Heritage, Design and Access Statement

for the replacement of an external stairway
and alterations to the doorway
at the rear of
No 42 Mornington Terrace
Camden
NW1 7RT

Applicant: Mr G Dunn
Ref: 42MT_HDA_RA_v1

ISSUE & AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Revision details
1	17/06/15	First issue. Document cancels and replaces “Design and Access Statement – replacement of access door and stairway to rear garden at 42 Mornington Terrace”

INTRODUCTION

1. This heritage, design and access statement supports of an application for listed building consent and planning approval to replace the existing access door and stairway to the rear garden of No 42 Mornington Terrace, Camden, NW1 7RT.

2. The property is a Grade II listed building situated on the western extremity of the Camden Town Conservation Area. The building is situated in a terraced row of 26 properties (Nos 26 – 52), all of which are listed. See Figures 1 & 2.

Fig 1: 42 Mornington Terrace – front facade

Fig 2: Mornington Terrace – listed row – Nos 26 - 52

HERITAGE

Location & Setting

3. The Camden Town Conservation Area can be divided into two sub areas of distinctly different character, a busy commercial and retail area, and, a quieter more formal residential area.

4. Beyond the commercial interests are areas of late 18th and early 19th century residential development while to the west of the High Street narrow passage-ways link through to quiet tree lined streets forming the residential sub area. These streets of stock brick and stucco terraces date from the early to mid 19th century and are consistent in character, and are in marked contrast to the dynamic, busy commercial frontages.

5. The Conservation Area has a high proportion of 19th century buildings both listed and unlisted, which make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There is an overall 19th century architectural and historic character and appearance throughout.

6. Camden Town Conservation Area was designated by the London Borough of Camden on 11th November 1986. The boundary was extended in 1997 to include the triangle behind Camden Town underground station formed by Camden High Street, Kentish Town Road and Buck Street and an area east of Camden High Street including Pratt Street (southside), Pratt Mews, Kings Terrace, Bayham Place and Bayham Street.

7. The Camden Town Conservation Area lies central to the Borough of Camden. Due north of Camden Town Conservation Area lies Kentish Town while the village of Highgate is further northward and the village of Hampstead and the Heath to the northwest. Euston Station and its approaches are to the south and Regents Park lies just to the southwest. The northern border of the Conservation Area is bounded by Parkway and Inverness Street while the western side is defined by the West Coast Main Line (WCML) railway from Euston to the North. To the southeast lie Somers Town, St. Pancras and Kings Cross.

8. The Conservation Area adjoins the Regent's Canal Conservation Area to the north and the Primrose Hill Conservation Area to the northwest, whilst to the west the Regent's Park Conservation Area is separated from the Camden Town Conservation Area by the railway lines. See Figure 3.

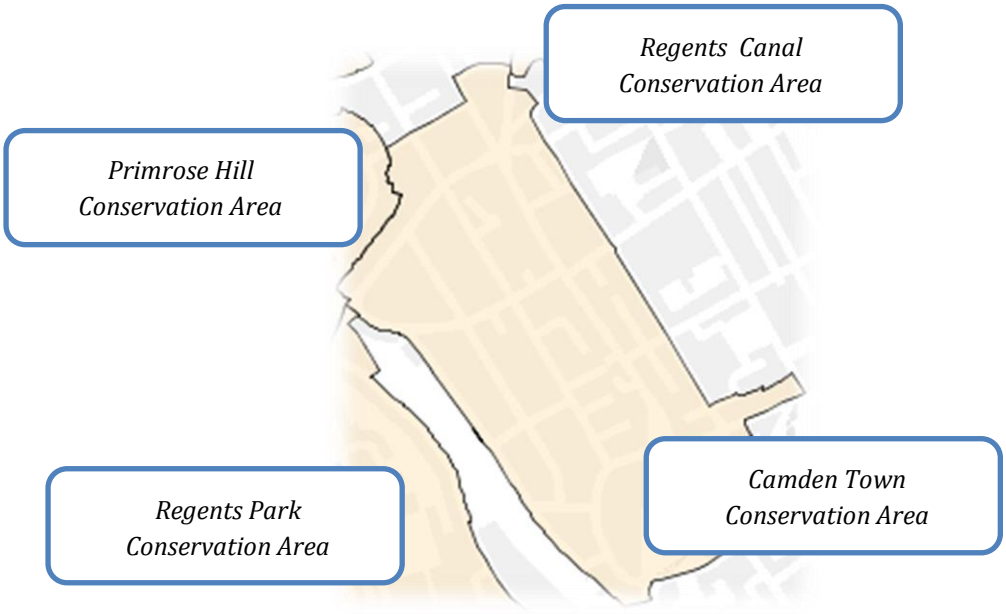

Fig 3: Relationship of Neighbouring Conservation Areas

9. The ancient north-south route, which has become Camden High Street, formed a spine along which development started about two hundred years ago. Typical of 19th century speculative development the plan form of the area evolved as a series of grid patterns - streets of terraced houses within garden plots. Around the two major junctions the plot sizes are more random particularly where larger late 19th and 20th century buildings occupy prominent focal positions and break the tight pattern.

10. The Camden Town Conservation Area lies on rising ground between the lower levels of central London and the hills of Hampstead and Highgate to the north. The trees of Hampstead Heath can be seen rising above the north eastern end of Camden High Street. To the south the taller buildings of central London are clearly visible, rising from lower ground, giving the viewer a sense of elevation. The Conservation Area also has a gentle slope from its western boundary close to Regents Park down to Camden High Street.

Historic Development

11. By the end of the 18th century the expansion of London had reached Camden Town and the open fields began to disappear as local land owners sold leases for the construction of houses. Consequently, at the time the Regent's Canal, which flows to the north of the Conservation Area opened in 1820, the development of the area was well under way. However, Arlington Road, Albert Street, Mornington Terrace and Delancey Street remained undeveloped building plots until the London and Birmingham Railway (now the WCML railway) opened in 1838 and generated increased speculative development.

12. By the late 1840's the western part of the Conservation Area had been developed as family homes for professional families and created a transition between the grand Nash properties of Regent's Park and Park Village and the more shabby industrial and commercial areas to the east.

Character of Residential sub-area

13. The residential parts of the Conservation Area are largely homogenous in scale and character, having been laid out within a period of three decades spanning the years 1820-1850. The western part of the Conservation Area comprises long residential terraces running in a north-south direction on a planned rectilinear grid (Mornington Terrace, Albert Street and Arlington Road) intersected by shorter terraces (Delancey Street and Mornington Street).

14. The area contains a large number of good examples of early/mid 19th century speculatively built terraced London houses, generally of a uniform appearance, and many statutorily listed for their special interest.

15. Buildings are set back from the street to make room for basement areas, or in more generous developments, for front gardens. Houses are generally three storeys raised on basements, sometimes with attic storeys, and may rise to four or five storeys to articulate a formal architectural composition. Terraces tend to end in a flank brick wall; and on street corners may have had windows and entrance doors inserted.

16. There is a greater sense of open space in the residential portions of the Conservation Area, in part due to the WCML railway cutting immediately to the west, but also the result of wide tree-lined streets and private front and back gardens, especially in Albert Street and Mornington Terrace. The trees and greenery of back gardens are only visible in occasional glimpses from the highway but contribute to the nature of the western part of the Conservation Area.

17. Yellow stock brick is the predominant building material, with decoration in the form of rusticated ground floors, stucco mouldings around openings, and stucco parapet cornices. Roofs are mainly covered in natural slate, windows are mainly painted timber box sashes and doors are painted timber with moulded panels. Exceptionally, properties have projecting stucco porticos and arched head windows. Terraces are adorned with various good examples of historic ironwork. Cast-iron boundary railings are a feature of most streets, and cast-iron balcony screens in a variety of patterns accentuate the principal first floors of many residential properties, sometimes bridging two or more windows.

Mornington Terrace

18. Forming the western boundary of the Conservation Area, Mornington Terrace has a spacious quality and benefits from panoramic views to the south and west. This is due to the WCML railway which runs opposite the frontage, the widening of which resulted in the demolition of a series of villas on the west side in 1902. A high brick wall with stone copings constructed at this time screens the railway cutting below.

19. The east side of the street is lined in most part by uniform terraces of brick and stucco houses erected in the 1840s. The houses tend to be taller and grander than their counterparts in streets to the east of the conservation area. The terrace at Nos 26-52 has a raised centrepiece rising to five storeys (Nos 33-39), accentuating the classical nature of the architecture. The bulbous cast-iron balconies at first floor level are continuous, a strong horizontal feature somewhat counterbalanced by the Ionic pilasters rising through the first and second floors of the properties. Front gardens are of a generous depth, often with mature planting, although front railings to a sizeable number of properties have been replaced with inappropriate boundary treatments including low brick walls and hedges. The terrace ends splendidly in a different style, with Nos 53-54, a pair of Italianate houses distinguished by heavy eaves brackets and arched windows breaking through a cornice. They are jointed to Nos 55-56 on the corner of Delancey Street, also Italianate, forming a single building with canted sides. Nos 53-56 are similar to the Italianate terraces of 1845-50 found in Gloucester Crescent to the north (in the neighbouring Primrose Hill Conservation Area).

20. The character of Mornington Terrace's predominantly 19th century appearance is further reinforced by aspects of the streetscape. York stone is the paving used outside most of the listed properties in Mornington Terrace with the original cast iron coalhole covers inset. The long brick wall on the west side of Mornington Terrace and pair of stone piers with lamp standards at the east end of Mornington Street Railway Bridge are also grade II listed.

No 42 Mornington Terrace

21. No 42 has been listed Grade II, in conjunction with the properties Nos 26 – 52 Mornington Terrace, consecutively, including the attached railings, since 14th May, 1974. It occupies the 17th ascending position in the row.

22. The listing description reads:

Terrace of 27 houses. Mid C19. Yellow stock brick with rusticated stucco ground floors. Slate mansard roof and dormers. Formerly symmetrical terrace; projecting central houses (Nos 33-38) and northern end houses (Nos 50-52), southern projection missing. 3 storeys, attics and semi-basements; central and end houses 4 storeys and semi-basements. 2 windows each. Stucco porticoes with pilaster carrying entablature; fanlights and panelled doors, some with nail head ornament. Entrance to No 52 in side portico. Ground floor sashes of Nos 26, 27, 29, 31, 32 and 40 with margin glazing. Stucco fluted Ionic pilasters mark division of houses rising through 1st and 2nd floors to carry entablature at 3rd floor level (except Nos 46 & 49), formerly with balustrade parapet. Recessed, architraved sashes to upper floors; 1st floor with console bracketed cornices and continuous cast-iron balcony.

Interiors: not inspected

Subsidiary features: attached cast-iron railings flanking steps to doorways and geometrical railing to areas.

DESIGN

Philosophy

23. Paragraph 12 noted that the western part of the Conservation Area had been developed as family homes for professional families. A survey of the 27 listed properties in Mornington Terrace reveals that currently only 3 remain a in their entirety. A further 5 properties, which include No 42, comprise a substantially compete home plus a basement flat. The remaining 19 properties are divided into a total of 72 separate apartments! No 42 is therefore amongst the small number which remain largely faithful to their heritage as a family home as originally built.

24. Notwithstanding, No 42, whilst retaining its original features, requires some restorative works. The current owner therefore intends to commit a significant amount in returning its features as nearly as possible to their original condition, thereby maintaining its heritage.

25. The existing stairway from the rear of the property to the garden is utilitarian in design and has an unattractive “industrial” appearance. Whilst it has not been possible to determine the date of its installation it would stretch credibility to believe it is an original 1840 feature. Everything about it suggests a much more recent installation. Likewise the rear door, being a single upper glass panel above a solid panel fronted by a metal plate, lacks merit and appears to be a modern installation.

26. In the context of this philosophy it is proposed to replace the stairway and door with items which better reflect the character and heritage of the property, taking as inspiration the ornate metalwork of the front façade 1st floor balcony and the classical Victorian style and proportion of the other windows at the rear of the property. In doing so there will be no impact on the front of the building, being entirely concerned with works to the rear of the property and access to the enclosed garden, which is not visible from the highway.

Current Configuration

27. In its present form access to the garden is via a single leaf door onto a raised platform and thence down a short flight of stairs. See Figures 4 & 5.

Fig 4: Location of proposed change

Fig 5: View on rear wall showing current configuration

28. The is a plain wooden door with a lower solid panel and glazed panel above. The exterior of the lower panel is covered by a metal plate. It carries no features characteristic of the properties heritage. The wall above the door opening is supported by a clearly visible ugly concrete lintel. As all other opening in the rear wall are crowned with brick arches there is a strong possibility that this opening is the result of an alteration at some point. See Figure 6.

Fig 6: Rear doorway

29. The window adjacent to the door is identical in style to all other windows on the rear elevation of the property, being a wooden sash window with 3 across x 2 up glazing panels in each of the upper and lower sashes. The brickwork above the opening is supported by a brick arch. On this rearmost wall, this feature alone is the only one faithful to the buildings heritage. See Figure 7.

Fig 7: Window adjacent to rear doorway
(in similar style to others on the rear elevation)

30. The platform and stairway down to the garden level is unattractive and utilitarian rather than an aesthetically pleasing design sympathetic to the character of the building. The platform and stairs are rolled steel channel (RSC), faced with industrial type treadplates. A guard rail on one side is made from tubular steel. All elements of the structure are painted black. See Figure 8.

Fig 8: Existing steel stairway to garden at rear

Design Proposal (form and materials)

Door / Window

31. The proposed change involves replacing the current doorway and adjacent window in the rear wall of the single storey ground floor element with:

1) a single leaf, glazed, wooden door replicating the style of the existing windows,
2) a new window, also in the style of that which it replaces and the others,
3) a balcony and stairway onto which the door opens and which takes its inspiration from the ornate metalwork of the front 1st floor balcony,

32. In order to better suit the arrangement of fixtures in the utility room and also to enable a view along the garden whilst approaching this room from the hallway, it is proposed to reverse the positions of the door and window in the wall.

33. With this arrangement the door will now occupy a position to the left of the window, viewed externally. It will be wider than the existing door at 900mm and will be 2000mm tall. The increase in width being in order to improve its proportionality. The door will be made in 24mm thick hardwood and painted white. It will have 8 glazed panels to match the style of the windows.

34. The window will adopt the style of the one it replaces. It will be the same width (760mm) but will not be as tall (1050mm as opposed to 1300mm) so that the whitegoods installed in the utility room will not cut across the window. It will be 2 sashes as its predeccesor is and each sash will be a 3 across x 2 up glazing pattern, as are all the other rear windows.

35. The rear wall will be made good using reclaimed bricks arising from creating the new openings and new matching bricks will be used to make up any shortfall in quantity. The brick arch above the current window will be replicated above both the door and window openings. See Figure 9, below, for a comparison between the proposed and existing aspects.

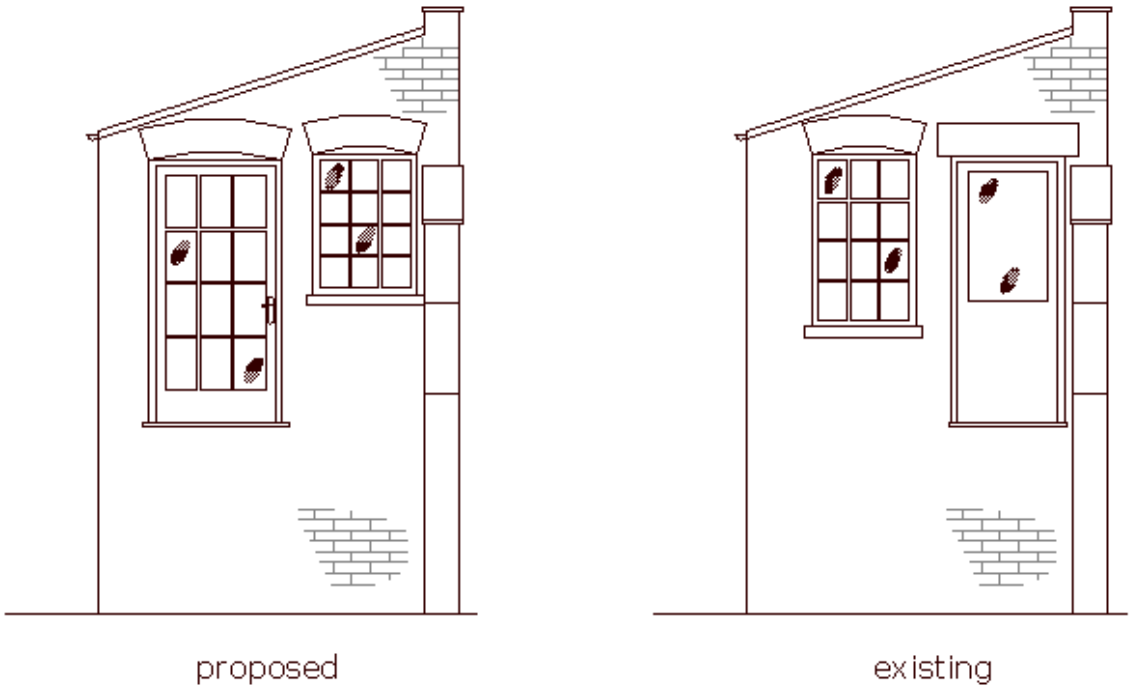

Fig 9: Comparison between proposed and existing door / window combinations (balcony and stairway omitted)

Balcony / Stairway

36. It is proposed to replace the existing platform and stairway. A new balcony, 2000mm wide x 1000mm deep will be installed on the rear wall in order to provide a safe area prior to descending the stairway. Protection from falls from this balcony will be safeguarded by the installation of balusters and a handrail.

The stairway will replicate the 1000 mm width of the existing flight but will differ by having protective balusters and a handrail on both sides. In common with that which it replaces it

will have 6 rises. The strings and balcony structure will be manufactured as profile cut steel items. The balusters, in cast aluminium, are shown in Figure 10. The treads and balcony panels, also cast aluminium, in a diamond pattern are shown in Figure 11. The handrail will be 40mm x 12mm flat bar. The finish will be black powder coated.

Fig 10: Baluster

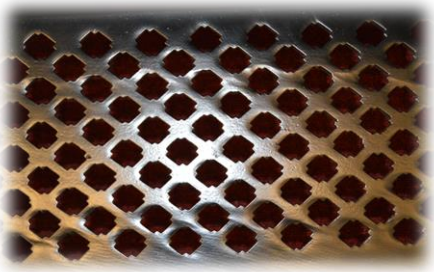

Fig 11: Stair treads and Balcony floor panels

Design Summary

37. The rear aspect comprises three elements; doorway, window, and stairway. Of these, both the current doorway and stairway are singularly unattractive, lack merit and are out of context with the rest of the rear elevation, and the property as a whole. Whilst the existing window is the exception to this the composite view of all three features is not one which respects the heritage of the building (see Figure 5).

38. The proposal seeks to elevate the appearance of the rearmost wall to one worthy of the property's other features. The existing window, door and stairway will be lost to be replaced by a new door, window and stairway. It is considered that the loss of the existing doorway with its ugly lintel and the industrial looking stairway is of little consequence. Whilst the window has more merit it is intended to mitigate its removal by adopting an identical style for the new one. The new balcony and stairway will also reflect the heritage by picking up on the ornate cast iron 1st floor balcony at the front.

39. In conclusion it is suggested the proposed façade, viewed as a coherent entity, will make a positive contibution towards enhancing the character of this listed building and will support the owners efforts to maintain its heritage. See Figure 12 for comparisons.

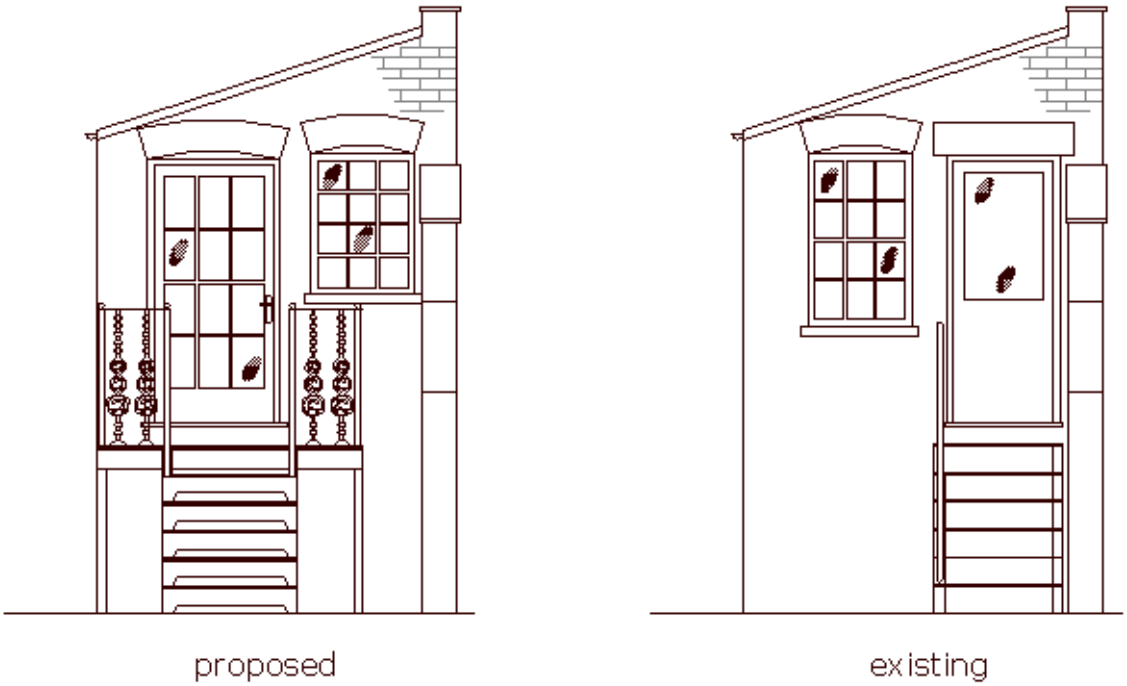

Fig 12: Comparison between proposed and rear facade

ACCESS

40. Access to the property, both internally or externally, will be unchanged as a result of the proposal. The proposal does not affect the front entrance. The width of the existing stairway at rear is maintained in the new stairway and the flight has 6 rises as before.