

7 ALBANY STREET, LONDON

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
HERITAGE STATEMENT ADDENDUM
JUNE 2016




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1. Introduction

An application for listed building consent (ref: 2015/6661/L) has been submitted to Camden Borough Council in relation to proposed alterations to the property at 7 Albany Street, London.

During the determination stage, initial advice was received from the local planning authority's (LPA) planning and conservation officers. The comments suggested that the alterations then proposed, specifically the opening up of the ground and first floors, would not appropriately reflect the property's listed status.

However, during a site visit with LPA's officers it was accepted that the property had been significantly altered during the recent past (c. 1970's onwards), with new openings created and very few original fixtures and fittings remaining. It was agreed that the changes had probably been undertaken without the formal approval of the local planning authority but these had taken place significantly in advance of the acquisition of the property by the applicant. Nevertheless, despite the changes that had taken place, the plan form of the property remains of importance. Officers advised that as a principle, alterations to a listed property should be of a form that allowed the original layout of the building and its hierarchy of floors to be understood. Therefore in taking forward further changes the proposed alterations should be designed to provide a greater reference to the original internal subdivision, whilst providing a contemporary living space as required by the applicant.

Following this meeting and advice the proposals were revised and resubmitted to the LPA for consideration. The amended proposals provide greater reference to the property's internal subdivision, particularly on the ground and first floors.

In addition, further research into the property's history has taken place with the property freeholder (The Crown Estate) and a further heritage assessment prepared in response to the revised proposals for which listed building consent is now sought.

This Heritage Statement Addendum therefore provides details on the additional research and the heritage site assessment undertaken by Terence O'Rourke Limited, and assesses the revised alteration proposals in terms of the property's listed building status.

2. Building and planning history

We have sought to undertake additional research into the property's history, specifically the more recent period, since the terrace was listed in 1973, to locate any evidence for the kitchen extension and or the extensive alterations that have been made within the interior of the property, or of when the most recent programme of works took place.

The property sustained some bomb damage during the Second World War, as recorded on the bomb damage map for Regent's Park, Euston and Somer's Town¹. The east side of Albany Street including the terrace at nos. 1-17 is identified as "*general blast damage (non-structural)*", from Marylebone Road to Munster Gardens. The buildings to the west on St Andrews Place and Park Square East are marked as "*seriously damaged (repairable at cost)*". There is no information available on any repair required to terrace 1-17 Albany Street as a result of war damage.

Initial investigation of the relevant planning history identified very limited records for 7 Albany Street. We have sought to undertake a further review the planning history, and liaised with the LPA on this matter. The outcome of the further research was to conclude that the London Borough of Camden

¹ From Bomb Damage Maps 1939-1945, Laurence Ward which can be viewed at <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/gallery/2015/sep/02/hand-coloured-bomb-damage-maps-london-in-pictures>

does not hold any information (paper or electronic) on any planning or listed building applications relating to no. 7 Albany Street prior to the current submission. This means either that the alteration and extension works undertaken to the property were without planning permission, or that the record has been lost.

Liaison with The Crown Estate, as the landlord of the property, -including access to Crown archives and meetings with its heritage experts, has taken place to ascertain what record are held in respect of extensions and alterations made. As per the lease arrangements, the leaseholder is required to seek the landlord's consent to undertake alteration works to the property. It was therefore considered that The Crown Estate might hold some record of previous alterations undertaken by previous leaseholders. Plans attached to a lease dated 20 July 1988 show the kitchen extension in existence alongside the current internal room arrangement. However, the Crown Estate has confirmed that it holds no specific record of the extensions and alterations made to the property prior to that date. Again, this could suggest that the previous alterations have been undertaken without formal consents being in place or, less likely, lost records.

Despite the best efforts of the applicant, it has not been possible to locate any firm evidence for the date of the kitchen extension or of the significant internal alterations that have taken place. Investigatory work of the existing layout and fabric suggests that works to the property have taken place on at least two occasions prior to 1988 but no evidence of exactly when exist.

3. Heritage assessment

A further inspection of the property was undertaken on 1 June 2016, and the photographic evidence is presented within Appendix A to this Addendum. The following should be read alongside the drawings of the property as existing, submitted with the application (drawings numbers AS-100E D1; AS-101E D1; AS-102E D1; AS-103E D1) and the series of site photographs provided within appendix A.

Some limited and localised opening up works have been undertaken to determine the extent of former works and original fabric and most of the built in furniture and some kitchen units have been removed. The opening up revealed that the plaster of walls and ceilings was all modern (post 1970) and this was consistent throughout most of the property. Also consistent throughout are the modern floors, doors, the spotlights inserted into ceilings and the applied decorative cornices. The latter has been designed around the built in furniture such as wardrobes. In the ground floor and first floor reception rooms gas fires with marble Regency-style fire surrounds have been fitted into the filled-in grates. The present appearance of the interior is of a unified scheme of decoration completed across all four floors of the property. All windows in the rear elevation and in the third floor are modern replacements. The staircase may also be a modern replacement, though pre-dating the most recent programme of decoration. The bannister and hand-rail are unstable.

The visible floor joists are of several types and dates, with the large profile older joists and a number of smaller and paler additions. The small areas uncovered did not allow full examination or any conclusions on date other than the opened areas exhibited little, or no original fabric.

Ground floor

The plan form of the ground floor is legible, with visible divisions between the entrance hall, staircase hall and the three main rooms (living room, dining room and kitchen). There are double doors between the living and dining rooms and an open arch through to the kitchen, which is located within a rear extension to the original property. This extension is of unknown date but was in existence by 1988. The sash windows at the front of the house have panelled reveals and functioning shutters. One side of the chimney-breast in the dining room area has been boxed in.

See Appendix A.1.

First floor

Again the plan form is legible with the two rooms opening off the central staircase enclosure. The sash windows at the front of the house have additional secondary glazing and fixed internal blinds. The shutters are present but painted and sealed in an open position. To the rear, an original window position, has been utilised by a door providing access to the external terrace over the kitchen extension. The chimney-breast in the rear room has been boxed in on both sides, one to half height, and there is an additional boxed in area in the corner of the room at the front of the building behind the door. The purpose of this is not known, but it is thought to accommodate pipework / wiring.

See Appendix A.2.

Second floor

The plan form is legible, with two rooms opening off the staircase enclosure. There has been alteration to the original form of the property with the insertion of a bathroom into the room at the front. In this room the chimney-breast has been boxed in on both sides, and a vent identifies the former location of the fireplace. The other wall is obscured by the built in wardrobe (now partially removed). The sash windows have secondary glazing and the shutters are present but again are painted and sealed. In the rear room one side of the chimney-breast is boxed and there is a vent locating the former fireplace.

See Appendix A.3.

Third floor

The plan form of this floor has been the most altered. The staircase enclosure has been partially infilled by a cupboard for a hot water tank and opens into a second central space giving access to the two bedrooms and two bathrooms created by inserted partition walls. The room at the front has a vent identifying the former location of a fireplace, with the chimney-breast is boxed in on both sides. The room at the rear of the property has one side of the chimney-breast open. There are skylight additions to both bathrooms.

See Appendix A.4.

4. Heritage assessment of the proposed alterations

In assessing the proposed alterations, the following should be read alongside the proposed alteration plans, sections and axonometric drawings as amended (drawings numbers AS-100 D4; AS-101 D3; AS102 D3; AS-103 D4; Ground Floor Section A-A; Ground Floor Section B-B; Ground Floor Section C-C; Ground Floor Section D-D; Ground Floor Section E-E; Ground Floor Section F-F; Ground Floor Section G-G; Ground Floor Axonometric 1; Ground Floor Axonometric 2; First Floor Axonometric 1; First Floor Axonometric 2).

Ground floor proposed works

In summary, the proposed alterations are as follows:

- The entrance from the hallway into the living room area is proposed to be partially widened to create a greater sense of openness within the property. However, the physical separation between the two spaces would be retained. The submitted axonometric and elevation drawings

show 'downstand' sections all wall being retained along the ceiling over the entrance way in order to continue to clearly define the separate spaces and historic divisions within the property.

- The enclosure and separation of the stairs and circulation space is proposed to be retained.
- The entrance from the stairs and circulation space into the dining room is proposed to be widened in order to create a greater sense of openness within the property, as per the hallway / living room entrance (see axonometric and elevation drawings).
- The downstairs WC is to be retained in its current location.
- Walls are shown retained marking the transition between the living room, dining room and kitchen spaces, and referencing the divisions within the property.
- The alcoves either side of the two chimneybreasts are proposed to be fully reinstated.
- New fireplaces are proposed along with skirting.
- Wall, floor finishes and cornices are proposed to be replaced.
- The windows and shutters would be retained unchanged.

In conclusion, as opposed to creating an open plan layout at ground floor, the revised proposals simply seek to widen the existing openings between the internal rooms, maintaining the property's historic sub-division whilst allowing the ground floor to be opened up (without loss of original fabric) to create more of an open space concept. The proposals also seek to reinstate historic feature lost or obscured during the most recent alterations, most notably the reinstatement of the chimney-breasts, and the removal of inappropriate 'boxing-in' of service runs.

First floor proposed works:

In summary, the proposed alterations are as follows:

- The wall enclosing the staircase will be retained.
- Walls are shown retained marking the transition between the living spaces, and referencing the division between the rooms.
- The corner enclosure within the main living space will be removed.
- The division between the living spaces has been widened in order to create a greater sense of openness and appropriate livable space. However, the physical separation between the two spaces would be retained. The submitted axonometric and elevation drawings show 'downstand' sections of wall being retained along the ceiling over the entrance way in order to continue to clearly define the separate spaces and historic divisions within the property.
- The enclosure and separation of the stairs and circulation space will be retained.
- The blinds and secondary glazing will be removed and the shutters repaired and made operational.
- The chimney-breast in the rear room will be reinstated and the boxed in section removed.
- New fireplaces and skirting are proposed.
- All wall and floor finishes and cornice are replaced.
- The access to the rear terrace is retained unchanged.

It is considered that while the proposals will alter the current plan form of this floor, effectively creating a single room opening off a staircase enclosure, the proposals will retain clear and distinct references to the original subdivision of the two rooms, which will be clearly 'read and understood' when in those spaces. The plan form drawings, while showing a more open plan concept, still show the two spaces

as being used for different purposes. The proposals will also have the benefit in reinstating the chimney-breast in the rear room, and the windows and shutters in the front room. The amount of original fabric removed during this process will be minimal.

Second floor proposed works:

The proposals will retain the plan form of the staircase enclosure, but remove the door to the rear room, which would be accessed from the master bedroom. A new dividing wall is proposed to replace the existing. The previously inserted bathroom will be removed.

As highlighted previously, the second floor has been the subject of alteration. The proposals keep two distinct rooms with access from an enclosed staircase.

Third floor proposed works:

The original layout has long been removed but the proposals will reinstate the staircase enclosure and doors to the two bedrooms and replace the partition walls with a new arrangement to divide the space into additional bathrooms. The skylights will be removed.

The third floor has been considerably altered and it is not considered the current configuration represents the historic plan form of the property. The proposals would reinstate the staircase enclosure while providing two distinct rooms more closely resembling the original layout.

The staircase:

The present structure of the staircase is retained with replacement bannisters and secure hand-rail. The staircase enclosure is retained as a separate space, with visible divisions on all floors.

5. Conclusions

Given the property's existing condition, we believe that the alterations proposed will not lead to significant heritage impacts affecting the property's listed status. The amended proposals maintain clear reference to the existing plan form of the property, specifically on the ground and first floors where it is considered that the original plan form remains.

The second and third floors have been altered previously, the third floor significantly, since when a significant amount of time has passed. It is considered that the upper floors bear little resemblance to the original plan form of the property. As such the proposals on these floors cannot be concluded to lead to adverse heritage impacts on the property. Indeed, we submit that the proposals on both floors offer the opportunity to recapture some of the original format by maintain two distinct rooms, and on the third floor, reinstate the staircase enclosure.

The property has been subject to extensive, and largely low quality, renovations and alternations by the previous tenant(s), and there is very little of the original fabric, or decorative finishes, left within the building. The proposal is seeking to bring the building back into use as a family home, and is proposing a high quality internal renovation, using appropriate materials (to Crown specification) that will complement the property.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed alterations are acceptable in terms of the property's heritage value and listed status.

Appendix A – Heritage Site Assessment Photographs

Appendix A.1 – Ground Floor





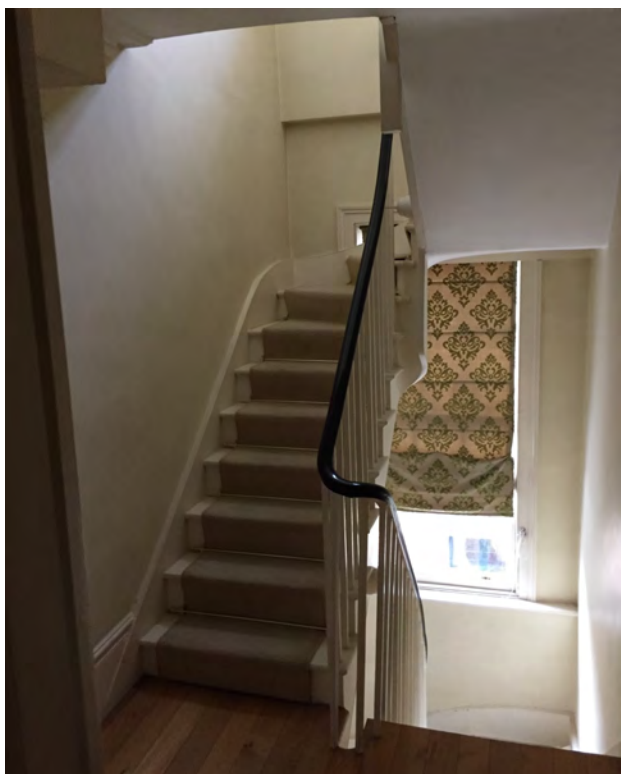


Appendix A.2 – First Floor





Appendix A.3 – Second Floor





Appendix A.4 – Third Floor

