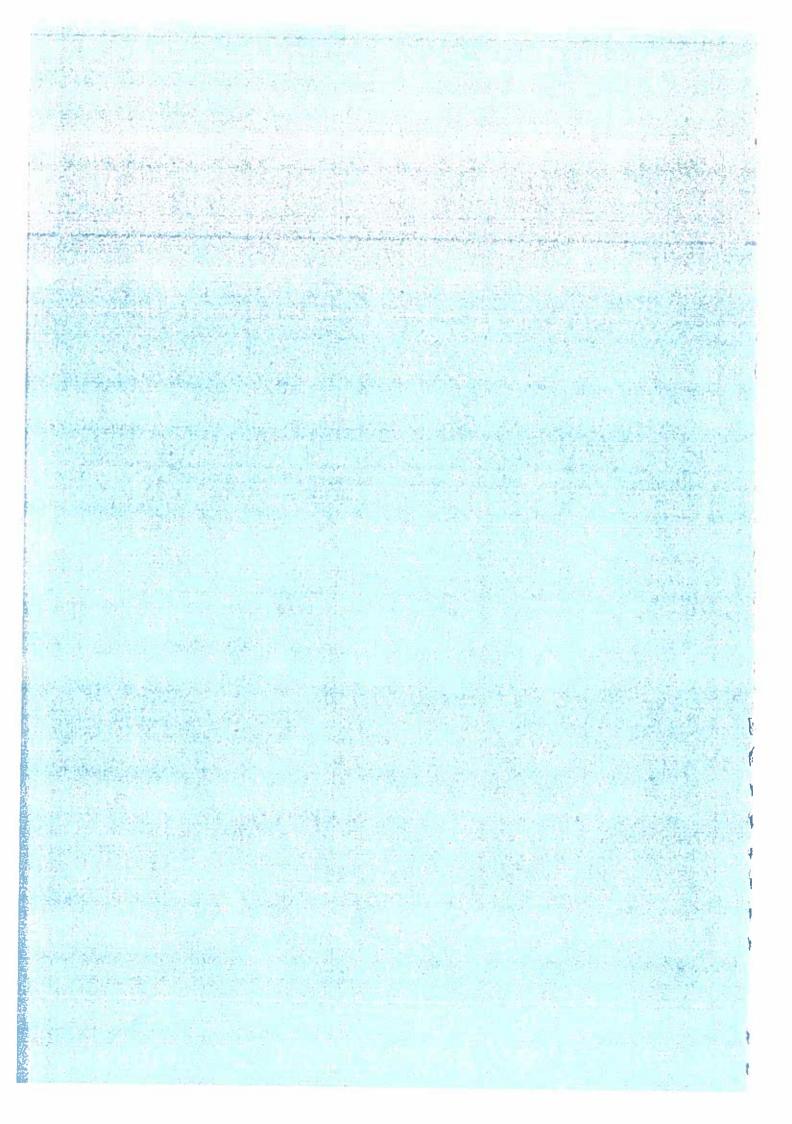
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Heritage Statement

October 2015



Built Heritage Consultancy



# 100 Chalton Street &46 Phoenix RoadHeritage Statement

October 2015

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Built Heritage Consultancy have been appointed to evaluate the heritage impacts of the proposed alterations to 100 Chalton Street and 46 Phoenix Road, in the London Borough of Camden. These two contiguous units are purpose-built shops on the ground floor of the Grade II listed Chamberlain House, part of the larger 1920s Ossulston Estate.

The proposals entail the removal of modern signage from the façades above the shopfronts, the insertion of a louvred panel to hide exposed extract vents, and the general refurbishment of the shopfronts. The two shops are also to be connected by two openings through the party wall. Overall the proposals would enhance the special interest of the listed building through the removal of modern detracting features and the reinstatement of more appropriate elements.

In compliance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 128) and the London Borough of Camden's heritage policies, this report sets out the historical development of the shops, assesses their heritage value, and considers the proposals against the relevant policy and guidance. This report has been written by Edmund Harris and James Weeks, following a site visit on 18 September 2015.

# 2.0 Understanding

# 2.1 Historic development of Somers Town

The Ossulston Estate, of which Chamberlain House forms a part, is located in Somers Town, north of the Euston Road between Euston and St Pancras Stations. The site formed part of an estate belonging to the Charterhouse until it was sold in 1608, eventually being purchased by Charles Cocks of the Middle Temple in 1628. A descendant married Mary, the sister of Lord Chancellor Somers, and their grandson was created Baron Somers of Evesham in 1784, hence the area's current name.

In 1756 Euston Road was laid out as part of the New Road, which linked Paddington with Islington, cutting across the southern portion of the estate. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Somers Town was being absorbed by the northern fringes of London, and residential development began in the 1780s. The streets were laid out on an orthogonal plan centred on Clarendon Square, north west of our site. Little of the original late 18<sup>th</sup> century Somers Town now survives, having fallen victim to bomb damage in World War II and 20<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment.

A dramatic change to the area was brought about by the opening in 1838 immediately to its southwest of Euston Station, the southern terminus of the London and Birmingham Railway. This was followed by King's Cross, a short distance away, in 1852, and then St Pancras in 1868. Somers Town went into decline as a residential district and subsequent development was far lower in quality. Living standards dropped with overcrowding becoming a serious problem, and it eventually turned into a slum area. An Anglican parish church, Christ Church, together with a parsonage and National Schools was put up on a site on the east side of Chalton Street a little south of Phœnix Road in 1868, replacing a church destroyed for the construction of St Pancras Station. It engaged in missionary work and poverty relief, but was damaged by bombing in World War II and demolished afterwards.

# 2.2 The Ossulston Estate and Chamberlain House

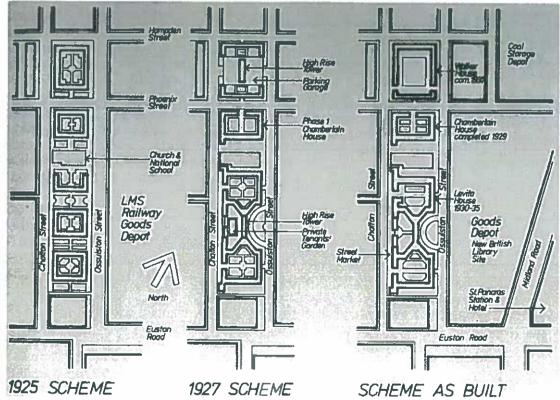
The London County Council (LCC) recognised the need to provide better accommodation for the inhabitants of Somers Town, and before World War I had put up the Churchway Estate on the nearby street of that name: a complex of tenement blocks typical of the housing its architects' department was designing at the time. In 1924 the Borough Council of St Pancras proposed a redevelopment of the area in the vicinity of Wolcot Street in the north of Somers Town. The LCC criticised the proposal for its inadequacy and wanted to see a larger scheme carried out, but its ambitions were checked by the limited amount of land it was able to purchase from the London Midland and Scottish Railway, comprising the terraces bounded by Chalcot and Ossulston Streets.

At the time it seemed likely that the west side of Chalton Street and the east side of Ossulston Street would soon be redeveloped for railway and other uses. The LCC's favoured forms for new housing — Garden City 'cottage' estates and five- to six-storey tenement blocks — would not have been an effective response to the situation. Consequently G. Topham Forrest, the chief architect of the LCC, began thinking about high-rise buildings instead, inspired by his experience of steel-frame technology in the USA. It was decided at an early stage that the flats would be better appointed than the LCC's standard designs, with proper kitchens and bathrooms, heating and a hot water from a

central supply, and electric (rather than gas) lighting, power points, cookers and kettles - the 'allelectric flat'. Built-in rubbish chutes and a mechanised disposal system would also be incorporated. It was recognised that the scheme would be expensive to build and the cost was to be offset by the inclusion of private apartments with their own parking, offices and shops.

An initial perimeter block scheme, was produced in 1925 and published in the Architects' Journal. After a hiatus, during which time Forrest had acquainted himself with Karl Ehn's designs for the Karl Marx-Hof housing complex in Vienna, a new scheme was proposed in 1927. This was intended to house 2,862 council and 192 private tenants. The southern portion of the complex was to have two quadrangles linked by a central high-rise block, forming an angular figure-of-eight on plan. Thirty five lock-up shops were planned for the Phoenix Road and Chalton Street frontages as well as wide pavements for a street market. After some discussion a pub - what materialised as the Cock Tavern on Phoenix Road - was included in the plan, as well as a coffee house.

The design was very positively received and drawings of it were exhibited at the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition in 1927. Neville Chamberlain, at that point Minister of Health, laid the foundation stone in February 1928 of the first block, which was named after him. This was largely complete when the Prince of Wales visited in October 1929. While Chamberlain House was under construction the remainder of the scheme underwent a substantial revision, prompted by concerns over its financial viability. The intended private flats and studios were never built, and Levita House was reduced in size, losing its central tower. Walker House, the northernmost portion of the Ossulston Estate, was not completed until 1937, to the designs of E.P. Wheeler, Forrest's successor. By then the style had changed to a blend of Neo-Georgian and Moderne.



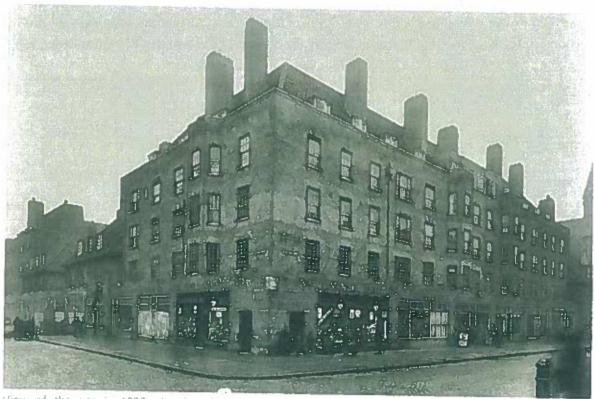
The evolution of the scheme from the original proposal of 1925 to what was eventually built between 1928 and 1937 - source: Pepper, p. 47

#### 2.3 The site

The site comprises two neighbouring shop units on the corner of Chalton Street and Phoenix Road. 100 Chalton Street has frontages onto both streets, whereas 46 Phoenix Road is a single shopfront. Each was purpose-built within a larger unified design for parades of shops running along both streets on the ground floor of Chamberlain House.

## Original design

The likely original character of the shopfronts is shown on the historic photograph below. Each had a low wall with large windows above, topped by a row of small windows. Each shopfront was set within plain roughcast masonry surround enlivened by roundels. The masonry façade between and above each shop was entirely plain, forming a continuous 'basement' that projected slightly in front of the recessed residential storeys above. At the corner of the street was a door on each façade leading into the shop behind. Even by the date of this photograph there were some variations in the shopfronts: 100 Chalton Street was occupied by Home & Colonial Stores, and appears to have a different set of upper lights to its shop windows. It also had the store name repeated in larger gold letters fixed to the masonry parapet above the shopfront. It is interesting to note that all the other shops also had their names displayed on the same parapet above the shopfronts, unlike today.



View of the site in 1930, showing the largely regular glazed shopfronts, though with some individual modifications. (The City of London: Guildhall Library - Collage)



Note the lettering set above the shopfronts on all the units, though particularly on 100 Chalton Street on the corner. (The City of London: Guildhall Library - Collage)

#### Modern alterations

As illustrated on the photos below, the original frontages of these two shops have been changed over recent decades:

- The doors in the masonry façade at the street corner have been blocked up.
- Modern fascias have been fixed onto the masonry parapets above the shopfronts.
- The uninterrupted glazing of the original shopfronts has been replaced with more oldfashioned windows with several vertical glazing bars, and no upper row of small windows.
- Metal shutters have been fitted to some of the windows and doors.
- Several projecting signs have been fixed to the masonry façade.
- Various advertisements have been placed on the windows, as well as a cashpoint machine.
- Holes have been cut in the Phoenix Road window of 100 Chalton Street to vent the plant inside.



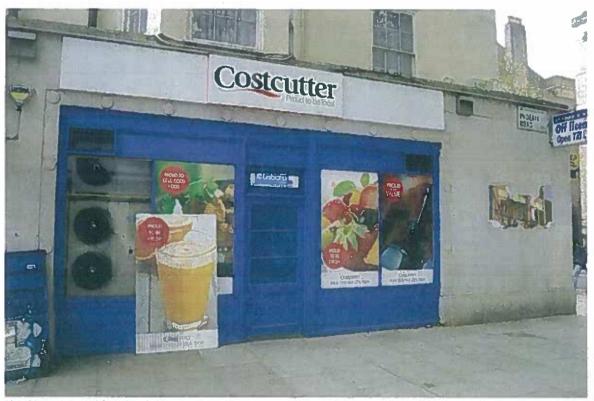
The Chalton Street façade of 100 Chalton Street, showing the modern shopfront and upper fascia, and the cashpoint by the door.



The Phoenix Road frontage of the two shops, showing the projecting signs, modern shopfronts, and upper fascias. Note also how the original doorway in the wall on the right has been completely blocked.



46 Phoenix Road, showing the modern upper fascia, shutters and awning obscuring the original masonry and the (modern) shopfront.



The Phoenix Road façade of 100 Chalton Street, showing the holes cut in the window for venting plant.

Internally, the two shops have been completely modernised in all respects. No historic features of any note were visible on the site visit.



View of the shop interior from the entrance to 100 Chalton Street.

# 3.0 Significance

## 3.1 Assessing significance

Assessing 'significance' is the means by which the cultural importance of a place and its component parts is identified and compared, both absolutely and relatively. The identification of areas and aspects of higher and lower significance, based on a thorough understanding of the site, enables proposals to be developed which safeguard and, where possible, enhance the character and cultural values of a place. The assessment is an essential step towards the identification of areas where greater or lesser amounts of change should be considered, as well as locations where change might enhance our understanding and appreciation of the site's significance.

The significance of a 'heritage asset' is defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework as:

the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

English Heritage's Conservation Principles (2008) includes a methodology for assessing significance by considering 'heritage values' which broadly align with the 'interests' of the NPPF.

These are arranged in four categories:

**Evidential** (or archaeological) value – the physical aspects of a building that yield evidence about its past.

**Historical** value – the extent to which the building is associated with or illustrative of historic events or people.

**Aesthetic** (architectural / artistic) value – includes the importance of buildings or places for their design, visual, landscape and architectural qualities.

Communal value – includes the importance of buildings or places to societies and communities, including for local identity.

# 3.2 Significance of the shops

#### Historical interest/value

The two shops possess notable historical interest due to their original role within the comprehensive design of the Ossulston Estate. This estate, including the Grade II listed Chamberlain House, was a pioneering interwar Council housing project and is regarded by Historic England as being 'the most important inner city estate of the inter-war period, representing the most considered attempt by the LCC to inject new thinking into inner-city estates. It was influenced in particular by Viennese housing models and was innovative in terms of layout and elevation' (list description; see Appendix).

The shops as originally conceived were an integral part of the overall design. However the loss of the original shopfronts and interiors has negatively affected their historical value.

#### Aesthetic value

The original integrated design of the shops was a key part of the considered elevations of Chamberlain House to both streets. However, the replacement of the shopfronts, the modern advertisements and shutters, and the accretive additions of various unsympathetic signs over the years has reduced their aesthetic value. It is now relatively low, but could be greatly improved by relatively modest alterations such as the removal of the over-sized and unsympathetic upper signage.

#### Communal value

The shops have a moderate communal value as a part of the purpose-designed local shopping parade of the Ossulston Estate.

# Evidential / archaeological value

The shops possess little evidential value. The materials and techniques used in their construction were typical of their time and the fabric offers relatively little potential for discoveries that could add significantly to our understanding of the past.

## 4.0 Policies

## 4.1 Statutory control

Chamberlain House is a Grade II-listed building. The desirability of protecting the setting of such heritage assets is set out in Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which states:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

This is further recognised in national and local authority planning policy, as set out below.

## 4.2 National Heritage Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to streamline national planning policy into an integrated set of priorities, structured around the central theme of sustainable development, 'which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking' (paragraph 14). In order successfully to deliver sustainable development, the NPPF makes it clear that "business should not be overburdened by the combined requirements of planning expectations" and that "planning policies should recognise and address potential barriers to investment". Paragraph 7 states that:

There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

An economic role - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy...;

A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities... by creating a high quality built environment...; and

An environmental role - contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy; ...

# Core Planning Principles

The NPPF also sets out 12 'core planning principles' that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These include that planning should:

Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. ...;

Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas...;

Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;

# Good design

The NPPF also requires high quality design within the built environment, stating in paragraph 56 that:

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

# Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Chapter 12 of the NPPF (paragraphs 126 to 141) sets out the national planning policies on the historic environment. Paragraph 126 states that: 'Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.' The guidance continues to place the assessment of the significance of heritage assets and the impact of proposed development on this at the heart of planning for the historic environment, as follows:

## Paragraph 128 states:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

#### Paragraph 129 states:

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

## Paragraph 131 states:

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities 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 positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

#### Paragraph 132 states:

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be....

With regard to the proposed alterations, paragraph 134 states:

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.

## 4.3 Regional Heritage Policy

The London Plan (March 2015, incorporating Further Alterations to the London Plan) is an overall strategic plan, setting out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of London over the next 20–25 years. It is meant to ensure that there is 'general conformity' between each London Borough's Local Development Plans and provides general guidance on spatial development within all London Boroughs.

The specific policies within the London Plan that are relevant to consider in this case are as follows.

Policy 7.4 'Local Character' requires that:

Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings.

The approach to architecture is discussed in Policy 7.6, which states as a general strategy that:

Architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.

It goes on to set out the following policies guiding the decision-making process.

Buildings and structures should:

[...]

c. Comprise details and materials that complement, not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character;

[...]

f. Provide high quality indoor and outdoor spaces and integrate well with the surrounding streets and open spaces;

Policy 7.8 states that, as a general policy guiding the design of proposals which will have an impact on heritage assets:

C. Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

Policy 7.9 deals specifically with heritage led-regeneration:

The significance of heritage assets should be assessed when development is proposed and schemes designed so that the heritage significance is recognised both in their own right and as catalysts for regeneration. Wherever possible heritage assets (including buildings at risk) should be repaired, restored and put to a suitable and viable use that is consistent with their conservation and the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality.

# 4.4 Local Planning Policy and Guidance

# 4.4.1 Camden Core Strategy (2010-2025)

The Camden Core Strategy is a central part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). It supersedes the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), from which no relevant policies have been carried forward. The policy from LB Camden's Core strategy which is relevant to the proposals for Chamberlain House is 'CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage', which states:

The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

- a) Requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;
- b) Preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;
- c) Promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;
- d) Seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible [...].

The accompanying explanatory text contains a number of specific clauses on the need for high-quality design in the borough, that responds to local distinctiveness.

# 4.4.2 Camden Development Policies (2010)

The Camden Development Policies document contains the Council's detailed policies on design and the criteria used to determine applications for planning permission. The relevant policies for the purposes of this assessment are DP24 on high quality design and DP25 on heritage. The more relevant parts of the policies and the accompanying explanatory text are set out below.

## Policy DP24 - Securing high quality design

The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

- a) Character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- b) The character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;
- c) The quality of materials to be used;
- d) The provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;
- e) The appropriate location for building services equipment;

[...]

i) Accessibility.

## Policy DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage

This policy sets out the Council's general position on listed buildings.

To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- f) Only grant consent for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building; and
- g) Not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

This, policy is saccompagied by the action of the saccompagied by the saccompagied by

25.13 In order to protect listed buildings, the Council will control external and internal works that affect their special architectural or historic interest. Consent is required for any alterations, including some repairs, which would affect the special interest of a listed building. [...]

# 5.0 Assessment of Proposals

# 5.1 The proposed alterations

The proposals entail the removal of modern signage from the masonry parapets above the shops, the insertion of a louvred panel to hide the exposed extract vents, and the general refurbishment of the shopfronts. The application also seeks permission for the two shops to be connected by two openings through the party wall.

## 5.2 Assessment

## External alterations

The removal of modern fascias from the parapets above the shops would return the original masonry of the facades back to view, notably enhancing the listed building's aesthetic and historical values. The removal of the modern projecting signs would also be an enhancement.

The tidying-up of the glazing would enhance the aesthetic value of the shops, improving their group value with the other shopfronts and delivering a minor heritage benefit.

The insertion of the louvred panel on one of the Phoenix Road shopfronts would be a visual improvement on the existing arrangement, which has three holes cut into the glass window which reveal the extract vents of the chiller units to view from the street. The louvred panel would be sensitively designed to form a modest element in the wider street frontage, and it would therefore enhance the aesthetic value of the listed building.



The general refurbishment and regularisation of the shopfronts would deliver significant localised benefits. Overall these would constitute a minor enhancement of the listed building's aesthetic value.

#### Internal alterations

The interiors of the shops are entirely modern. The proposed changes involved the removal of masonry in the party wall to create two openings, each of which would be the width of a single door. The openings would be trimmed with display boards to maintain an appropriate appearance within the shop. There would be negligible harm to the aesthetic and evidential value of the listed building. Its historical value would be marginally affected by the physical combination of two original shops into one unit; however the original design of two units would remain completely legible as the majority of the party wall would remain in situ. Meanwhile, the communal value of the shops would be marginally enhanced, since the ability of the supermarket to serve local people would be increased, thereby enhancing its economic sustainability.

# 6.0 Conclusion

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 129 requires local authorities to ensure that the particular significance of any heritage asset is properly assessed. This assessment has described the special interest of the shops as part of the Grade II listed Chamberlain House and the wider Ossulston Estate. It has summarised their heritage value, which derives mainly from their historic role as part of the purpose-built shopping parade and from their aesthetic contribution as part of Chamberlain House's street facades.

From the assessment in section 5, our conclusion is that the submitted proposals would enhance the aesthetic, historical and communal values of Chamberlain House through improving the design and character of the frontages of 100 Chalton Street and 46 Phoenix Road. The changes therefore meet the tests set out in paragraphs 132 and 134 of the NPPF, and accord with the London Plan and London Borough of Camden policies set out in chapter 4 above.

Overall the proposals would enhance the special interest of the listed building through the removal of modern detracting features and the reinstatement of more appropriate elements. In view of the benefits of the scheme, Listed Building Consent can be safely granted.

# 7.0 Sources

The particular historical sources used in the preparation of this report included:

Godfrey, Walter H., Marcham, W. McB. (eds.), 'Somers Town' in, Survey of London: Vol. 24, The Parish of St Pancras - Part 4: King's Cross Neighbourhood (London: London County Council, 1952), 118-123 <a href="http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol24/pt4/pp118-123">http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol24/pt4/pp118-123</a> [consulted 23 September 2015]

Pepper, Simon, 'Ossulston Street: Early LCC Experiments in High-Rise Housing', 1925-1929, The London Journal, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 57 (Summer 1981), 45-64

# 8.0 Appendix: List description

loE Number: 477766

Location: CHAMBERLAIN HOUSE INCLUDING SHOPS, 44-58 PHEONIX ROAD (south side), CAMDEN

TOWN, CAMDEN, GREATER LONDON

Date listed: 13 December 1996

Date of last amendment: 13 December 1996

Grade II

CAMDEN TQ2982NE CHALTON STREET 798-1/89/1312 Nos.86-100 (Even) 13/12/96 Chamberlain House GV II See under: Nos.44-58 Chamberlain House including shops PHOENIX ROAD. CAMDEN TQ2982NE OSSULSTON STREET 798-1/89/1312 Chamberlain House 13/12/96 GV II See under: Nos.44-58 Chamberlain House including shops PHOENIX ROAD. CAMDEN TQ2982NE PHOENIX ROAD 798-1/89/1312 (South side) 13/12/96 Nos.44-58 (Even) Chamberlain House including shops GV II Includes: Nos.86-100 Chamberlain House CHALTON STREET. Includes: Chamberlain House OSSULSTON STREET. Block of council flats, partly with shops at ground floor level, forming part of the Ossulston Estate; frontages to Phoenix Road, Ossulston Street and Chalton Street. 1927-9. To the designs of the LCC Architect's department under G. Topham Forrest. Loadbearing brickwork rendered with roughcast, channelled to ground floor to appear as stone; reinforced concrete balconies. Pantiled hipped roofs with tall chimney-stacks. PLAN: courtyard plan with entrance from Phoenix Road. EXTERIOR: Phoenix Road frontage of central entrance flanked by similar 2 storey and attic pavilion blocks having 3 tripartite sashes each and hipped roofs with dormers and overhanging eaves. To either side the row continues with 4 storey blocks having ground floor shops and tripartite sashes to upper floors; other street facades in similar style. Opposite entrance in courtyard the southern block has balconies designed to make the voids above them read as holes punched in the building; central rectangles with a projecting corbelled balcony with shields to the top floor flanked by long rectangular voids grouped in 3s to each floor. Round-arched arcaded ground floor with central opening approached by curved steps. A similar design continues to the western bays. INTERIORS: not inspected. This complex forms a group with Levita House, Ossulston Street, (qv) and the southern block of Walker House, Phoenix Road including The Cock Tavern (qv). HISTORICAL NOTE: despite policy to house as many Londoners as possible on outlying cottage estates pressure of waiting lists and urgency of slum clearance forced Cecil Levita, Chairman of the LCC Housing Committee to review the situation. The Ossulston Estate is the most important inner-city estate of the inter-war period, representing the most considered attempt by the LCC to inject new thinking into inner-city housing estates. It was influenced in particular by Viennese housing models and was innovative in terms of layout and elevation. The foundation stone of Chamberlain House was laid by Neville Chamberlain, then Minister of Health.

