

Design, Access and Heritage Statement Planning and Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation

50 Albert Street
London
NW1 7NR

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CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	3
1.2	The proposed works include:	3
1.3	This Statement therefore:	3
2.0	Design Process.....	4
2.1	Assessment:	4
2.2	Evaluation:	4
2.3	Design and Access:.....	4
2.4	Consultation:	4
3.0	Site Context and Analysis	5
3.1	Strategic Context	5
3.2	Local Context	6
3.3	Site Description	6
3.4	Existing Balcony Assessment.....	7
4.0	Design Principles and Proposals.....	8
4.1	Use.....	8
4.2	Portland Stone Balcony Replacement.....	8
4.3	Safety Measures	9
4.4	Layout	9
4.5	Scale	9
4.6	Landscaping.....	9
4.7	Appearance.....	10
4.8	Miscellaneous.....	10
5.0	Heritage Statement	10
6.0	Planning Policy.....	10
7.0	Access Statement.....	10
8.0	Conclusions	11
9.0	Bibliography	11
	Appendix A - Full Scope of Works Schedule (excluding preliminaries)	

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

1.0 Introduction

1.1.1 This Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent has been prepared by Baily Garner LLP on behalf of the London Borough of Camden. It accompanies the Listed Building Consent application for the proposed replacement of stonework to the first floor balcony on the front elevation.

1.2 The proposed works include:

- The replacement of stonework to first floor balcony on front elevation;
- The taking down, setting aside, refurbishment and reinstatement of the cast iron balustrading;
- Repairs to render, plaster and brickwork associated with the above, as these elements will be disturbed by the renewal of the existing, defective, balcony.

1.3 This Statement therefore:

- (i) Provides a review of the site's immediate and wider context.
- (ii) Provides a rationale for the scheme's design based on (i).
- (iii) Explains and illustrates the design principles.
- (iv) Explains how the development will meet the local authority's planning and urban design objectives.
- (v) Reviews the "access for all" criteria and inclusivity policies.

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

2.0 Design Process

The scheme proposals have been designed with reference to the following processes:

2.1 Assessment:

2.1.1 An assessment of the site's immediate and wider context (physical and socio-economic) has been made and the relevant planning policy, design and access framework reviewed.

2.2 Evaluation:

2.2.1 We have examined the contextual information and reviewed and identified specific issues related to the proposed works in order to ensure that the proposed methods of remediation and renewal follow the traditional methods and general approach that would have been carried out at the time of construction.

2.3 Design and Access:

2.3.1 The works proposed will simply reinstate the defective stone balcony with a virtually identical stone balcony, so there will be no implications in respect of access, and the proposed elements simply echo those of the original design and construction.

2.4 Consultation:

2.4.1 To ensure that the Baily Garner schedule of works for the project delivers elements of work that will aesthetically fit into this listed building, it is intended to supply and install the stone balcony using traditional methods of construction. To do this, we have consulted and liaised with a specialist stone restoration company to determine the most historically correct and aesthetically complaint remedial works proposed. It is proposed that this company undertakes the design and installation of the new balcony.

2.4.2 No other consultation exercise has been undertaken at this stage, but replacement works are virtually like for like, notwithstanding the issues surrounding modern replacement stone sizes, discussed later in this report.

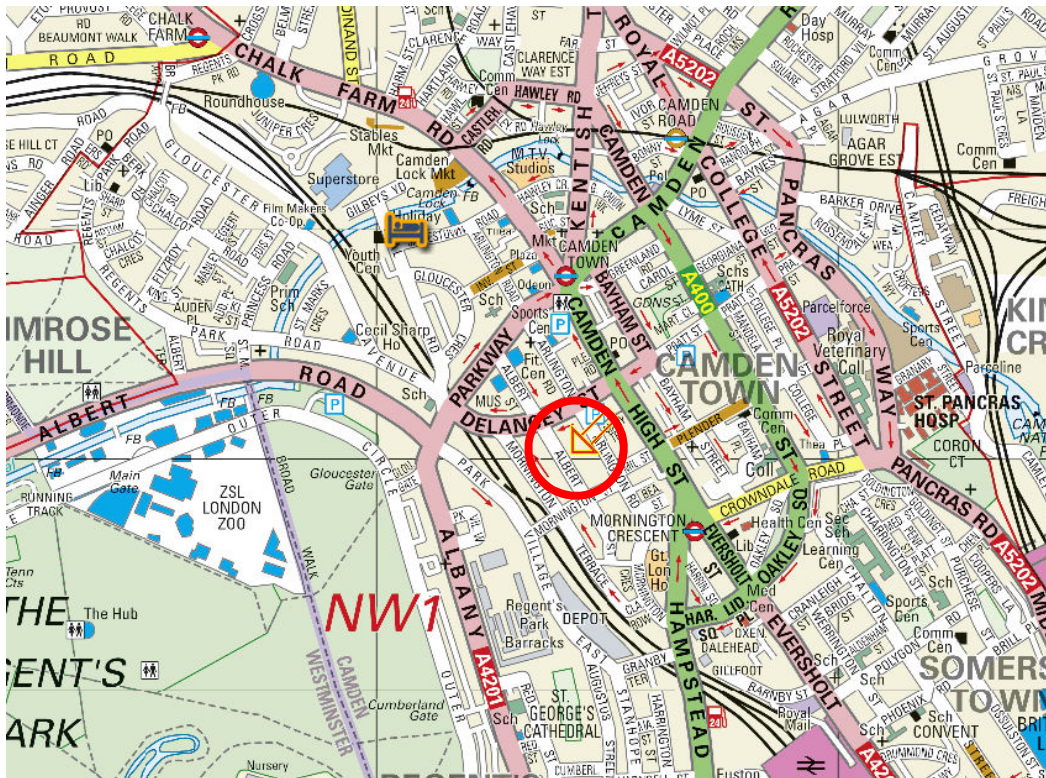
Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

3.0 Site Context and Analysis

3.1 Strategic Context

3.1.1 50 Albert Street is located within the Borough of Camden in the heart of London. It occupies a prime location close to The Regent's Park.



Local Area Plan



Ariel View of 50 Albert Street

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

3.2 Local Context

3.2.1 The building's inner London location ensures the transport links to the property are varied, with a choice of public transport types. Mornington Crescent underground station, located on the Northern Line, is approximately 500m from the property. Camden High Street is within 300m of the property, providing access to bus routes 24, 27, 29, 168 and 253.

3.3 Site Description

3.3.1 50 Albert Street is a Grade II Listed Building, which was constructed in the mid to late 1800's. The property is Georgian in style and appears to have many of its original features present, such as the storey height French windows to the first floor front elevation, timber



vertical sliding sash windows generally, stone lintels and a butterfly roof. At some point in its life, the property has been converted into two self-contained flats, each arranged over two storeys of the building.

50 Albert Street is surrounded by many Georgian properties on both sides of the street that have similar features. However, located to the right hand front elevation is a medium rise block, with its entrance located on Mornington Street, which appears to be 1950's in style.

3.3.2 Currently, to the front elevation of 50 Albert Street (see image above), emergency scaffolding has been erected and subsequently retained in order to support the existing two-piece Portland stone balcony, which is considered to be in a dangerous state of repair. This scaffold also serves as an access platform and has allowed ourselves and a stone specialist to complete a thorough investigation and condition survey of the balcony structure and stonework detailing.

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

3.4 Existing Balcony Assessment

3.4.1 We are advised by the stone specialist who visited site that the existing Portland stone balcony was constructed of two separate sections of Portland stone. To the front, this has been finished with a decorative cast iron balustrade structure, originally affixed to the stone using molten lead in pockets located in the stone balcony.

3.4.2 The stone specialist has deemed the stone balcony structurally unsound and it is their view, as stone specialists, that this requires immediate attention in order to remediate this problem.

3.4.3 As will be noted from the image below, there are at least four large front-to-rear cracks through the thickness of the stonework itself. Over a period of time, these cracks have been subject to moisture ingress which has led to plant growth and further deterioration and



expansion of the cracks, which have opened up further through the passage of time. The stone specialist has advised that these visible cracks (see image above) often lead to further latent cracks within the thickness of the stone slabs.

The other point to note is that the two stone sections will have originally been fitted together using a “joggle joint”, which

is then grouted with molten lead. Taking these apart is difficult, and because of the existing damage to the stone, it is likely that the remaining sections would become further damaged during this process.

3.4.4 Another point the stone specialist made is that the stonework to the balcony is extensively weathered, so some of the original depth of stone has crumbled away through the course of time, making it less structurally effective than when it was installed. We note that the existing balcony would have been 89mm thick, so the reduction in thickness through weathering would be significant.

3.4.5 A stone specialist has looked at the existing balcony and concluded it is constructed from a Portland limestone, similar to a Jordans Whitbed stone, which we intend to replace like-for-like notwithstanding the size constraints set out in item 4.2 later in this report.

3.4.6 The stone specialist who visited this site is familiar with this type of work and completed the replacement of 10No. balconies in the nearby Mornington Crescent, where the properties are of a similar construction and age.

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

3.4.7 The conclusions are that through the observations highlighted above, repairs, or partial replacement is impractical, so wholesale renewal is the only reasonable option.

4.0 Design Principles and Proposals

4.1 Use

4.1.1 The two existing residential flats to this property will remain unchanged.

4.2 Portland Stone Balcony Replacement

4.2.1 For completeness, excepting the preliminaries section of the works schedule, we have included the full Works schedule at Appendix A.

4.2.2 Our proposals seek the replacement of the existing Portland stone balcony with new Jordans Whitbed Portland stone to essentially match the existing. We say “essentially” to match existing because the existing balcony is constructed in two separate stone sections, but the proposed balcony will be fabricated in three. The reason is that Portland stone sections as large as the originals are no longer produced, so the only alternative is to replace them with three stone sections rather than the original two.

4.2.3 We have not been able to determine the actual site where the original stone was quarried, but the proposal to use the Jordans Whitbed Portland stone from Dorset ensures that the new stone comes from the same geographical area of the country as the original balcony sections. We have also been advised by the stone expert who visited the 50 Albert Street site that the quarry where the original stone was excavated is now likely to be exhausted.

4.2.4 The new Portland stone balcony will be fabricated to the same overall dimensions as the original balcony, and will also incorporate the same detailing, including the throated drips. Below is the proposed specification for the new balcony elements:

4.2.5 Left-hand balcony slab (1No.), overall size 1,665mm x 820mm x 89mm (approx.) thickness, with throat on underside of front edge and left-hand return.

4.2.6 Centre balcony slab (1No.), overall size 900mm x 820mm x 89mm (approx.) thickness, with throat on underside of front edge.

4.2.7 Right-hand balcony slab (1No.), overall size 1,665mm x 820mm x 89mm thickness, with throat on underside of front edge and right-hand return.

4.2.8 By replacing the balcony wholesale would significantly extend the life of this element into the foreseeable future. There would also be continuity in the finish, texture and subtle colouring of the stones if the whole balcony were to be replaced, as proposed, in a single operation.

4.2.9 The Jordans Whitbed stone we propose to use on this project is extracted from the Inmosthay Quarry on the isle of Portland. The site has been extracting stone since the late 1800's. It is interesting to note that the majority of the southern reserves lie under the grounds of the local cricket club. In order to protect the site at ground level, the stone is mined, rather than quarried, thus preserving the surrounding environment. The Jordans mining site sits in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

- 4.2.10 We have asked the stone specialist about prematurely ageing the new stonework in order to give it a patina that aesthetically fits into the general age of 50 Albert Street. However, the situation is that once the Portland stone, which is an oolitic limestone, is exposed to the atmosphere, the face “case hardens” to a pale grey, normally within six months of installation. This occurs because the free calcite, integral to the stone, migrates to the surface, forming a protective coating which dulls the natural variations in the stone. This initial ageing will be accelerated if conditions are dry and sunny. Thus after six months, or so, in position, the new stone should have sufficiently weathered to reasonably blend in with the existing building patina.
- 4.2.11 It is likely that during the balcony replacement process, the existing masonrywork around the balcony areas will become disturbed. Any brickwork that becomes damaged will be replaced with new bricks to match existing and be pointed in cement:non hydraulic lime:sand at a mix of 1:1:6 to the profile, colour and texture of the existing. Any render banding damaged will be repaired using a cement:sand mix, complete with a “plastic” additive to allow for inevitable building movement. Internal plaster disturbed will be repaired using a lightweight gypsum plaster and skim. All disturbed areas will be decorated in colours to match existing at completion.
- 4.2.12 **Cast Iron Balustrading Repairs and Reinstatement**
- 4.2.13 In respect of the cast iron balustrading, it is proposed to re-use this on the new balcony. The process of works will be as set out below:
- 4.2.14 Carefully dismantle the existing cast iron balustrade railings to the length of the balcony.
- 4.2.15 Remove loose scale and rust from existing balustrading and clean down using sand blasting.
- 4.2.16 Repair and make good any defects noted, such as rusted sections, or distorted members.
- 4.2.17 Provide a key and supply and apply undercoat and black gloss finishing coats.
- 4.2.18 Upon completion of the balcony stone works the contractor is to carefully refit the newly refurbished railings and set them into pre-drilled pockets, caulking with molten lead to provide a traditional detail for refitting.
- 4.3 **Safety Measures**
- 4.3.1 A structural engineer will validate the integrity of the new Portland stone balcony and balustrading to ensure it is structurally safe and fit for purpose. As part of this process, lead paint testing will be carried out as the areas around the balcony will be disturbed during this process and will need to be reinstated to match existing.
- 4.4 **Layout**
- 4.4.1 The internal layouts of the existing residential units will remain unchanged.
- 4.5 **Scale**
- 4.5.1 Works proposed are predominantly designed not necessarily to enhance, but to fit in with the existing building elements and will therefore have no impact on scale.
- 4.6 **Landscaping**
- 4.6.1 Landscape will remain unchanged.

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

4.7 Appearance

4.7.1 Proposals for the necessary replacement works will maintain, not necessarily enhance, the aesthetics of the building.

4.8 Miscellaneous

4.8.1 No additional provision has been made for cycle or car parking, and the situation remains as existing.

5.0 Heritage Statement

5.1.1 50 Albert Street is a Grade II listed building, having been designated this status on 12th May 1974. All the properties in this terrace (50-88 Albert Street) are listed, along with the attached railings, which merit special mention in the listing. From the London Borough of Camden document "Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and management Strategy" (Adopted 4th October 2007), we note that Albert Street was constructed by seven different builders.

5.1.2 Like the large proportion of houses in the street, the property is arranged over three storeys plus the lower ground floor. The property has been split into two self-contained flats, one at lower ground and upper ground floor level, and the other over the remaining two floors. The roof has its original butterfly roof structure and has not been extended upwards. The roof is finished with slates. The windows to the front elevation are single glazed timber sliding sashes, which complement the French windows to the first floor balcony.

5.1.3 The front elevation is finished in stucco render to basement and ground levels and fair faced brickwork to the higher levels. The property has high parapet walls that are finished with exposed brickwork, with all downpipes and gutters being located to the rear elevation.

6.0 Planning Policy

6.1 In preparing our proposals we have referred to:

- Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and management Strategy" (Adopted 4th October 2007).
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes

7.0 Access Statement

7.1.1 Access to and around the building remains as existing. There is currently no lift access to the upper floors of the property.

7.1.2 There are no proposed changes to the building, and the foregoing works are essentially intended only to replace the existing balcony like-for-like, notwithstanding the issues set out in item 4.2 above.

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Replacement of Stonework to First Floor Balcony on Front Elevation, 50 Albert Street

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The site is an existing street property laid out in the mid to late 1800's. The building was granted Grade II listed building status in 1974.
- 8.2 A detailed survey has been carried out to the front elevation balcony structure and it has been deemed unsafe. Hence, a temporary scaffold has been erected in order to arrest any movement in the existing structure.
- 8.3 The aims for the proposed works to 50 Albert Street include:
- Our proposals seek the replacement of the existing two Portland stone balcony sections with three Portland stones, but to the overall same dimensions. These new stones will be installed using traditional methods.
 - It is also intended to strip back, make good, redecorate and reinstate the cast iron balustrades, again using traditional methods.
 - Any repairs, which are anticipated to be minor, to the surrounding masonrywork damaged through replacement of the balcony will be carried out to match the existing.
- 8.4 The proposed works will greatly assist in preserving the historic nature of the building.
- 8.5 Overall in terms of Listed Building Consent, we believe the proposals should be seen as favourable, as the main result of the works is to preserve the existing building.

9.0 Bibliography

Historic England's Management of Conservation Areas

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes

www.imagesofengland.org.uk

www.housingprototypes.org

www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk