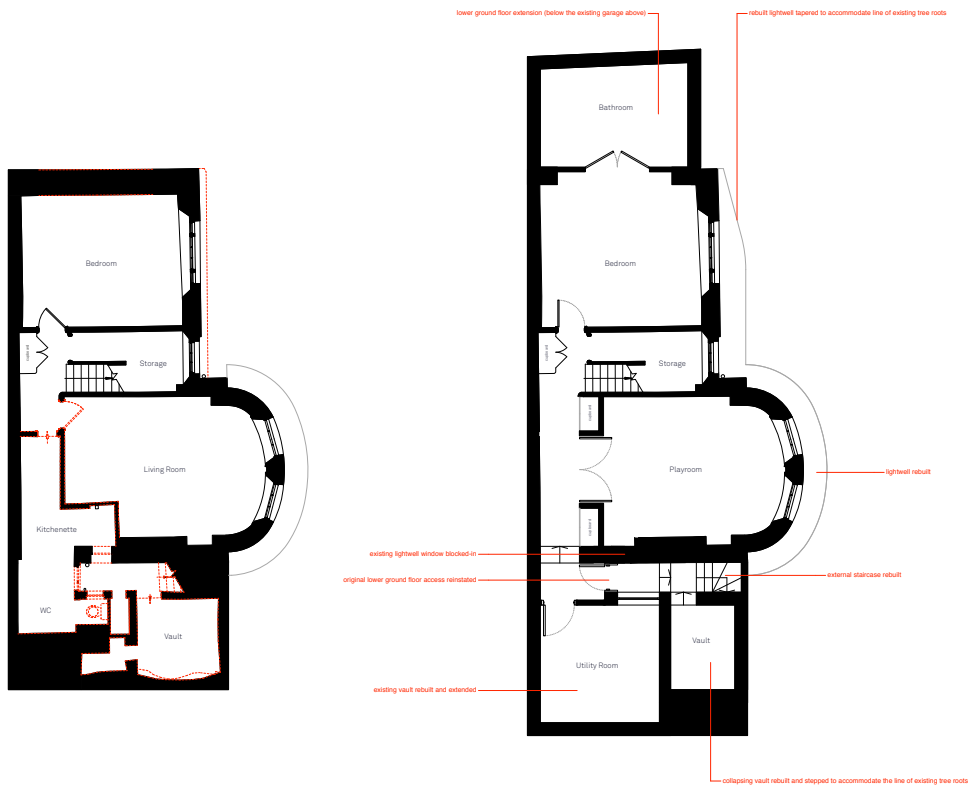


Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation

2. Design Proposals



Existing & Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plans

2.1 Use

55 Gloucester Avenue is a residential property situated within a largely residential area. There is no proposed change of use. The alterations would merely reconfigure and extend the existing accommodation.

2.2 Amount

The proposed increase to the floor area of the property is approximately 23 square meters.

2.3 Layout

The layout of 55 Gloucester Avenue is determined by its situation on the corner of two roads. Like many of London's corner plots there is a consequent absence of a rear garden. To compensate, the property has a large front garden. The building has been designed to acknowledge the junction of the two roads and the large semi-circular bay window is used as an architectural device to successfully turn the corner of the site. In essence the original layout of the property was defined by two principal rooms either side of the main staircase. The current layout of the property has seen a number of changes to the original rooms, primarily to incorporate a series of bathrooms. These changes date back to a period when the property was run as a house of multiple occupation. Beyond this the only significant alterations appear to be the loss of an original window on the side elevation at second floor level and the insertion of three bathroom windows into the previously blank rear elevation. The proposed layout is driven by the desire to extend the house in order to provide additional accommodation as well as to carry out necessary reconstruction to areas of the existing property that have begun to collapse. For example, the front vault has partially collapsed and constitutes a relatively dangerous structure in its present state. Equally one of the side lightwells has begun to collapse as well and is beginning to have an adverse effect on the main house, causing a degree of cracking to the lower ground walls.

2.4 Scale

The scale of the proposals are effectively modest, constituting a small extension beneath the site of an existing garage, along with rebuilding the side lightwells and reconstructing the front vaults. The ambition is to preserve as many of the remaining original features of the property as possible, whilst extending and refurbishing the property, primarily to ensure structural safety as well as to provide additional accommodation for continued use as a family home.

2. Design Proposals



Existing Long Section



Proposed Long Section

2.5 Landscaping

There are no landscaping proposals that form part of this application. However, it is intended that a landscaping plan will be prepared and submitted independently.

2.6 Appearance

The proposals are designed to have a minimal impact on the overall appearance of the property, whilst aiming to enhance and benefit the house wherever possible. The removal of the pre-fabricated concrete garage with an asbestos roof located at the rear of the property is intended to improve the area as a whole. The proposed lower ground floor works will be largely invisible from the street, by virtue of being below ground. The existing lightwells are simply rebuilt to ensure their structural integrity. Equally, the current vaults are not visible from the street and neither will the replacement vaults be visible from the street.

2.7 PPS5

The primary local heritage assets are the listed buildings located within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, along with the Parks that lie adjacent to the Conservation Area. The proposals will not affect any listed buildings or designated Parks, by virtue of not being located within the immediate proximity of any of these primary local heritage assets. Given the existing garage and the modest scale of the proposed extension to 55 Gloucester Avenue the alterations should make a positive contribution to the area as a whole. The appearance, character, and local distinctiveness of the Conservation Area will therefore be improved by the proposed works to the existing property. Consequently, the proposals aim not only to be appropriate for their context but also to contribute to the overall sense of place.

2. Design Environment



Flood Risk Map
Showing the proximity of the river and sea related flood risk area

2.8 Trees

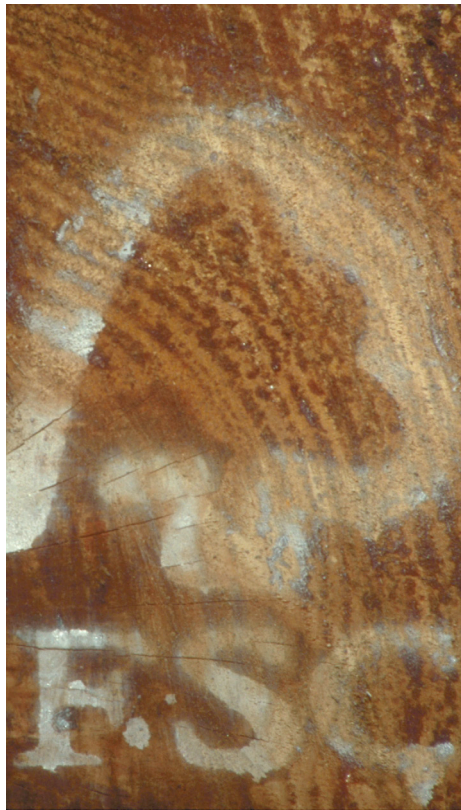
There are two large lime trees situated within 55 Gloucester Avenue's front garden. An independent Arboricultural Report accompanies this submission accordingly.

2.9 Flood Risk

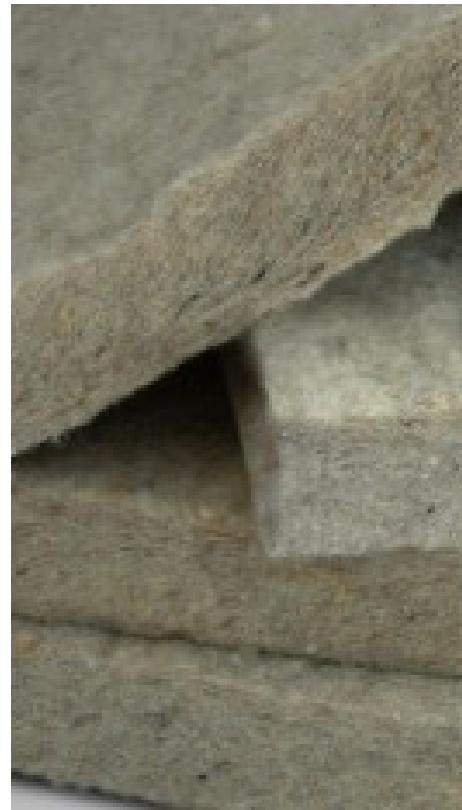
The site lies outside the flood risk area, as defined by the Environment Agency, and therefore no Flood Risk Assessment is required.

2. Design

Environment



FSC Timber
Sustainable material



Sheep's Wool Insulation
Sustainable material

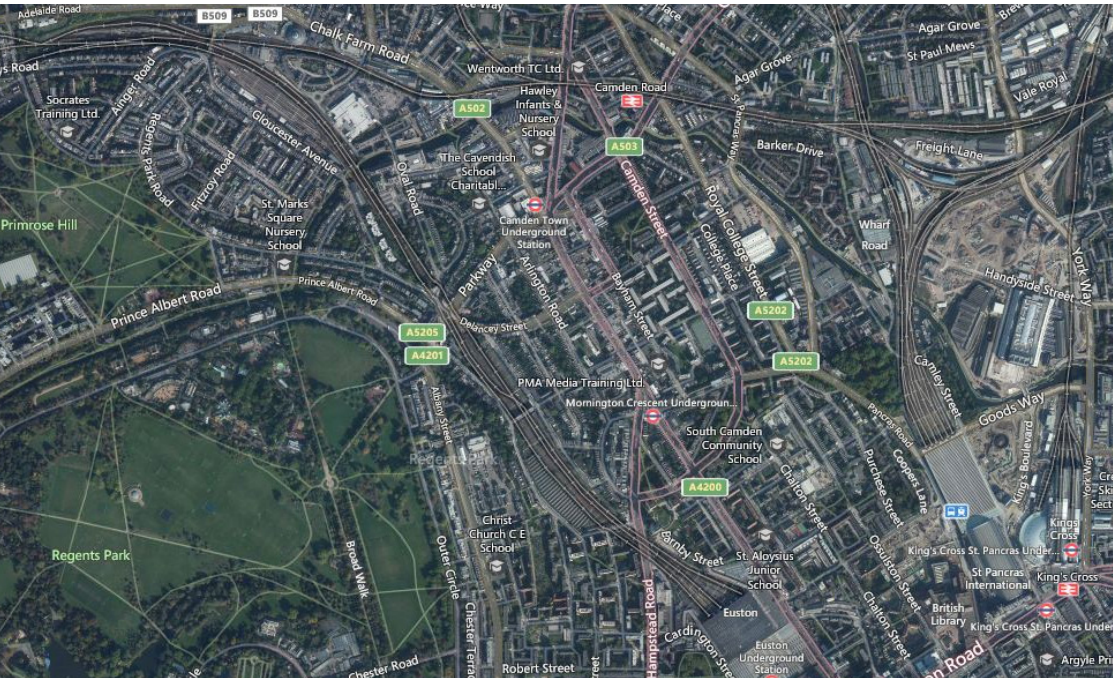
2.10 Sustainability & Services

Although the proposals do not include the introduction of any renewable energy technologies there is nonetheless a heavy emphasis on passive design measures:

- natural ventilation is used throughout the property and there are no proposals for air-conditioning
- where possible insulation levels will be upgraded to meet current Part L Regulations

3. Access

Assessment



Transport Map

3.1 Approved Document M

There are no proposals to alter the access arrangements at the property in relation to the current Approved Document M. As a private residential property the regulations regarding level access are not applicable.

3.2 Parking

Permit Holder Only residential parking is located within close proximity to the property.

3.3 Deliveries

All deliveries to the property are for normal residential purposes and consequently can be adequately accommodated.

3.4 Public Transport

55 Gloucester Avenue is well served by public transport. There are numerous bus routes, and bus stops nearby. The property is also situated within walking distance of both Camden Town & Chalk Farm underground stations. The close proximity of three main-line railway stations, Euston, St Pancras & King's Cross provides a variety of long distance travel options.



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