

Heritage Statement

17 East Heath Road, London NW3



AHP Architectural
History
Practice

Heritage Statement

Lower ground floor works at

17 East Heath Road, Hampstead, London NW3

Prepared for

Mr and Mrs A. Saleh

by

The Architectural History Practice Limited

November 2016

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by The Architectural History Practice (AHP) at the request of Marek Wojciechowski Architects on behalf of the owners, Mr and Mrs A. Saleh. It has been prepared to accompany and inform proposals to carry out lower ground floor alterations at 17 East Heath Road (NGR TQ 26605 86229), a Grade II listed building lying within the Hampstead Conservation Area.

- 1.2 This Statement briefly describes the house and its history, assesses its architectural, historical and townscape significance, and assesses the likely impact of the proposals on that significance. It meets the requirement of *The National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), paragraph 128, that 'local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'.

- 1.3 The statement has been prepared by Andrew Derrick, BAHons AADipl Cons IHBC, a director of AHP, and follows site inspections on 30 June and 29 September 2016. It should be read alongside the application drawings and other documentation prepared by Marek Wojciechowski Architects.

2.0 Historical overview

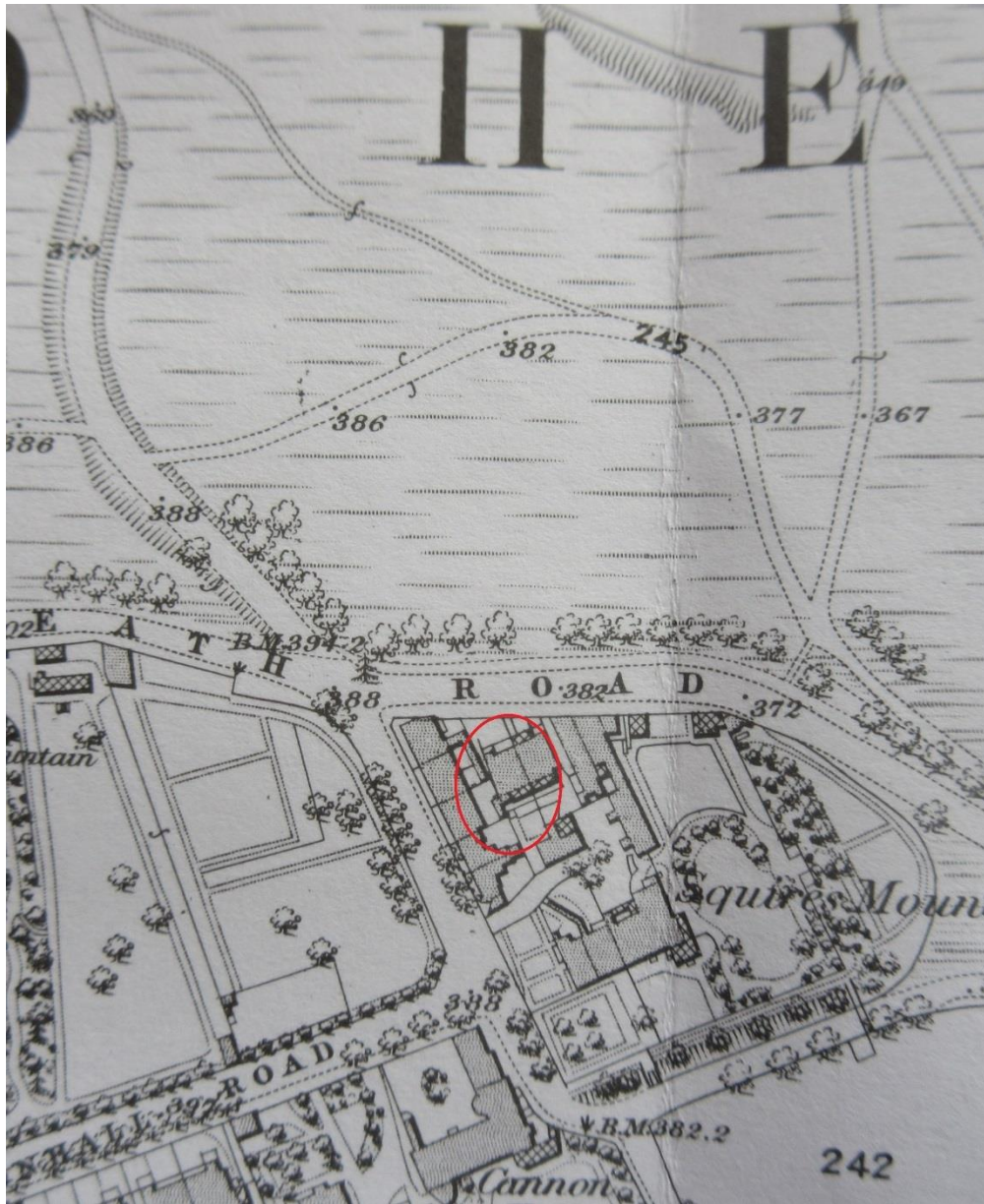


Figure 1: Detail from first edition Ordnance Survey map, 1866

- 2.1 Nos 16 and 17 East Heath Road form a semi-detached pair, and are given a late nineteenth century date in the list entry (appendix 1). However, they are shown on Stanford's map of London and its suburbs (1862) and on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1866 (detail at figure 1), and a date of about 1860 seems likely. This was a time of rapid expansion of the village; Hampstead Heath station opened in 1860 and thereafter the Heath developed as a place of resort and recreation for Londoners. This was shortly before the passage of the

Hampstead Heath Act 1871, when the Heath was brought into public ownership and saved from encroaching development.

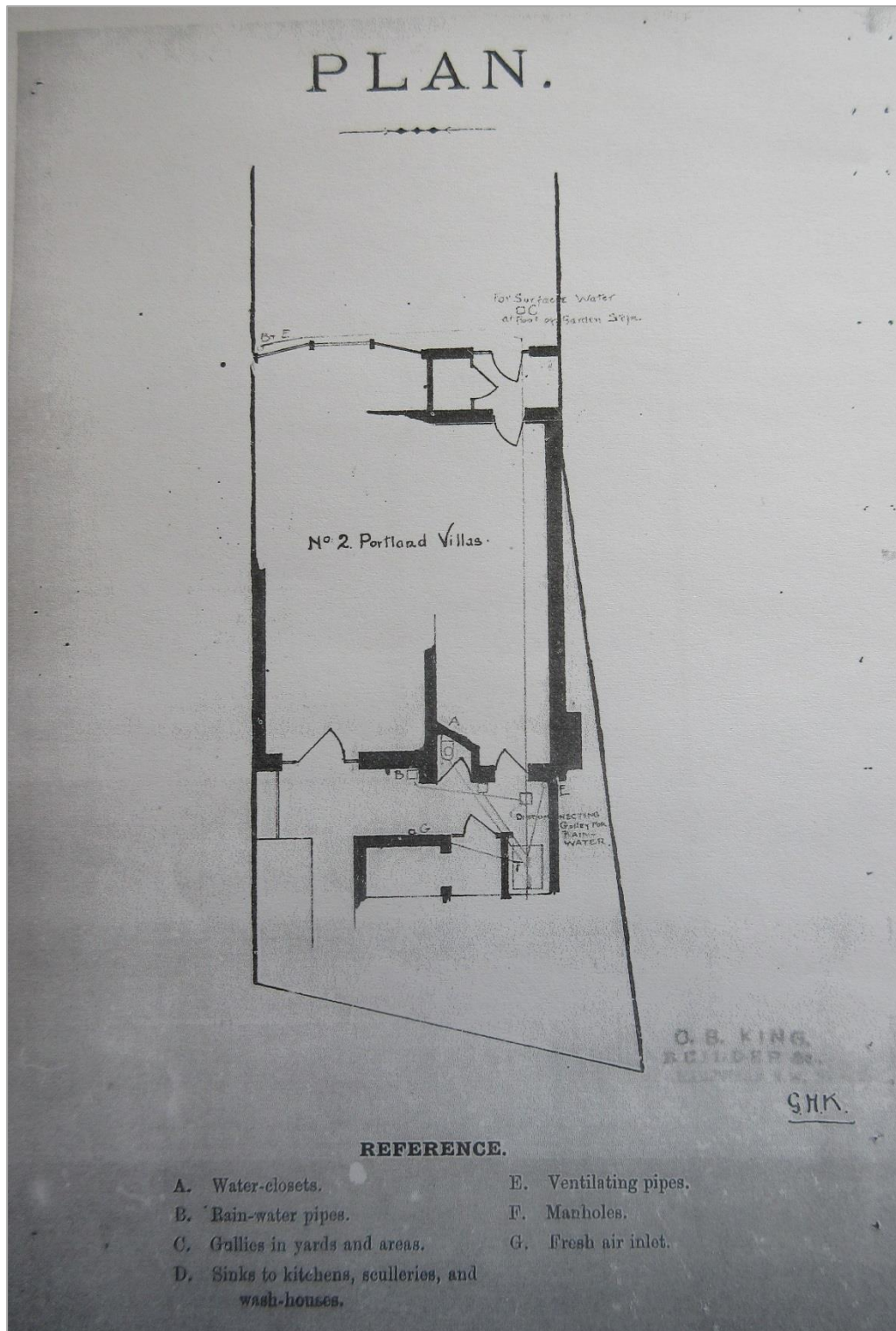


Figure 2: Lower ground floor plan of 2 Portland Villas, 1901 (Camden Archives)

- 2.2 The properties were originally known as 1 and 2 Portland Villas. The early or original lower ground floor arrangements are indicated on drainage plans of 1901 in Camden Archives (that for no. 17 at figure 2), with an area and vaults at the front and a rear conservatory with a small outhouse alongside, probably for a scullery.
- 2.3 No. 17 is best known as the home between 1918 and 1920 of the New Zealand-born writer Katherine Mansfield and her husband, the poet and critic John Middleton Murry. Mansfield was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1917, and she and Murry agreed that they should look for a house in an open part of London. Murry wrote: ‘we agreed that I should look for a house in Hampstead, and I found a tall grey brick one, outwardly unprepossessing, but immediately overlooking the Heath. Because of its greyness and its size we christened it the Elephant’.¹



Figure 3: Exterior in 1970 (GLC/English Heritage)

- 2.4 Mansfield spent two years here on and off, longer than at any of her other London residences. Visitors included D. H. Lawrence and his wife Frieda, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, Bertrand Russell, Lytton Strachey and the painter Mark Gertler. Murry set up a printing press, the Heron Press, in the lower ground floor, in emulation of Virginia and Leonard Woolf’s Hogarth Press;

¹ Quoted in 1968 GLC report, on English Heritage Blue Plaque file (ref. 1659)

limited editions of Murry's poems and Mansfield's short story *Je ne parle pas Français* were printed here.

- 2.5 Katherine Mansfield left the house for the last time in September 1920, dying in France in 1923 at the age of 34. Her residency here with Murry is commemorated by a blue plaque on the front of the property, erected by the Greater London Council in 1969. A photograph taken soon after the unveiling of the plaque is at figure 3.

- 2.6 Sadly, the house retains no evidence of their occupation, having undergone extensive alterations and renovations on several occasions. Some of the internal alterations, including those to the lower ground floor, are shown on plans now deposited on microfilm in Camden Archives (appendix 2 and 3). Further changes since the 1960s have included the replacement nearly all of the original internal finishes (floors, cornices, ceiling roses, most fireplaces, skirtings and floorboards), including at lower ground floor level.

3.0 Architectural Description

- 3.1 The house is one of a semi-detached pair, but here only no. 17 is described. Dating from about 1860, the design combines late Georgian and mid-Victorian characteristics. The building is of three storeys over a lower ground floor and two bays width; the inner bay is slightly recessed and the outer bay (containing the entrance) projects; both are gabled, with projecting bracketed eaves. The brickwork (described as grey by Murry and on the GLC blue plaque file) is painted on the front and flank elevation, while the original London stock bricks of the rear elevation are (for the most part) left unpainted. The roof is slated, and there are tall chimney stacks on the party wall with no. 16 and on the flank elevation. The panelled entrance door has a glazed fanlight and sidelights, and is set within a wide, architraved, segmental-arched rendered surround with central keystone. The sash windows of the front elevation have rendered and lugged architraves. On the ground floor a single tripartite window with mini-balcony in front is supported on brackets; on the first floor the inner bay has a square-headed opening in which are set modern French windows, while the outer bay has a round-arched opening. The second floor windows have pointed heads, following the profile of the gables. Modern (1960s) railings and stairs lead down to a basement area, with a modern door with sidelights (following the pattern indicated on figure 2, but now opening outwards). The front garden and basement area have been paved with ceramic tiles.
- 3.2 At the side, windows light the stairwell (that to the second floor now a bathroom). A projecting chimney stack at the side originally heated small rooms at the front of the house. Towards the rear, the house is built tight against the property boundary, and the stack does not project.
- 3.3 The rear elevation (figure 5) has glazing bar sashes, set in rendered reveals. The windows have been renewed at ground and first floor level, with cruder mouldings and details, but the original windows appear to survive on the second floor. One ground floor window has been replaced by a door giving onto a terrace over a lower ground floor addition (built in the 1960s). The lower ground floor rear wall is rendered, with modern French doors.



Figure 4: rear elevation

- 3.4 Inside, the plan form conforms to the common late-Georgian plan of a smaller front room and a larger rear one at ground and first floor levels, and with three rooms at attic level. More unusually, the stairwell is lit from the side and is set back behind small closets, lit from the front and originally heated by fireplaces served by the front side stack. A bathroom has been formed at second floor level, taking light from the stairwell.

- 3.5 The house retains its original stair from ground floor to attic, compact in form, with winders, open string, moulded newels and balusters, and hardwood handrail.
- 3.6 The lower ground floor is shown in photos at appendix 4. The stair from ground floor to lower ground floor is simple in form, and has been reconfigured and extended at the bottom, with an additional winder. It appears to retain its original handrail and turned columnar newel, but no balusters. Otherwise the lower ground floor contains no historic finishes or finishes; it is fitted out with a modern kitchen at the front, and with modern wall, floor and ceiling finishes and joinery throughout.

4.0 Significance

- 4.1 The house is in some respects an unremarkable design of c1860, and has been greatly altered. The list entry does not state this explicitly, but it is possible that the pair was listed mainly on account of the historical association of no. 17 with Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry (it was listed five years after the blue plaque was installed). Nevertheless, the building is an attractive period residence, which makes a positive and prominent contribution to the Hampstead Conservation Area. Surviving early and original features are of high significance. Internally, the lower ground floor is of low significance, having been much altered and retaining no historic finishes apart from the newel and handrail to the stair. Externally, the vaults under the entrance steps are capped with large stone slab(s) and belong to the original construction, but have been altered, while the metal stairs and ceramic tiling are modern and of low/negative significance.

5.0 Policy context

- 5.1 Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

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 [...]

5.2 The NPPF (paragraph 126) enjoins local authorities to:

recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

5.3 Paragraphs 132-4 of the NPPF state:

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. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance [...] should be wholly exceptional. [...] 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.

5.4 Camden Council Core Strategy Policy 14 (CS14, 'Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage') 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;
- e) Protecting important views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views.

5.5 Camden Development Policy 25 ('Conserving Camden's Heritage') states:

Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;
- d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and
- e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

Listed buildings

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

- e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;
- 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.

6.0 Current proposals

6.1 The proposals affect only the lower ground floor and back garden, and should be seen in the context of the proposals shown on applications 2016/4233/P & 2016/4600/L), approved by Camden Council on 25 October 2016.

6.2 Please refer to the detailed application drawings and other documentation prepared by Marek Wojciechowski Architects. Briefly, it is proposed to:

- lower the internal basement ground floor finish by 115mm, in order to increase the floor to ceiling height at this level; this will require some adaptation of the basement stair
- Outside, the finished floor level of the area and vaults will be slightly lowered (by 40mm)
- At the rear, it is proposed to extend the lower ground floor playroom
- A sunken hot tub is proposed at the end of the garden.

7.0 Impact assessment

7.1 The proposed slight lowering of the lower ground floor (by 115mm) is in order to increase the floor to ceiling height at this level. The existing tile floor and screed would be removed. This would not involve loss of historic fabric. Trial pit investigations have been undertaken by the structural engineer and a method statement for lowering the floor level without damaging the surrounding fabric has been prepared. The floor would be made good with an appropriate new finish.

7.2 With this lowering, an additional tread will be required at the bottom of the stair to the lower ground floor. The trial pit investigations indicate that the floor level has previously been lowered, with modification to the bottom winder section to suit the new level. Plans of 1966 (appendix 3a) show a partition at the bottom of the stairs, now removed, possibly in association with work undertaken at that time. It is proposed to replace the three bottom winder/treads with four. The original newel and handrail will remain, repositioned on the other side of the stair. No loss of historic plan form or character would result.

- 7.3 The floor slab in the front area will also be lowered by 40mm, to increase the existing floor to ceiling height and thereby make the vaults more useable. The opening up of the vaults area formed part of the recently-approved application, and the rationale and heritage justification for this was provided in that context. The proposed slight lowering of the floor level here is a minor amendment to that scheme, and will not further affect the historic fabric, character or plan form of this part of the building. The light well/area will be repaved with stone flags in place of the existing ceramic tiles, enhancing its historic character and appearance.
- 7.4 The proposed extension of the playroom at the rear of the property will require additional excavation and structural works, as detailed in the application. The extension will be modest in size and located below the modern extended ground floor terrace. This is again a modest amendment, involving no loss of historic fabric or character.
- 7.5 The proposed sunken hot tub in the rear garden will be located discreetly, within a landscaped area. It would have no impact on the historic fabric and character of the building. A similar feature has recently been approved in the neighbouring property at 16 East Heath Road.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 No. 17 East Heath Road is one of a semi-detached pair of houses built in about 1860. The buildings are architecturally modest, but characterful, and make a positive contribution to the Hampstead Conservation Area. The greatest significance of no. 17 lies in its occupation between 1918 and 1920 by the writer Katherine Mansfield and her husband, the poet and critic John Middleton Murry. A blue plaque is placed on the building to commemorating their residence.
- 8.2 The house has undergone many changes in the last fifty years, and retains few original internal features and finishes. Current proposals are modest in nature, and are largely designed to improve the quality of the lower ground floor accommodation, which has very largely lost its historic character. There would be no loss to the historic fabric or character of these spaces under these proposals, which rather seek to reinstate some of the building's historic

character, while also meeting present day needs. The building's contribution to the local conservation area will remain unchanged. Relevant local and national policies and guidance have been satisfied, and the proposals accord with the development plan. As such they constitute sustainable development which should be approved without delay (NPPF paragraph 14).

Appendix 1: List entry

Name: NUMBERS 16 AND 17 AND ATTACHED WALL

List entry Number: 1342104

Location: NUMBERS 16 AND 17 AND ATTACHED WALL, 16 AND 17, EAST HEATH ROAD

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

District Type: London Borough

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-May-1974

Details

CAMDEN

TQ2686SE EAST HEATH ROAD 798-1/17/363 (South West side)

14/05/74

Nos.16 AND 17 and attached wall

GV II

Pair of semi-detached houses. Late C19. Painted brick with 2 plain 1st floor bands. Slated roofs with tall brick slab stacks. 3 storeys. 2 windows each. Each with double gabled front; gables to outer, slightly projecting bays have projecting bracketed eaves. Entrances in outer bays with wide, architraved, segmental-arched doorways having keystones, fanlights and panelled doors with sidelights. Lugged architraves to sashes. Ground floor, tripartite; 1st floor outer bays, round-arched, inner bays, square-headed with 2-light casements; 3rd floor, sashes with pointed heads.

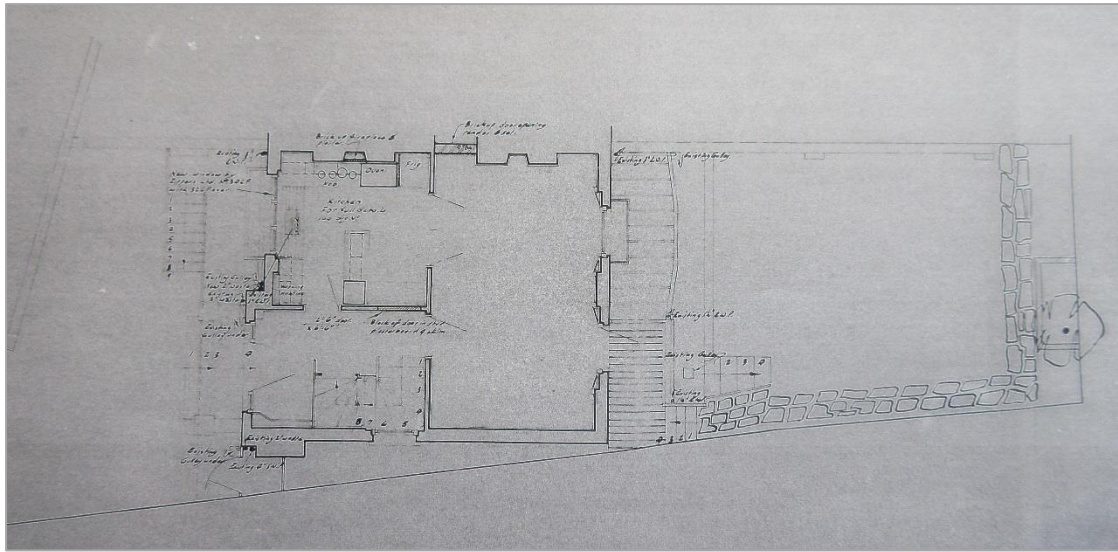
INTERIORS: not inspected.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached brick wall with panels and stuccoed coping.

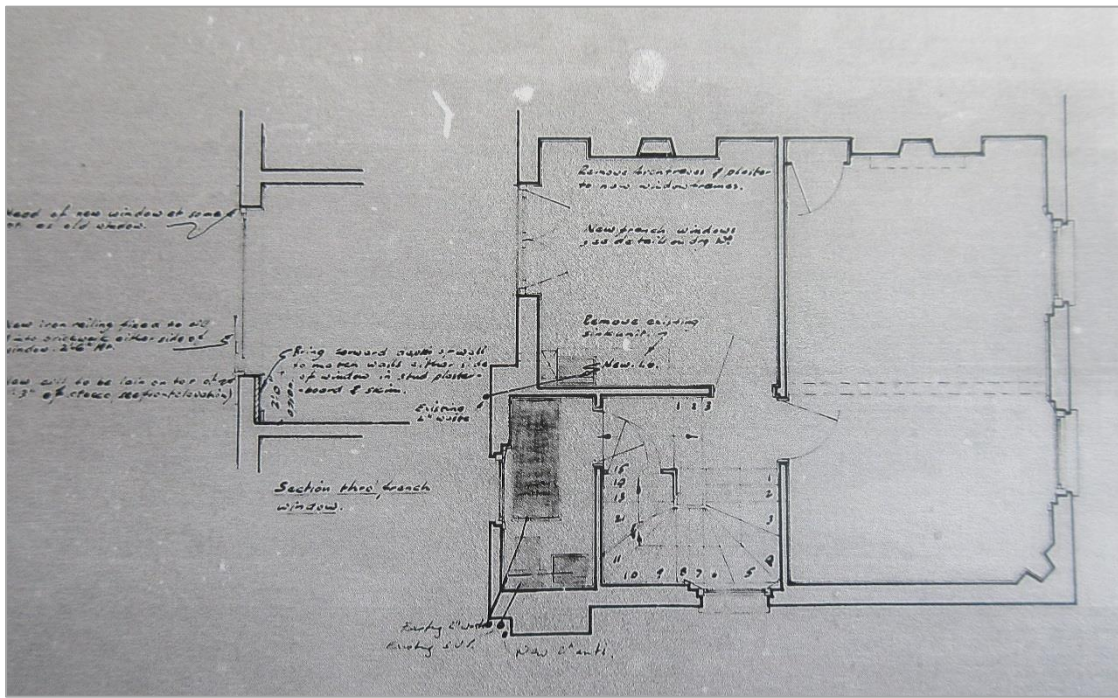
HISTORICAL NOTE: No.17 was the home of Katherine Mansfield, writer and her husband John Middleton Murray, critic, from 1918-20 (GLC plaque).

Listing NGR: TQ2661186231

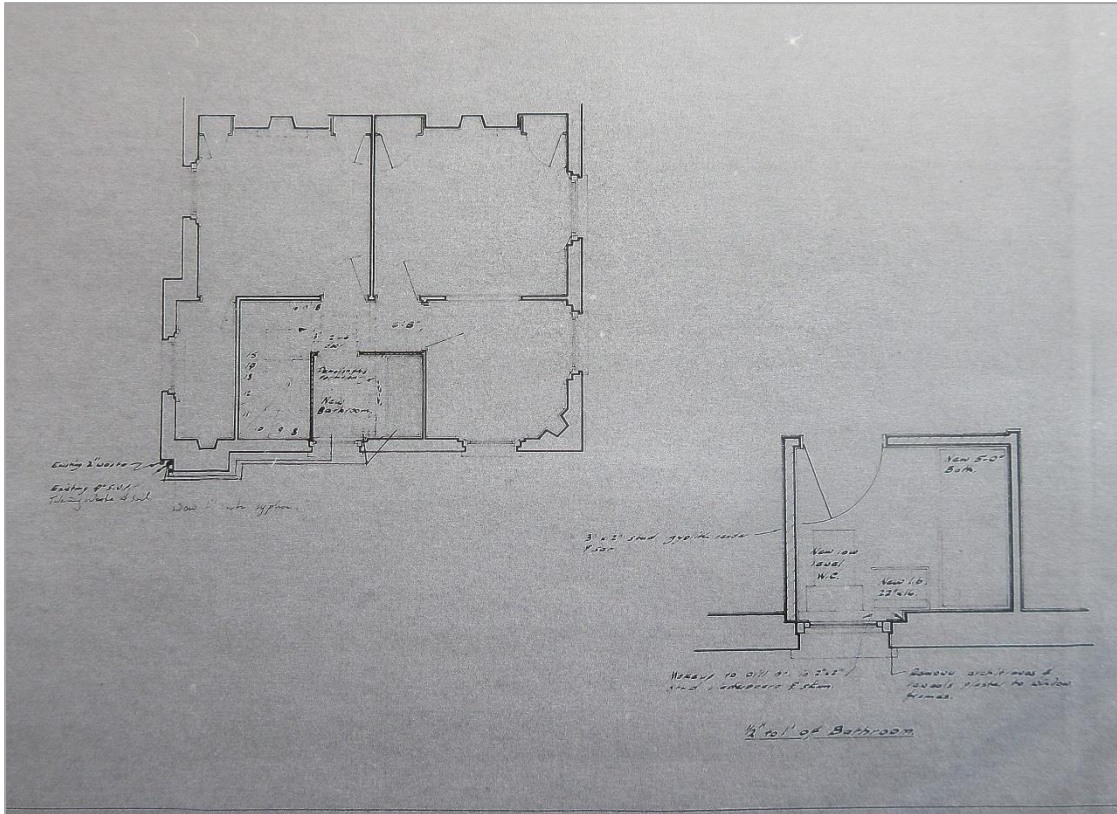
**Appendix 2: Proposed alterations, 1963 (Gerald Murphy & Partners),
microfilm drawings in Camden Archives**



2a: Ground floor proposed

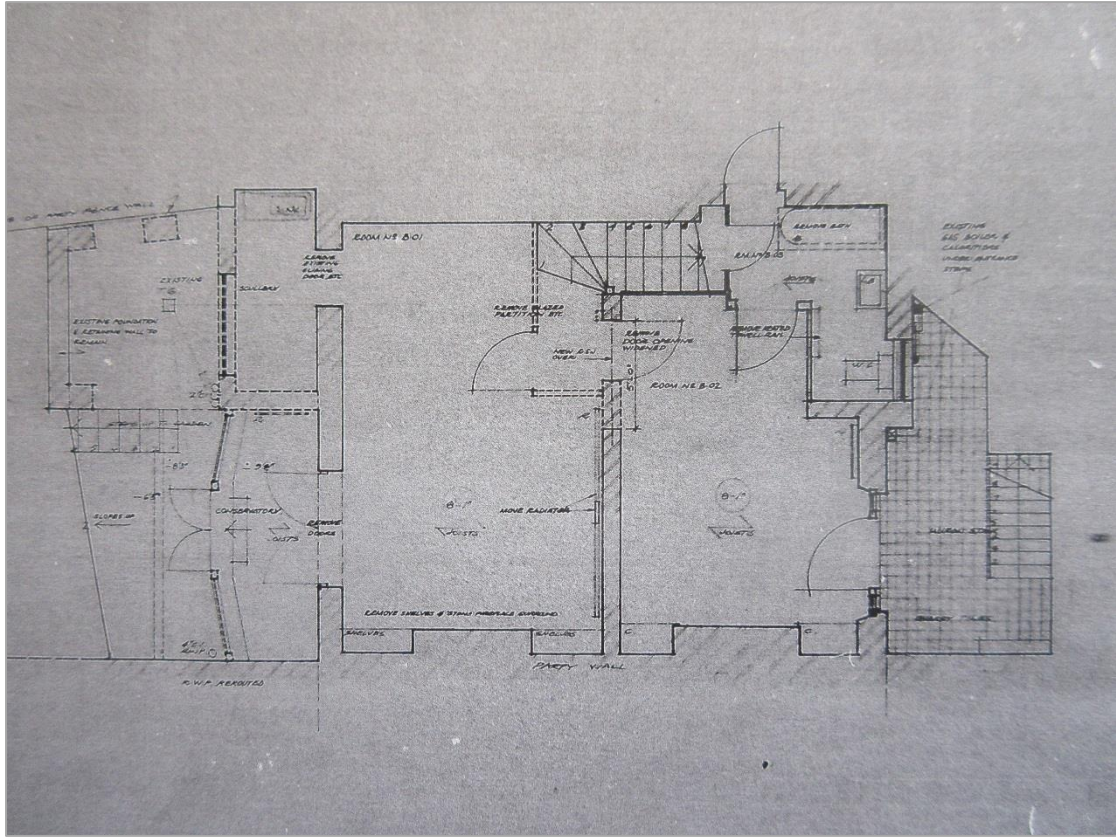


2b: First floor proposed

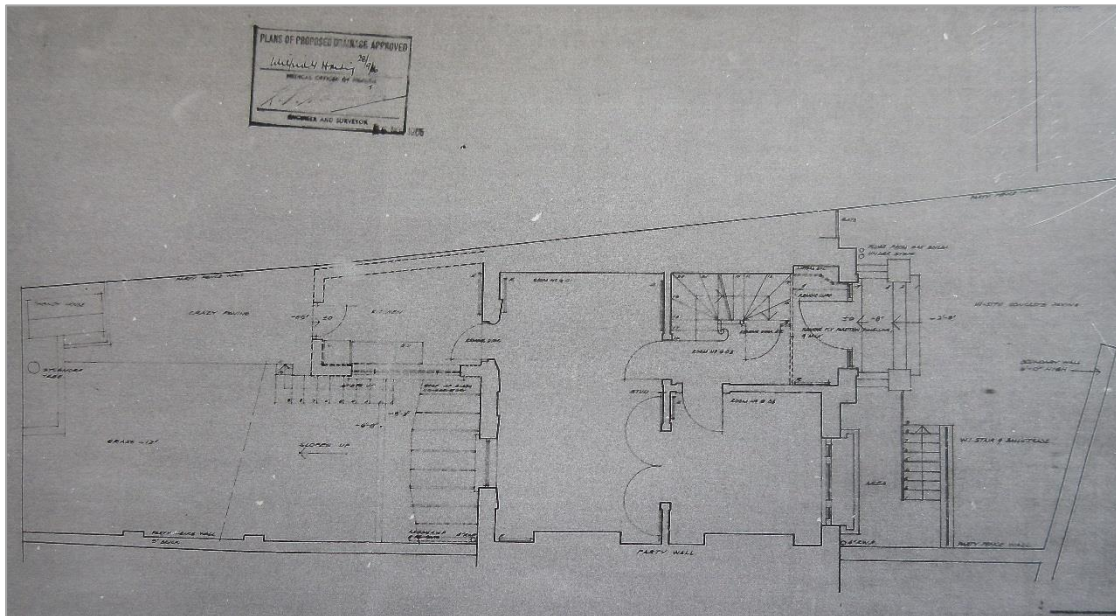


2c: Second floor proposed

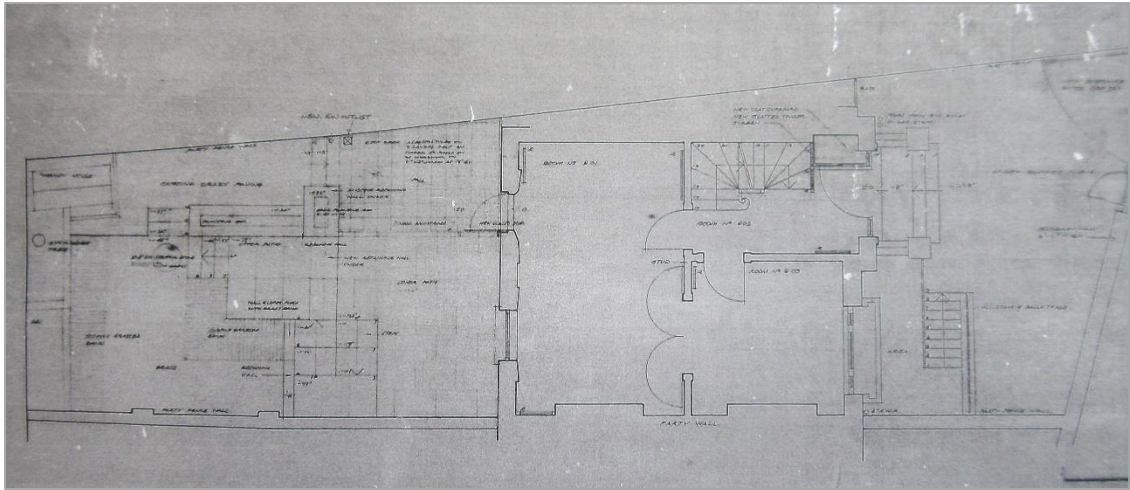
Appendix 3: Proposed alterations, 1966 (Griffiths Lewis Goad Partnership), microfilm drawings in Camden Archives Drainage



3a: Lower ground floor plan showing demolition and removals



3b: Ground floor plan showing demolition and removals



3c: Ground floor proposed

Appendix 4: Lower ground floor photographs



4a: Front garden, showing modern tiling, light fittings and railings to light well/area



4b: Door in area



4c: Doors to vaults under entrance steps



4d: Rear lower ground floor area



4e: Internal lower ground view towards stair



4f: Front room (kitchen) in lower ground floor



4g: Lower ground floor view towards garden



4h: Stair from lower ground to ground floor



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