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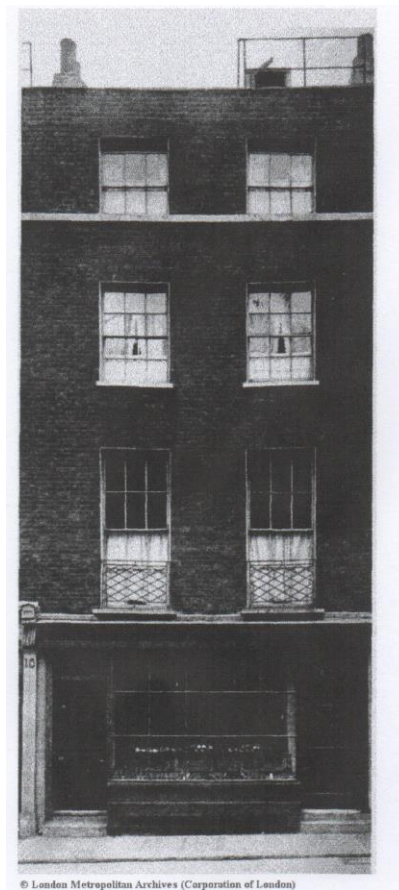
CONSERVATION - REGENERATION

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No. 14 LEIGH STREET LONDON WC1 LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN



No. 14 Leigh St - Early 20th century

*An Appraisal of the Heritage Asset and the Possible
Impact of the Proposals*

November 2014

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.01 This report seeks to describe the heritage significance of No. 14 Leigh Street. The proposals will be discussed in the context of both local and national policies and guidance for the management of change in the historic environment.

2 THE SITE & DESIGNATIONS

2.01 No. 14 Leigh Street is a mid-terrace house in a row on the south side of the street. It is a typical London terrace house of the early 19th century and of many neo-classical developments that make up much of Camden's historic housing.

2.02 The house is formed of three main storeys plus a basement and attic storey. It is faced in yellow stock brick and is two windows wide with an altered ground floor shop front of basically early 19th century design. The central shop window is flanked to the left by the shop entrance and to the right by the residential entrance. The first floor front elevation windows have geometrically-patterned iron balconettes in front of tall glazing-barred sash windows. The second floor has smaller but similar "6 over 6" sash windows. The sheer attic storey is separated from the elevation below by a stucco band course. The front elevation is crowned with a parapet coping.



2.03 The rear elevation is built of red/brown stock bricks. It was common during this period for the fashionable paler stock bricks to be reserved for the more formal front elevation. The rear elevation has modern French doors to the basement, with a corrugated plastic canopy. There is also a modern single storey brick W.C. extension to the left hand side of the ground floor elevation.



2.04 The interior the house retains its general original ground plan and staircase, but the original doors and chimney pieces have been removed. Some of the door openings retain their reeded architraves.

2.05 No. 14 is part of a terrace, Nos. 12-19 (consecutive), forming part of the original street development. The terrace is listed Grade II. The listing description reads;

Nos. 12-19 (consec) and attached railings

8 terraced houses with later shops. 1810-13 by James Burton. Built by T Jennings. Darkened stock brick with some later patching. 4 storeys and cellars. 2 windows each. Nos. 12, 13 & 19, early C19 wooden projecting shop fronts with entablatures and large window panes; No. 19 with reeded pilasters carrying fascia; round-arched doorways with cornice-heads. Patterned fanlights and panelled doors. No14, C20 reproduction C19 shop front. Nos. 15-18, altered mid-later C19 shop fronts with entablatures flanked by consoles. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows, first floor Nos. 12-14 with cast-iron balconies. No.18 with stucco architraves and 1st floor console bracketed cornices. Nos. 14-19 with plain 3rd floor sill band. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, Kings Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: - 1952:88)

2.06 Leigh Street is situated within the designated Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3 HISTORY

3.01 The Skinners Company is one of the twelve historic Livery Companies of the City of London. It was granted a Royal charter in 1327 and became a rich institution by virtue of its member's wealth, initially obtained from dealing in expensive furs but latterly as general merchants.

3.02 The Skinners Company have a long history of charitable enterprise. In 1572, Sir Andrew Judd vested the land known as the Sandhills Estate (subsequently the Skinners Company Estate) for the benefit of Tonbridge School in Kent. The estate was agricultural land situated northwest of the Foundling Hospital.

3.03 By the late 18th century, the urban expansion of London was casting its shadow over the Skinners Company Estate. Houses produced better returns than agriculture. In 1809, the Company granted James Payne, builder, of Marchmont Street, sites on the south side of newly-laid out Leigh Street. Three adjacent plots were granted to James Richard Parry of Everett Street. Nos. 12-19 (consecutive) was a development by James Burton who was responsible for much of the Skinners Company development on Bloomsbury. James Burton was a very successful developer who also worked with John Nash in Regent Street. His son was the architect Decimus Burton. Nos. 12-19 was built by Thomas Jennings, plasterer, of Marchmont Street.

3.04 The original occupants of Leigh Street were what were termed "the middling class", which included doctors, lawyers, senior clerks and shopkeepers.

4 THE PROPOSALS

- 4.01 It is proposed to construct a rear ground floor and basement extension. This would be composed on the ground floor elevation of a four-leaf glazed façade with a brick surrounding structure. The garden wall on each side would be raised and the flat roof behind the parapet would contain a low “eyelid” dormer around the top section of the existing rear house elevation window. This window would be converted to an entrance into the new extension by dropping the sill to form a doorway.
- 4.02 This proposal represents a variation on a similar size extension recently granted listed building consent.

5 POLICY CONTEXT

5.01 The policy guidance from Government is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In Section 12 “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment”, it states in paragraph 126 that local planning authority strategies should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation can bring;*

*-the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;
and*

-opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of place.

5.02 In cases where harm may be caused to a heritage asset, paragraph 133 advises that this may be acceptable if it is shown that;

-the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

134 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

5.03 English Heritage provides design and conservation advice in its publication:

“London Terrace Houses 1660-1860”

Page 12The balance between preservation and change may not always be easy to strike. The aim should be to minimise the impact on the building while helping the owner to adapt the property to suit reasonable needs.

5.04 Whilst English Heritage advises that extensions should generally utilise traditional forms and materials;

However, there may be some occasions where a more modern design approach may be acceptable.

5.05 The Mayor of London's Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London supports the proper management and recognition of heritage assets in London.

5.06 London Borough of Camden has policies within the Local Development Framework that echo central Government's commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment (DP25).

5.07 Policy UDP NN31;

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

5.08 The council has produced a SPG in the form of "Bloomsbury C.A. Appraisal and Management Strategy". Leigh Street is briefly described in Sub Area 13 Cartwright Gardens/Argyle Squire;

5.237 The properties on Judd Street and Leigh Street are 4 storeys and a number have had shop fronts inserted in 19th century, several of which retain traditional architectural details.

6 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

6.01 The heritage significance of No.14 Leigh Street resides both in its contribution to the wider historic townscape and in its intrinsic value as an early 19th century neo-classical house.

- 6.02 No. 14 forms part of a terrace of houses that are significant examples of early 19th century townscape. The terrace in turn forms part of the wider grid of streets and terraces that form the particular quality of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 6.03 The intrinsic historic interest of No.14 as an example of an early 19th century neo-classical house is recognised by its statutory listing Grade II. The house has a virtually complete ground plan with the original stairs, front and rear rooms, although much of the original detail has been lost. The ground floor shop front, although altered, appears to be original or inserted soon after the house was built.
- 6.04 The rear elevation above first floor level is mostly original, with red/brown stock brickwork and recessed sash windows under gauged brick arches. The ground floor rear elevation, however, has a modern brick W.C. extension on the left hand side of the elevation and a corrugated plastic roof over the basement area. The original basement sash window has been replaced by a pair of French doors. The W.C. extension and the roofed-in basement area detract from the original heritage significance of the rear elevations as poor quality and ill-advised additions.

7 COMMENTARY ON THE PROPOSALS

- 7.01 The proposal involves the removal of the rear ground floor W.C and the plastic roof over the basement area. The early 19th century date of this building means that closet wings, typical of early 18th century houses never

existed here. Occasionally, outbuildings for wash houses or privies are found in the rear gardens of early 19th century houses. In this case, the existing flat roofed W.C. has modern concrete foundations and is designed and detailed in a clearly 20th century manner. The removal of the W.C. block and the plastic roof to the basement area represents a clear enhancement of the listed building.



7.02 The previously consented scheme attempted to save the idea of a brick box on the left hand side of the rear elevation, while constructing a glazed extension of minimal design on the right. This produced an unfortunate visually hybrid design that would have set unhappily with the classical order of the original house. Perpetuating a modern asymmetrical W.C. block in a new design would have produced a visually unsettling

result which would fail to preserve or enhance the listed building. The W.C block has no intrinsic heritage significance and detracts from the listed building's character.

7.03 The current proposal seeks to extend the basement and ground floor at the rear. The rear elevation would be formed of a four-leaved glazed front surrounded by brick piers each side and a brick parapet above. This design has the merit of simplicity, acting visually as a glazed rear ground floor elevation simply pushed forward from the original house garden elevation. The design, by virtue of its simplicity has a reticent and subsidiary relationship with the house elevation. It has a harmonious character in contrast to the visually staccato design of the previous scheme. This accords with the advice given regarding "New work and Alteration" in paragraph 143 of the English Heritage publication "Conservation Principles -Policies & Guidance";

There are no simple rules for achieving quality of design in new work, although a clear and coherent relationship of all parts to the whole, as well as to the setting into which the new work is introduced, is essential. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting the values established through an assessment of the significance of the place,

7.04 The relatively low level of the proposed extension, (especially when compared with the scale of the extension in the right hand rear garden) and the scale of the surrounding brick garden walls would mean that the

proposal would have virtually no effect on the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

8 CONCLUSION

8.01 The proposed extension would remove the W.C. block and plastic roof from the basement area, thereby removing modern features that detract from the heritage significance of heritage asset. The proposed extension is proportionate, sensitively designed and would not result in the loss of any historically important fabric or features.

8.02. The proposal would assist in insuring a sustainable future for the heritage asset by providing extra living space which is orientated to the garden in tune with modern living. This would be achieved without prejudicial changes to the listed building. The proposal would accord with the guidance in NPPF, Section 12, paragraph 131;

The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Martin O'Rourke MARCA