

HERITAGE STATEMENT

The house at 31 Downshire Hill is a four storey end of terrace house which was built around 1800-1820. It was built as an artisan dwelling and, whereas it has a pleasing internal ambience, it is of itself of little historical or architectural importance. However, it occupies a position in a street which is known for the pleasing appearance of its buildings and gardens. The properties were built mostly in the Regency period and although varied in appearance are consistent in scale and present integrity of period which is not often found in London.

The proposed changes to the property are internal only and will have absolutely no impact on the external appearance of the building. With the exception of the opening of the back room chimney breast to accommodate a range cooker and ventilation hood there is no impact on the structure. The chimney breast remaining above the basement will be supported with new pre-stressed, pre-cast concrete beams or steel RSJ's.

The owner believes that the proposed changes will return the basement to a configuration very close to that of the original building. His reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

- The suspended timber floor is clearly not original. The boards are narrow and little worn. This floor is some 100 mm lower than the solid floor and was probably installed to increase ceiling height. The floor would originally have been solid and at the same height as that in the corridor.
- The barred window in the corner cupboard indicates that the cupboard was intended as a pantry. The timber partition and door of this cupboard are ill constructed and clearly not original. I do not think it coincidental that the doors of the existing alcove cupboards will serve perfectly for the pantry cupboard as I believe that is where they came from.
- The chimney breast has been partially bricked up at some time and evidence of redundant water pipes can be seen above the hearth. The unbricked hearth would have accommodated a cooking range and perhaps a boiler.
- The internal door which presently serves the back room fits exactly the doorway in the corridor. This doorway provides evidence that a lock was once fitted. If the door was originally fitted in the corridor a dividing partition between the corridor and back room would make no sense.

From these observations it may be inferred that the back room was not originally divided into room and corridor and that it would have originally been intended to serve as a kitchen.