

**Gloucester Lodge, 12 Gloucester Gate
and 12 and 13 Gloucester Gate Mews NW1
London Borough of Camden
Application B**

HERITAGE SUPPORT STATEMENT

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gloucester Lodge is the terminal residential building on the east side of Regent's Park and forms a classical 'pavilion' at the north end of Gloucester Gate. The centrepiece façade survives as designed and built by James Burton in 1827 as part of the John Nash scheme for Regent's Park. It was the latest-built of the Regency-style buildings in the area and marks the geographical end of such architecture on the east side of the park. It now forms half of a building originally built as one symmetrical façade, with a south extension added by J.B. Papworth in 1836, when it was split into two houses.

It is listed Grade I for its architectural and historic interest. The mews houses at the rear in Gloucester Gate Mews are not included in the statutory list but are situated in the Regent's Park Conservation Area. The mews house was much altered and extended later, and remodelled as a single house in 1993. The current proposal is to further remodel the building as a single family house. The front elevation and principal ground-floor rooms are retained. But it is proposed to alter the bedroom floors, cover the courtyard at ground-floor level, erect a glazed rear link building, and rebuild the mews over an excavated basement.

2. JOHN MARTIN ROBINSON: CURRICULUM VITAE

John Martin Robinson has 40 years of experience working with Historic Buildings in London and the other parts of the UK. He worked for the GLC Historic Buildings Division from 1974 to 1986, including two years as architectural editor of the *Survey of London* volumes on the Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair. He was employed subsequently in the London Division of English Heritage, where he was Historic Buildings Inspector for Westminster until 1989. Since then he has been a private consultant and writer.

He has written detailed Environmental Conservation studies for Covent Garden and Seven Dials, as well as 28 books, which include a work on Georgian model farms, the official histories of Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, *The New Georgian Handbook*, and the definitive biography of James Wyatt, published by Yale University Press in 2013. He is a regular contributor on architecture to *Country Life*. From 1995 to 2014 he was chairman of the Casework Committee and vice-chairman of the Georgian Group. He has a detailed knowledge of Westminster's heritage as well as listed buildings legislation and restoration in general.

3. HISTORY

Regent's Park was originally developed over the first three decades of the 19th century as the northern termination of the Regency Metropolitan Improvements, the great town plan for London that extended in an axis northwards from Carlton House, the Prince Regent's residence in Pall Mall.

The former Marylebone Park reverted to the Crown in 1806, and John Nash was commissioned to produce a scheme for developing the whole area as a dramatic combination of urban terraces and picturesque landscapes dotted with villas. The Nash design was published in 1812 and approved by the Treasury. Work began immediately, though as the project developed many modifications were made. Notably, only a few of the proposed villas were constructed in the park, and the proposed circus at the top of Portland Place was reduced to a crescent when its builder went bankrupt. The construction of the terraces began with Cornwall Terrace in 1820 and continued over the next ten years, the last being Gloucester Gate, between 1826 and 1827. The house under consideration forms part of this latter development.

Nash produced the design for most of the façades, assisted by Decimus Burton and his father James, a builder who was responsible for Gloucester Lodge. The houses behind were of the standard London type, erected by speculative builders and sold on 99-year leases. Sir John Summerson has described the extravagant scenic terraces as “dream palaces, full of grandiose, romantic ideas such as an architect might scribble in a holiday sketch-book. It is magnificent.

And behind it all – behind it are rows and rows of identical houses ...”

To an extent Nash's architecture represented grandeur on the cheap. The spectacular frontages, with their columns, statues and pediments, were mere stucco. The structure behind was all stock brick and thin deals like any other London terrace. The foundations were shallow, set on London clay; there were no damp courses. This initial flimsiness of construction exacerbated the problems the government and The Crown Estate faced in deciding the future of Regent's Park in the 1940s and 1950s after a decade of war damage and lack of maintenance.

At the end of the Second World War, Clement Attlee commissioned the Gorrell* Report, which with strong support from the LCC and the Georgian Group recommended that the Regent's Park terraces should be saved and restored for a variety of uses, including education, office and residential. In 50 years since, The Crown Estate has carried out a consistent policy of restoration for the whole complex of 370 listed buildings. Recently, many of the buildings have been returned to residential use.

Gloucester Lodge was designed by James Burton, the chief contractor working with Nash in Regent's Park. It is now half of a pair of semi-detached villas but was originally one house; the façade still appears as a single symmetrical composition with a large central portico of attached fluted Ionic half columns and pediment. The side wing to the south was added by J.B. Papworth in 1836, when the property was made into two houses. The façade centrepiece survives as designed and built by James Burton for Nash, and is the major interest of the building. The house behind the façade was always relatively simple and has been

reconstructed and extended at various dates. Most of the present interior was recreated by the Donald Insall Partnership in 1993.

More details and illustrations of the history are included in the Design and Access Statement.

4. PROPOSALS

It is proposed to adapt the main house at 12 Gloucester Gate (Gloucester Lodge) for continuing occupation as a single residence, and to demolish and rebuild the rear (unlisted) mews buildings (12 and 13 Gloucester Gate Mews, both unlisted). It is proposed to leave the front elevation of No. 12 Gloucester Gate unaltered, thus respecting the principal feature of special architectural interest and the reason for the building's Grade I listing. The layout of the front garden with a central oval survives as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey Map in 1872. The old weeping ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) in the centre has died. This was likely to have been planted originally by J.B. Papworth. It is proposed to replace it with a new example of the same species. It is also proposed to enlarge the areas in front of the basement windows, though these are screened by planting and invisible, so the alteration will not affect the appearance of the façade.

The principal interiors of the James Burton central block, with their linked drawing rooms, entrance hall and staircase, will be retained. At present there is a food service lift and cloakroom on the south side of the staircase; it is proposed to replace these with a small passenger lift in the same place. It is not considered that this will affect the special interest.

The south extension added by J.B. Papworth in 1836 has been much altered. The rear dining room originally had a semi-circular bow window, but this was removed circa 1900 and replaced with a large Edwardian window. (The bow is shown on the 1894 Ordnance Survey but not that of 1935.) The present arrangement of this part of the building dates from the 1993

alterations by Insalls. It is proposed to alter this area by eliminating the redundant light well indent in the south wall, moving the formal dining room to the enlarged front room, and making the new area the cloakroom and lavatory. It is considered that these changes will make more practical use of the space, do not involve the removal of historic features, and respect the formal arrangement of space on the main ground floor.

Minor alterations, which do not involve the significant removal of historic fabric of the ground floor. On the first floor, the present layout arrangements and all the detail date from the 1993 alterations. It is intended to remodel this area, removing the 1993 landing arrangement and creating a large master bedroom over the drawing room. The main staircase is not affected by the proposals, but it is intended to insert a skylight over it to enhance the lighting. Such a top light over the staircase is characteristic of much Georgian and Regency architecture. The present simple, cramped dog-leg subsidiary staircase to the attic floor is a safety concern and does not comply with current building regulations. It is proposed to replace it with a straight flight at right angles.

The principal change affects the courtyard at the rear of the building. The present arrangement is modern, largely a remodelling of 1993. Nothing survives of the 1830s garden with its semi-circular conservatory, probably by Papworth. The first edition Ordnance Survey of 1872 shows a rear garden with a large semi-circular conservatory attached to the back of No. 13 Gloucester Gate Mews and covering about a quarter of the space. This lost layout likely dates from the 1870s. It was altered and the glasshouse removed circa 1900, and had certainly gone by the 1935 edition of the Ordnance Survey. A link building along the whole of the south side

of the courtyard was erected in two stages circa 1900 and circa 1950. It is clearly shown on the 1962 Ordnance Survey and on an old survey plan was described as containing 'bedsits'. This early 20th-century link building was demolished in 1993 when the house underwent refurbishment. It is proposed to rebuild it as a glazed link to form a new family room. Pre-App advice from 28 September 2015 suggested that it should occupy the old footprint and line up with the rear projection of the Papworth part of the building (the 1993 dining room). This advice has been complied with. The roof is planned as a monopitch, at an angle suggested by the Daylight and Sunlight Consultant, so that the proposal meets BRE targets with respect to daylight and sunlight impact on the adjacent properties. This new family room link building is therefore the resuscitation of a former building which once existed on the site, and the proposed elegant modern architectural treatment is described in Pre-App advice as a 'welcomed feature'.

The rear courtyard is to be remodelled and roofed over at subsidiary level to create a new lower-ground space underneath, lit from a lightwell on the north and west sides. This will not impinge on the listed rear elevation, except for the addition of an iron balcony, similar to those on nearby houses, outside the ground-floor drawing room window. The raised floor of the back area will be treated as a garden with a predominance of grass lawn and some stone paving. This will maintain the amenity value of the back garden. The raising of the floor of the rear courtyards of Georgian houses is a feature dating back to the 19th century in West London, especially in Mayfair and Marylebone. There is therefore an historical precedent for the treatment of the rear space in listed buildings.

The mews buildings are not listed. Their demolition and rebuilding, therefore, raises no issues of special interest. They will be rebuilt to the same two-storeyed scale as the existing, with a continuous pitched slate roof (at present only extant on half). The elevation towards the mews will be of stock brick, with segmented arches to the sash windows and ground-floor mews doors to improve on the current condition and match the adjoining mews houses, which have been consistently rebuilt or refurbished in recent years by the Crown Estate. It is considered that this will enhance the Conservation Area. (The excavation of a plant room at basement level under the new mews building raises no historic buildings issues.) The mews elevation towards the new court/garden will be treated in the same 'green' way as the new glazed link building and trellis on the north wall to maintain a consistent, modern approach.

Altogether, it is considered that these alterations will retain and respect the features of special interest, the front and rear elevations, the principal rooms on the ground floor, and the main staircase. The alterations are to be implemented in an elegant, modern manner of high quality, which will add a new dimension to the architectural character.