

9, ST GEORGE'S TERRACE, PRIMROSE HILL, LONDON, N.W.1.

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION TO THE BASEMENT LEVEL FLAT



Nos. 10, 9 and 8, St George's Terrace – The street frontages

PAUL VELLUET – CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This outline report addresses the particular architectural and historic interest and significance of no. 9, St George's Terrace, as an integral part of the grade II listed terrace comprising nos. 1 to 11 (consec.), St George's Terrace, and its contribution to the character, appearance and significance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area in which the terrace is located, and to the settings of nearby listed buildings, and the potential effects of proposals for internal alterations to the basement level flat and its extension level into the garden at the rear of the property on that interest, character, appearance and significance.
- 1.2 The report does not seek to repeat the detailed design and access and heritage statements submitted in support of the current/recent applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent, but instead, to review the most recent proposals and to examine the critical, officer-level comments of the local planning authority on those proposals in order to determine the extent – if any – to which they are justified, and/or might be resolved.
- 1.3 Particulars of Paul Velluet's qualifications and experience are attached at the end of this report.
- 1.4 The report concludes that the critical, officer-level comments of the local planning authority on the most recent proposals as set out in the e-mail of the 27th March are entirely unjustified, and that subject to satisfactory detailed design, the proposals should serve to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the property and the listed terrace of which it forms and sustain its significance as a heritage asset; preserve the character and appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area and sustain its significance as a heritage asset; and preserve the settings of nearby listed properties; and as such will be consistent with relevant National, London-wide and local planning and conservation policies and guidance. Accordingly, the applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent merit the authority's support

2. THE EXISTING PROPERTY

- 2.1 No. 9, St George's Terrace forms an integral part of the grade II listed terrace comprising nos. 1 to 11 (consec.), St George's Terrace located on the north side of Primrose Hill Road in Sub-area 3 - Regents Park Road North of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area (as defined in the Council's *Primrose Hill Conservation Area*

Statement, published in January, 2001). A narrow, enclosed garden separates the listed terrace from Primrose Hill Road and the attractive and popular public open-space beyond – not, anomalously, included within the conservation area. The terrace of which no. 9 forms part steps down from west to east towards the junction with Regents Park Road; nos. 10 and 11 at the west end being the highest and nos. 1 and 2 at the east end being the lowest. Nos. 9, nos. 4 to 8 and no. 3 are aligned at intermediate levels. Nos. 3 and 9, are set back modestly from the line of nos. 10 and 11, nos. 4 to 8 and nos. 1 and 2, and comprise basement, three storeys and mansard storey, whereas the remaining houses in the terrace comprise basement, four storeys and mansard storey. The gardens of each of the houses at the rear of the terrace, extend northwards to the imperforate back wall of the two-storey properties on the south side of St George’s Mews, and step down west to east corresponding to the slope at the front of the terrace. The slope in the natural ground level means that the basements of the properties at the rear are sunk fully below the level of the original gardens

- 2.2 The terrace was first listed in September, 1997. The description attached to the listing-entry is brief and succinct:

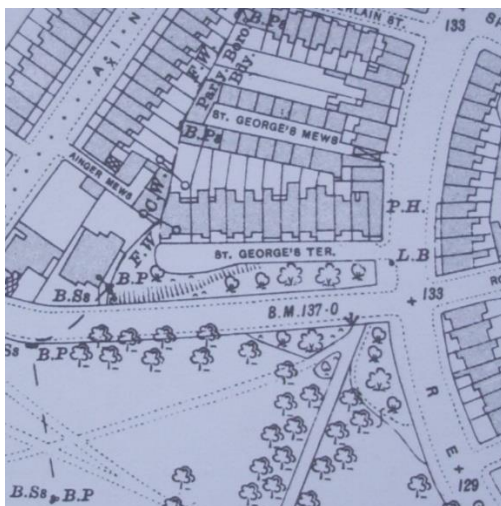
‘Terrace of 11 houses. C 1852. Pale yellow stock brick with channelled stucco ground floors and quoins and dressings. 3 storeys and basements. Nos 3 & 9 slightly recessed and originally of 2 storeys. 1 window each. Ground floor tripartite sashes mostly with enriched cast-iron window guards. Each house has a prostyle Doric porch (Nos 5 & 6 paired) supporting a continuous stuccoed balustrade to tripartite 1st floor window with screen of 4 half-columns with enriched capitals supporting an entablature the cornice of which supports a balustraded window guard to tripartite 2nd floor window with pilaster screen and entablature. 3rd floor windows tripartite architraved round-arched with keystones. Heavy bracketed and enriched stucco cornice. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with spearhead finials to areas’.

- 2.3 The listing of the terrace without the interiors of the individual properties having been inspected, and the absence of any reference to features within the properties or to the rear elevations clearly suggest that the terrace was listed solely or primarily on the strength of the special interest of its front elevation.
- 2.4 The individual properties have been extensively altered over the last hundred or more years - particularly their rear elevations, including that of no. 9 and of the immediate neighbours – see photographs below, and internally to varying degrees, including no. 9.
- 2.5 In addition, the gardens at the rear of each of the properties have been extensively altered, generally with the aim of increasing daylighting to the rear rooms at basement level through. In the case of nos. 8 and 9, the 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey mapping of the area in 1870 and 1913 (London, Sheet XVI and London Sheet V.I,

respectively) – see extracts below - clearly shows that as built, both properties possessed only narrow basement areas to the sides of each rear wing lighting the rear rooms within the main part of the house and leaving the rooms in the rear wings unlit. In the case of no. 9, the rear garden has been substantially excavated in two stages over the years to create three, level terraces. By contrast, the rear garden of no. 8 appears to have been left at its original level, with only the original basement area built-over at ground floor level with a modern, fully glazed extension at the side of the rear wing. The original, existing and proposed levels of the garden of no. 9 are shown in architects' drawing 617(P)008.



St George's Terrace, ca 1871: extract from the 1:2 500 scale Ordnance Survey London Sheet XVI



St George's Terrace, ca 1913: extract from the 1:2 500 scale Ordnance Survey London Sheet V.I



The rear elevation of no. 9, St George's Terrace at basement level as existing showing the impact of the excavation of the original garden to create three terraces stepping down to basement level



The rear elevation of no. 8, St George's Terrace at ground floor level as existing showing the original garden retained at the same level as the ground floor

- 2.6 It may be reasonably suggested that the architectural and historic significance of the terrace as a designated heritage asset resides in the coherence and unusual stepping form of the terrace – primarily as perceived in its front elevation – as a good exemplar of a mid-19th century terrace in the part of North London – and in its contribution to the character, appearance and significance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The much altered interior of the basement of the property – in use as a self-contained residential flat for many years - possesses only modest architectural and historic interest and significance and contains no features of architectural or historic interest or significance. Externally, the rear elevation of the property has been much and adversely altered at basement and ground floor levels. The lower part of the rear elevation contributes nothing to the particular special architectural or historic interest or significance to the listed terrace or to the settings of nearby listed buildings or to the character or appearance of the conservation area, or to the significance of the terrace or the conservation areas as designated heritage assets.
- 2.7 St Georges' Terrace is specifically highlighted and described in the Council's *Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement* under the section covering the history, development and character of Sub-area 3 – Regents Park Road North. However, anomalously, the Council suggests that the properties in the terrace 'are four storeys high' – whereas, they are four and three storeys high, with mansarded attic storeys and basements. In the same document, the Council rightly draws attention to the significance of views of the terrace from the Primrose Hill public open-space and Regents Park Road.

3. THE POLICY CONTEXT AND THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The present amended proposals have been shaped with regard to the following policies and guidance:
- The relevant policies contained in Section 12 of *The National Planning Policy Framework* of March, 2012;
 - The relevant guidance contained in *PPS 5 Planning for the historic environment: Historic environment planning practice guide* of March, 2010; in particular, Sections 5 and 6;
 - The relevant guidance contained in English Heritage's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, of April, 2008; and in *London terrace houses, 1660-1860: A guide to alterations and extensions*, published in February, 1996;

- The relevant policies contained in *The London Plan: The spatial development strategy for London consolidated with alterations since 2011* of March, 2015; in particular, Policies 7.6 and 7.8;
- The relevant policies included in Camden Council's *Core Strategy, 2010 -2015* ; in particular, Policies CS 14 on 'Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage';
- The relevant policies included in Camden Council's *Development Policies, 2010-2015*; in particular Policies DP 24, 25 and 27 on 'Securing high quality design', 'Conserving Camden's heritage' and 'Basements and light-wells';
- The relevant policies included in Camden Council's Draft Local Plan, 2015; in particular Policies A.1, A.5, D.1 and D.5;
- The relevant supplementary planning guidance of Camden Council contained in *Primrose Hill Conservation Statement*, published in January, 2001;
- The relevant supplementary planning guidance of Camden Council contained in *Camden Planning Guidance : Basements and lightwells, CP4*, published in September, 2013;
- The relevant guidance of English Heritage contained in *London terrace houses 1660-1860: A guide to alterations and extensions*. and
- The relevant joint advice of English Heritage and CABI contained in *Building in context – New development in historic areas*, published in January, 2002.

3.2 The amended proposals are wholly consistent with the above policies and guidance (including the 'policies' on listed buildings, rear extensions and basement lightwells set out in the conservation area statement) in that they will ensure that the integrity of the internal plan of the basement floor will not only be maintained, but reinstated where it has been previously adversely altered, and that the much altered rear elevation of the property will be left unchanged except at basement level where it has already been substantially altered – part of the property never devised to have any formal architectural role as it was concealed by the original garden to the rear. In addition and importantly, the proposals will ensure that the garden at the rear of the property will be restored to its original level, reversing the regrettable excavation of the garden and its being re-contoured in past years. In so doing, the proposals will serve to preserve the particular special interest of the property and the listed terrace of which it forms part and the settings of nearby listed buildings, and preserve the character and appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, and serve to sustain the significance of the listed terrace and the conservation area as designated heritage assets.

4. THE CRITICAL OFFICER-LEVEL COMMENTS ON THE MOST RECENTLY SUBMITTED PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The officer-level comments of the 27th March, 2014 suggest their concerns are based on the ‘lack of subordination in the scale of the (proposed) extension’ and that as ‘a full-width rear extension’ it ‘fails to relate to the historic character of the listed building’. Such a view fails to reflect any recognition that the greater part of the extension would be located out of view below the natural ground level of the site and that it would provide for the reinstatement of the garden at the rear of the property to its original level, similar to the garden that survives at its original level in the adjacent property at no. 8, St George’s Terrace. The further suggestion that the proposed extension ‘removes the established and expected (sic) historic character and hierarchy of this lower ground floor flat’ suggests that the judgement is being made in relation to the basement of the property alone rather in relation to the property as a whole, let alone in relation to the listed terrace comprising nos. 1 to 11 (consec.) which is the ‘designated heritage asset’. The suggestion that ‘this impacts (sic) on the significance of the 19th century interior’ is equally questionable for the same reason, and because the basement flat has not possessed a ‘19th century interior’ for many years, since its conversion as a self-contained residential flat and subsequent alterations that opened-up its original room- compartmentation. In addition, the suggestion that the proposals would involve the loss of the chimney-breast is not reflected in the latest scheme.
- 4.2 The officer-level comments regarding the ‘odd garden layout with a pronounced change in level to the rear’ and the suggestion that it fails to ‘reflect the garden plot but rather cuts it up into courtyards (sic)’ suggest that officers have failed to recognize that the scheme seeks to recover to a substantial degree the original level and configuration of the garden at the rear of the property. Whilst paragraph 2.72 of Camden Council’s supplementary planning guidance *Camden Planning Guidance: Basements and lightwells, CPG 4* refers to ‘excessively large lightwells’, no such lightwell is proposed in the latest scheme.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 As explained above, the critical, officer-level comments of the local planning authority on the most recent proposals as set out in the e-mail of the 27th March are entirely unjustified. Moreover, subject to satisfactory and sensitive detailed design, the proposals should serve to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the property and the terrace of which it forms and sustain its significance as a heritage asset; preserve the character and appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area and sustain its significance as a heritage asset; preserve the settings of nearby listed properties; and as such will be consistent with the relevant National,

London-wide and local planning and conservation policies and guidance. Accordingly, the applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent merit the authority's support

Paul Velluet

15th June, 2015.

PAUL VELLUET: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- A chartered architect - a member of both the RIBA and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation;
- A member of both the Franco-British Union of Architects and the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects;
- Over thirty-five years working in both private practice and the public sector specialising in building conservation and development in historic areas;
- Project architect with architects Manning Clamp + Partners, Richmond, Surrey, 1972-1976; Principal Urban and Design and Conservation Officer in Westminster City Council's Department of Planning and Transportation, 1976-1991; Regional Architect and Assistant Regional Director, English Heritage London Region, 1991-2004; Senior Associate, Conservation and Planning, with the major Central London commercial practice HOK Architects, 2005-2011; and full-time independent consultancy, 2012 to the present;
- Project architect (with Manning Clamp + Partners) for the repair and restoration of no. 4, The Terrace, Richmond, Surrey - a scheme awarded *European Architectural Heritage Year (Civic Trust) Award* in 1975;
- Project architect (with Manning Clamp + Partners) for the planning and design stages for the repair of Decimus Burton's Temperate House in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey - a scheme awarded a *R.I.B.A. Awards commendation* in 1983;
- Exhibitor in the Architecture Room of the Royal Academy of Arts Annual Summer Exhibitions, 1975 and 1981;
- Architect for other projects that have received awards and commendations under local awards schemes;
- Formerly Inspecting Architect for St Matthias' Church, Richmond, Surrey; Holy Trinity Church, Eltham, London, S.E.9.; and St Peter's Church, Petersfield, Hampshire; and
- Consultant architect for major re-ordering schemes at Holy Trinity Church, Eltham and St Peter's Church, Petersfield, and major works of conservation at St Paul's Church, Wimbledon Park, London, S.W.19.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERESTS

- Holds B.A. Hons and B. Arch. Hons. degrees from the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne;
- Awarded a Master's degree by the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne for his thesis on the life and work of the distinguished cathedral and church architect Stephen Dykes Bower;
- Formerly a member Executive Committee of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain;
- Formerly a visiting lecturer on conservation, planning and access law and practice at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne;
- Currently lectures on listed building law and practice, conservation and development in Central London, liturgical planning, and the local history of Richmond and adjacent areas in south-west London.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Past roles include membership of:

- The Planning Group of the RIBA;
- The Thames Landscape Strategy Panel of the Royal Fine Art Commission;
- The Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England; and
- The Board of the Museum of Richmond, the Board of the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond and The Executive Committee of The Richmond Society; and
- Twenty years' service as a Trustee of the Covent Garden Area Trust, and
- Five years' service as an assessor for the RIBA/Crown Estate's Annual Conservation Awards and as a Trustee of The Richmond Charities.

Current roles include membership of:

- The RIBA's Awards Group;
- The Cathedrals Fabric Commission's Technical Group;
- The Archdiocese of Westminster Historic Churches Committee;
- The Guildford Cathedral Fabric Advisory Committee;
- The Council of the Ecclesiological Society; and
- Service as Inspecting Architect for St Paul's Church, Wimbledon Park, London, S.W.19. and as a Trustee of The Richmond Parish Lands Charity.

PUBLICATIONS

Contributor to various publications, journals and guidance including:

- *Context: New buildings in historic settings* (The Architectural Press, 1998); *The Buildings of England, London 2: South* (1983), and *The Buildings of London, London 6: Westminster* (2003);
- *The Architects' Journal*, *Planning in London*, *Urban Design Quarterly*, English Heritage's *Conservation Bulletin*, *Church Building* and *Ecclesiology Today*, and
- Diverse policy and guidance documents for Westminster City Council and English Heritage.

THE CONSULTANCY

PAUL VELLUET - CHARTERED ARCHITECT is an independent consultancy specialising in the provision of professional and technical advice to property owners, prospective developers and other planning and building professionals on projects involving new development in historic areas and the conservation, alteration and extension of historic buildings, particularly at the critical pre-planning and planning stages.

Established at the beginning of 2005, the consultancy undertakes work for commercial, educational, residential, cultural, diplomatic, church, health-sector, hospitality-sector and rural-

estate clients. Clients have also included historic London estates, historic building trusts and local amenity and community groups.

Work undertaken by the consultancy includes:

- Research and the preparation of assessments of the architectural and historic interest and significance of historic buildings and sites;
- The drafting and submission of documentation supporting proposed development and works in relation to national, London-wide and local planning and conservation policies and guidance;
- Support for appellants and local planning authorities in Written Appeals, Informal Hearings and Public Inquiries and for property owners at Lands Tribunal Hearings; and
- Collaborative and creative engagement with local authority planning and conservation officers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

A schedule of projects undertaken by the consultancy since the beginning of 2005, including details of clients, and particulars of most projects, is available on request.

Paul Velluet

January, 2015.

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