

Objection to application 2016/3719/P

1. A roof extension would be harmful to the character and form of the whole building No 50-54.

Planning history

Rochester Conservation Area was created in 2001. Two important decisions have been made by Camden Council during the period of the Conservation Area

In application 2014/1538/P, Camden's advice was 'The proposal is considered to appear as an incongruous addition to the host property which would disrupt the relationship of the group of properties to which it naturally belongs (nos. 50-54) and is not considered to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the host property'. The decision notice stated: 'The erection of an additional storey above the existing ground floor commercial unit by reason of its siting, scale and detailed design would unbalance the appearance of the single storey building and would be out of keeping with its industrial character and neighbouring buildings, failing to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Rochester Conservation Area'

In dismissing appeal APP/X5210/A/09/2096525), the Inspectorate concluded that the development 'would detract from the simple architecture of the garage, and more importantly, would unbalance the cohesive group of commercial units which would not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area'.

Character and form

Rochester Place was laid out as mews behind the plots of Rochester Terrace. Initially the plots were empty, and there was piecemeal construction in the late nineteenth century up to the 1980s. The building at Nos 50-54 was for a coach works, indicated by the sign on the premises for 1900. (Wilson's also had sites elsewhere in the street.) It was constructed as a single storey with wide doors and overhead lighting.

The conservation area statement states that Rochester Place has "low mews type buildings" and "provides an interesting contrast to the wide roads and villa style properties that dominate the Conservation Area". "All buildings ...vary in scale, but generally, are between one and two storeys high.."

Nos 50-54 provide an important central rhythm to the street, lower than the adjacent buildings and providing light in. The unbroken roofline with skylights is important and characteristic for this traditional industrial building.



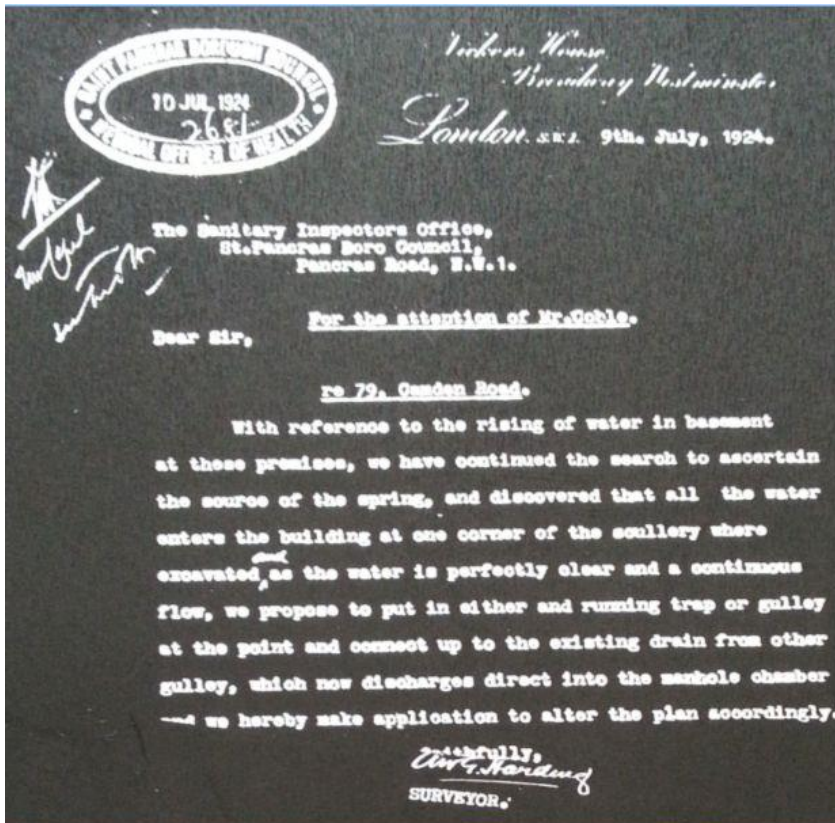
2. Building a basement would be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area.

Rochester Place is a narrow service road. The Conservation Area statement says "All buildings spring from the narrow footway without physical front boundaries", contrasting with the villa and terrace buildings elsewhere in the Conservation Area that are set back from the road with front areas, and some of which have semi-basements and raised entry steps.

None of the buildings in this section of Rochester Place has been built with a basement. Basements have been refused in proposals for re-construction of Nos 55 and 61-63 Rochester Place (opposite and adjacent to both Rochester and Jeffreys Street Conservation Areas) as they provide inadequate industrial use. At Nos 50-54 a vehicle is able to enter directly from the street through the industrial doors of the coachworks

3. The site is within the groundwater flow of the River Fleet,

Rochester Place is built parallel to St Pancras Way which was the historic coach road from London to Highgate along the upper north bank of the River Fleet. There is a hillside springline along Rochester Place and water flows southwest to the river. The ground water level varies with the season, but there has been flooding in Rochester Terrace Gardens annually until recently putting in a new drain.



1924 report of spring at 79 Camden Road, adjacent to Rochester Place



Pre-drain flooding in Rochester Terrace Gardens; Environment Agency map 'Risk of flooding from surface water'