



41-42 Chester Terrace, London, NW1 4ND: Rebuilding Boundary Wall to West Elevation

Heritage Statement

(To accompany Listed Building Consent Application)

June 2015

Introduction

1. No. 41-42 Chester Terrace is a Grade I listed building (c1825), part of the grand-palace style terrace by John Nash, within the Regents Park Conservation Area in the Borough of Camden.
2. In June 2013 Listed Building Consent (2013/1888/L) and Planning Permission (2013/1426/P) have been granted for the conversion of two existing adjoining houses at Nos. 41 and 42 Chester Terrace to form a single family dwelling. The granted scheme has been implemented on 16th April 2014 with the start of the excavation and underpinning works.
3. Furthermore, a consent was granted for the subterranean development to the side of the building under the existing garden in September 2014 (LBC 2014/2938/L and PP 2014/2872/P).
4. Consent was also granted in October 2014 for Temporary removal of railings to West elevation during the course of constructions works (to be reinstated once work is complete) (2014/4921/L)
5. Following on from the previously granted permissions and their implementation on site, Stephen Levrant: Heritage Architecture Ltd (SLHA) was commissioned to prepare a Heritage Statement whose purpose is to provide heritage based evidence in support of the proposed alterations to the sections of boundary wall on the west and north side of the house. This statement complies with the requirements of the NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) ("The Framework") and Local Planning policies in respect of Heritage issues.
6. This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents:
 - Architectural/Planning drawings by MMM Architects Ltd;
 - Structural Engineer's Statement by Sinclair Johnston;
 - Method Statement by Contractor (Sherlock);
 - Photos of the West and North boundary wall – as existing.

Context

7. Chester Terrace is located on the eastern boundary of Regents Park and No. 41-42 is at the northernmost end and separated from the terrace. The house fronts on to Chester Terrace with gardens to both sides and rear. The site is bounded to the north by Cumberland Place, to the east Chester Terrace, and to the west by Outer Circular. Regent's Park is situated to the west.
8. The property is within the Regent's Park Conservation Area within the Borough of Camden. The entirety of Chester Terrace is listed Grade I (under a single entry) and is additionally surrounded by a number of other listed buildings and the Grade I registered Regent's Park.
9. No's 41 and 42, have been designed by John Nash, prince Regent's architect, built in 1825, by James Burton. The design is a Grand Palace style terrace comprising 37 houses and 5 semi-detached houses. Chester Terrace has been the longest unbroken terrace that was built at the time of Regent's Park developments.
10. 2014 consent has allowed for temporary removal of boundary railings and plinth wall in two locations facing the Outer Circle in order to facilitate site access during the main contract works. Two temporary openings are a personnel entrance to the South West corner and a construction traffic entrance primarily for basement construction vehicles to the North West.
11. The principle of site access from the Outer Circle and not from Chester Terrace or Cumberland Place was established and agreed between the design team and relevant parties, including The Crown Estate Paving Commission and Royal Parks. The reason for this was to avoid disruption to resident amenity and parking arrangements and potential hazards associated with the additional presence of construction related traffic.

Significance Assessment

12. As recommended by NPPF (March 2012), proposals for the alteration or redevelopment of listed buildings or buildings within a Conservation Areas should be considered and be based on an understanding of the site's significance.
13. The concept and the design of the whole of Chester Terrace have architectural and historic interest in both national and local terms. The houses in Chester Terrace are listed for 'group value', being part of the composition of neo classical buildings built around Regent's Park.
14. The elevations remain very much as originally conceived and constructed, enhancing the evidential value of this property and its group value as a typical terrace development of the Regency period.
15. The buildings' significance and special interest are well established and inherent, as previously stated, principally in the external fabric and in particular any original fabric that relates to the neighbouring buildings and the composition as a whole that forms part of the architecture of The Park.

16. Nos.41-42 Chester Terrace stands at the end of the terrace and is fairly unique in this part of the Nash development as it has its own substantial garden sited to the north and south sides of the house. The garden gives considerable visual amenity to the surrounding. The garden is considered of highly significant as part of the setting of both No.41-42 Chester Terrace and the neighboring listed Grade I Nash houses. The listed walls and railings around the garden are also highly significant in terms of their contribution to the character and appearance of John Nash's development.

Present Proposal

17. The proposed works that form part of this application have arisen from a need for the emergency repair or the west boundary wall which became evident during the course of the works on site.
18. The sections of the wall and piers adjacent to the temporary site entrance at the South West corner and just beyond the lime tree appeared to be a later cavity wall in a poor condition and showing signs of considerable movement (Fig 1 and 2).



Fig 1. Cavity wall construction visible



Fig 2. West boundary wall elevation to Outer Circle

19. After initial inspection with the Crown Estate's structural engineer the option of rebuilding just the two most affected sections has been considered, and in light of the advice of the structural engineer and further investigative opening up works, which confirmed that all sections of the west boundary wall and one on the north side are later cavity wall, it is considered that the entire west side should be rebuilt in solid brickwork with hydraulic lime mortars and render to match the original wall to the north side. The first bay adjacent to the corner on the north boundary is in a poor condition, has the same defects (later cavity wall in poor condition, cracked cement render) and also needs to be rebuilt with coping detail changed (Fig 3).



Fig 3. North boundary wall - first bay adjacent to the corner (N-W corner)

20. The coping detail differs in the length of the wall and the opportunity will be taken to reinstate the original weathering detail during rebuilding of the defective lengths. New coping detail is to match coping detail on the North and East boundary (Fig 4)



Fig 4. North and East boundary wall - coping detail to be matched

21. Boundary wall to be rebuilt to match existing on the North and East side using original bricks where possible, carefully toothed into the adjacent boundary wall sections, re-pointed with lime mortar and finishes to match existing as per The Crown Estate Specification. Original railings to be repaired as necessary and fixed back with molten lead and welded together with adjacent railings by a specialist architectural metalworker. Decoration works to be carried out as set out in The Crown Estate Specification.

Pre-Application Advice (Apr-June 2015)

22. The condition of the West boundary wall and options for its repair/rebuild have been discussed on site and by exchange of letters/emails with the Local Planning Authority (Antonia Powell, Senior Planner) and The Crown Estate (Paul Prentice).
23. Investigative opening-up works to the west boundary (to determine if the full length of the wall is built as a cavity wall) have been agreed with Antonia Powell, the LPA officer in April 2015.

24. The Crown Estate agreed that *"several lengths of the boundary wall on the park side have been rebuilt in cavity wall construction and coincidentally are leaning and distorted and, we agreed, should be rebuilt in solid brickwork with hydraulic lime mortars and render."*

Impact Assessment and Justification Statement

25. This assessment aims to appraise the impact of the proposal on the special interest of the heritage asset within the site: No. 41-42 Chester Terrace. Furthermore, the assessment considers the impact of the proposed works on the Grade I listed house and the Regents Park Conservation Area; and on the setting of the designated and non-designated heritage assets within and surrounding the site.
26. The impact assessment on the special interest of the heritage asset and the conservation area also takes into account whether the proposal causes substantial or less than substantial harm by altering or eroding the authenticity and the heritage values identified on the assets.
27. Following the revision of the alternative proposals and further site investigation, we consider that these proposed works will not have an adverse effect on the special interest and appearance of the main house and its setting, nor the character of the Regents Park Conservation Area and are consistent with the spirit of local policies and national conservation principles, particularly NPPF policy principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets.
28. Due to the poor condition of the West boundary wall and one bay on the North boundary and the fact that they are later cavity wall constructions it is considered that rebuilding them in solid brickwork, with appropriate mortars, render and coping to match the original/early examples on the North and East boundary and other equivalent sections elsewhere in Chester Terrace would not harm the heritage asset's significance.
29. The minor intervention on the historic building fabric is limited only to West boundary and partially North boundary low plinth walls, while iron railings will be preserved, repaired as necessary and reinstated. It is considered that the proposed works will preserve and enhance the appearance of the heritage asset and the conservation area as a whole.
30. The proposed alterations will not adversely alter the special interest of the house at No41-42 Chester Terrace. Surveys, investigations, recordings and documentary research/analysis have been undertaken to inform the design. The assessments and analyses that have been carried out have not only informed the design process, but are also believed to be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets and its setting.
31. The overall impact of the proposed modification on the identified heritage asset is considered to be **minor/beneficial**. The holistic approach to the boundary treatment of No's 41-42 would contribute to the group value of the terrace and therefore enhance the special architectural significance of the building and the Conservation Area.

Conclusion

32. The works to the West boundary wall are necessary as part of the wall has the potential to collapse unless significant remedial works are undertaken. The remainder of the wall on the West side and part of the wall on the North side not of original construction are also proposed to be rebuilt to avoid any future movement of this structure. The proposed modifications to the West and North boundary wall will be constructed to exacting conservation requirements.
33. English Heritage (now Historic England) "Conservation Principles" and the NPPF define conservation as "managing change". Buildings, designated or undesignated heritage assets, are dynamic environments that have been subject to change and in order to remain a sustainable, welcoming and pleasing place they will continue to change.
34. Furthermore, the applicant has recognised the importance of undertaking investigations and analysis necessary for the assessment of the effects of the proposed works on the special interest of heritage assets. This approach has been both beneficial with regard to the consideration of alternatives and important with regard to the process of acknowledging the best practice guidance as outlined in NPPF.
35. It is considered that the proposed works are acceptable in conservation terms. It is substantiated by the research undertaken as well as the Structural Engineer's Statement by Sinclair Johnston. This has informed the location, nature and extent of interventions deemed to have the least adverse effect on the significance of the heritage asset and its setting.
36. The significance of the heritage asset and the surrounding Conservation Area is not challenged. The proposal results in degrees of **impact** across the site and within its settings which are considered to be **minor and beneficial** and would assist in the long-term use of the heritage asset.
37. It is considered that the proposed works cause "**no harm**". If, however the officer may find that the proposals do cause a degree of harm, we believe that this cannot be greater than 'less than substantial harm'. In which case the proposal will be clearly balanced by the following public benefits: the optimal viable use of the property developed through a sensitive and sympathetic design that maximises the intrinsic qualities of the existing building, further revealing its heritage value and enhancing the quality of its setting.
38. It is therefore concluded that the proposed works satisfy the relevant clauses of the NPPF. These are consistent with the spirit of local policies and national conservation principles and therefore there must be a presumption for its approval.

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Architects and Heritage Asset Consultants**