

ALTERATIONS TO 4 CHALCOT CRESCENT, Primrose Hill, London NW1 8YD

Introduction

To accompany a planning application for listed building consent for refurbishment works to the lower ground floor of **4 Chalcot Crescent**.

Chalcot Crescent lies between Primrose Hill and Chalcot Square. The detailed facades of its buildings contribute to the charm of the street as much as the scale of its buildings.

The houses were built by J Burden around 1850 and reflect a very pleasing uniformity. The terraces on the east side of the curve of the crescent are three storeyed, with basements. They are stucco fronted with rusticated ground floors, projecting porches with arched sides and, on the first floor, glazed doors opening onto railed balconies, with decorative window surrounds and cornices.

Chalcot Crescent is in the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, category Sub Area 3: Regents Park Road North, in the Conservation Area Statement. This was established in 1971 and extended in 1985.

Numbers 1-17 and 2-22 were given Grade 11 listing in 1974. The details of the listing refer to:

pedimented, prostyle porticoes with pilasters at angles, round-arched entrances and round-arched side openings. Doorways with cornice-heads, fanlights and panelled doors. Recessed sashes, some ground floors with window guards, second floors architraved. First floor architraved casements with console bracketed pediments and cast-iron balconies. Cornice and blocking course.

It should be noted that the above relates to the front of the houses. The interiors were not inspected.

The rear of the houses, numbers 2-22 and their gardens, on the south of the street, back onto the parking area of the Oldfield Estate - a large apartment complex owned by Central and Cecil Housing Trust - and the communal gardens of Hopkinson Place. This area is dominated by large trees and shrubs, concealing from view the lower levels of the buildings and back gardens in Chalcot Crescent.

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Planning History of Chalcot Crescent

Chalcot Crescent is a delightful street. The facades of these small terraced houses, with their projecting porticoes, frame the view of Primrose Hill beyond.

Many extensions and alterations have been made to the properties over the years, reflecting the fact that residents have wished to remain living in their homes, rather than moving to bigger properties. Certainly this is the case with the owners of No.4. Most of these extensions and alterations have been made to the rear of the odd numbers on the north side of the street. Several have secured approval for conservatory extensions, as well as for closet wings.

There have been fewer applications for external alterations to the even numbers on the south side, straight section of the street, though more significant additions to the rear of the properties on the curved section.

Proposed Works

No external alterations are proposed as the nature of the proposed work is to repair parts of the house which need urgent attention. The historic detail of number 4 will be left intact. The general built fabric of the house will remain unaltered - cornices, joinery and trim.

Repair of the lower ground floor damp proofing and repair of the the plumbing and heating throughout however is now needed requiring some alterations to the existing arrangements in the basement and front vaults.

The layout of the house is as follows: the top floor is a painting studio with spare bedroom; the master bedroom and ensuite bathroom are on the first floor; the drawing room is on the ground floor. The lower ground floor is less satisfactory. The kitchen is located at the front of the house, facing north onto a lightwell, while there is now a small reception room facing onto the garden with a stable type door of rather heavy fenestration. This is separated from the stairs by a wall. It is proposed to block in the original door from the stairs to the kitchen area and create a large opening in the spine wall. The closet wing on this floor is at present a utility room and lavatory is awkward to use, and with poor ventilation and light.

A serious problem is damp, which is coming up through the existing concrete slab floor and walls. The concrete slab and damp proofing was done more than 20 years ago and is now failing.

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The current owners of the house would like to generally do repairs and while doing this work improve the energy efficiency of the basement area.

The existing concrete slab and DPM will be replaced throughout. It is proposed to keep the kitchen at the front of the house, facing north, with the dining room and reception area towards the rear facing south, and open up the space between the stairs and the south room. This will improve the ventilation and penetration of natural daylight into the basement area, which in turn assists in repairing the damp problem.

The existing heating will be repaired and in the process upgraded to a more energy efficient system which will cope with the demands on hot water.

In addition while doing this work we propose installing an additional wc and shower at the top of the stairs at a new 2nd floor mezzanine level to provide additional facilities to the bedrooms and at the same time repair the damp penetrating the existing walls at that level.

In detail, the works required are as follows:

Repairs: treatment of damp, light and ventilation, heating and plumbing.

1. Damp proofing: Remove the existing slab and DPM throughout the basement and replace with an insulated concrete slab (not currently insulated) and new DPM "Delta" type self draining system.

The existing concrete floor and walls are failing and allowing damp into the family and kitchen areas.

2. Damp proofing: Waterproofing of the vault beneath the front entrance steps to allow it to be used as a laundry room, lavatory and larder.

The vault is currently used as storage with very bad access. A Delta type tanking and self draining system is proposed along with new with insulation.

3. Partial removal of stud and plasterboard boxing out beneath the existing beam in the spine wall.

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The infill is non original, but a section would be retained to indicate some of the original character of the layout. This will improve the ventilation in the basement and allow better daylight penetration into the living spaces.

4. Removal of the wall between the stair and rear room

Similarly, it is proposed to retain nibs and a down stand beam, to record the original layout of the room. This will improve the ventilation in the basement and allow better daylight penetration into the living spaces.

5. Repair plumbing generally and install a new WC and shower at the top of the house: As part of the repair of the services in the house a new mezzanine level will be constructed off the top of the 2nd floor stairs. This will extend into the existing roof cavity space but not extend past the existing roof line. The external roof will not be altered except for a proposed new skylight flush to the roofing.

6. Repair of Damp: through the walls in the upper floors of the house in conjunction with item 5 above.

7. Repair of the existing heating system involving the installation of a new energy efficient boiler and some pipework to replace the existing. This will not disturb any of the existing architectural features and the existing radiators will be re-used or replaced with new to match the existing. The new boiler and tank will replace the existing currently in the basement area utility area and will be relocated to either the front vault area or in the roof space at the top of the house.

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Design Approach

The house, though small, is well proportioned and charming. Our aim is to work with the grain of the house and proceed with sensitivity. At the moment, although the upper floors work very well, the lower ground floor is less successful. It is dark, requires artificial light all day, and is damp. The layout of the lower ground floor could be much improved upon, as already stated earlier, by reorganizing the rooms to take advantage of available sunlight and by moving the utility room and the lavatory to the vaults. Opening up the rear room and the hall area, while retaining the downstand beam, will return the space more closely to the spirit of its origins.

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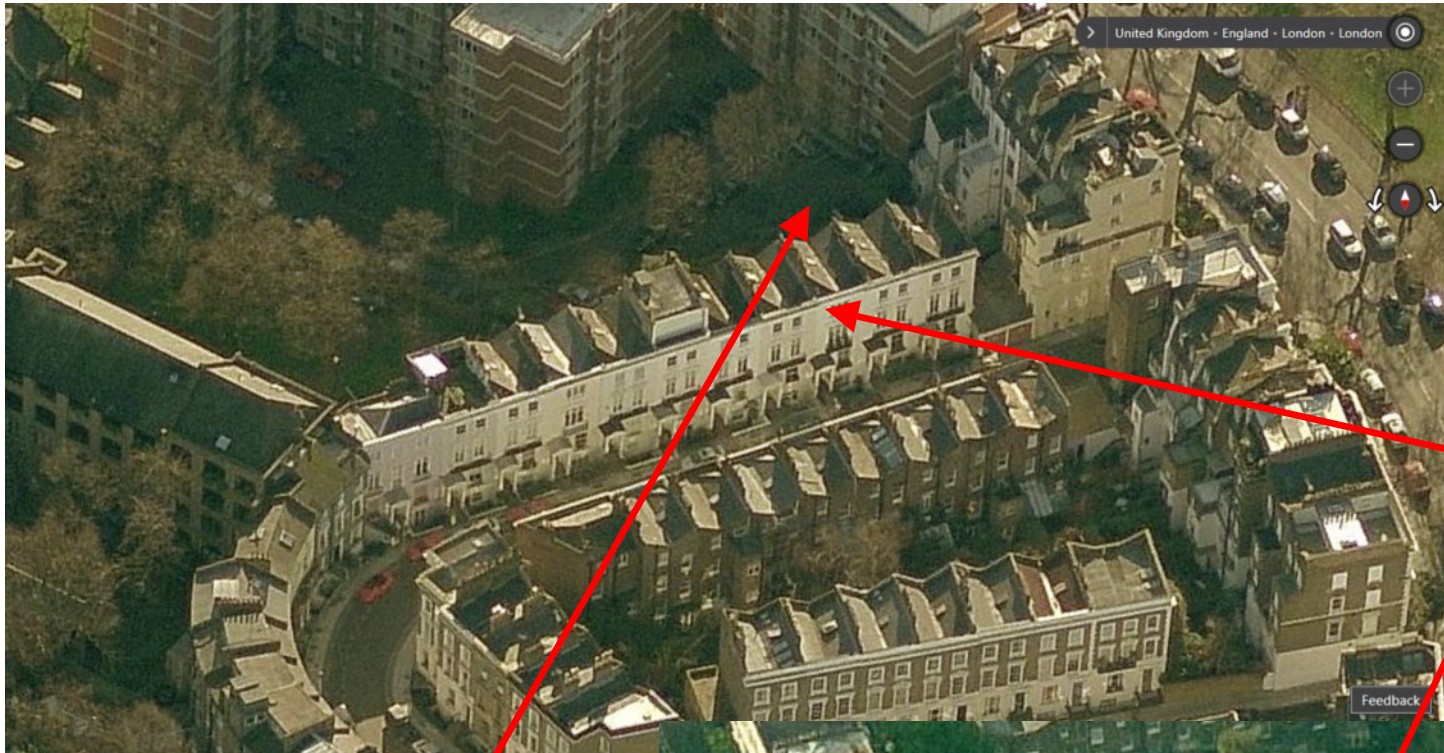
Summary

Number 4, Chalcot Crescent is listed primarily for its contribution to the streetscape in Primrose Hill. The scale and proportion of the properties have an interest and charm of their own.

The work proposed will improve the scale and proportion of the lower ground floor in relation to the rest of the house, and improve the lives of its occupants.

We consider that the work will conserve as well as preserve the heritage assets of the house and the street, in a manner appropriate to their significance, such that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the area and to the life of future generations.

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View south past garden



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Primrose Hill



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Front Lightwell

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Reception Room facing south

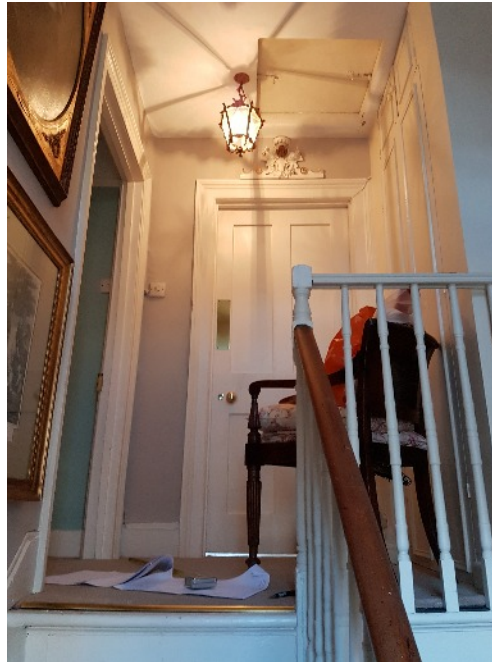


Kitchen facing north

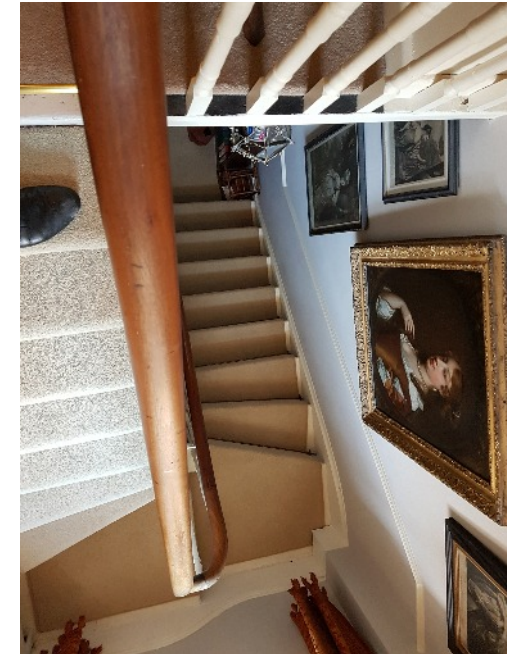
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Top of stairs second floor
Looking towards garden



Top of stairs second floor
Looking north



Top of stairs second floor
Looking down

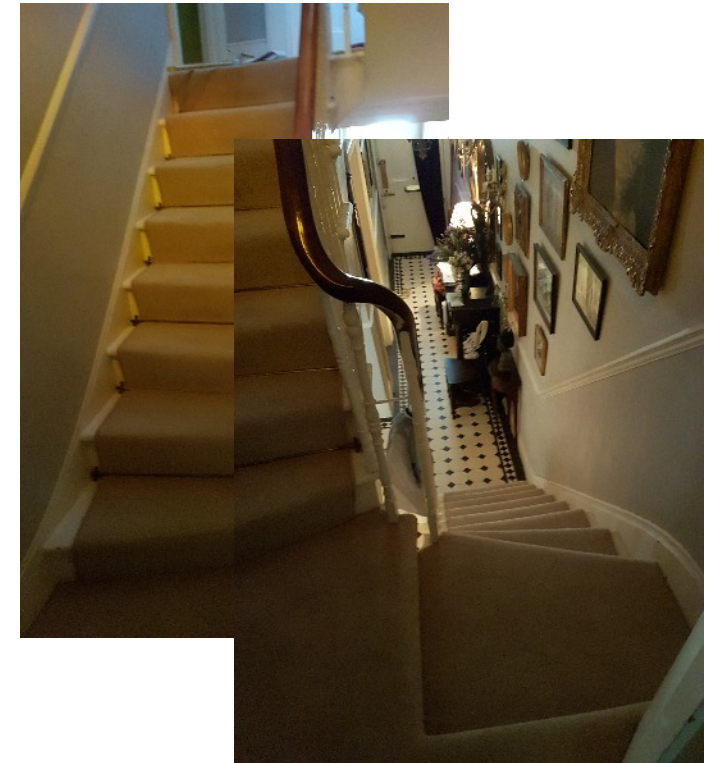
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Looking from Kitchen into Stair Hall facing south



Basement stair to ground floor



stair first floor to ground floor

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Rear Elevation

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