

Heritage Statement

Rose Cottage, Vale of Health, Hampstead London Borough of Camden



June 2017

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement for Rose Cottage in the Vale of Health on Hampstead Heath was commissioned in March 2017 by Nicola George of Nicola George Project Management Ltd., on behalf of clients. The report was prepared by Neil Burton BA FSA IHBC, a director of The Architectural History Practice Ltd.

Rose Cottage in the London Borough of Camden (Grid Reference TQ 264864) is a small timber-framed cottage built in the early nineteenth century. The house was listed Grade II in 1974. The whole of the Vale of Health lies within the Hampstead Conservation Area.

2.0 Background History¹

Until the later eighteenth century the Vale of Health on Hampstead Heath was an area of open and swampy ground fed by local streams and known variously as Gangmoor or Hatch's Bottom. The Hampstead manor map made in 1762 (fig.1) shows a single building on the ground, next to a small pond. In 1777 the Hampstead Water Company formed a much larger pond to feed their water supply system and this had the effect of draining the swampy area. In 1779 an application was made to the manor court for permission to build three cottages at Hatch's Bottom for paupers and also to build two private dwellings.

The name 'Vale of Health' seems to have come into use in about 1801. The parish rate book for 1806 shows eight rate-payers under the heading 'Vale of Health', suggesting eight houses. It is likely that most of the houses were erected by John Rudd, a builder who acquired several pieces of manorial waste land before his death in 1801. His property was then acquired by William Woods, a carpenter, who had built two more cottages by 1810. By 1815 there were ten cottages and four houses. Most of these early buildings seem to have been in a single cluster of weatherboarded and whitewashed houses, which included the present Rose Cottage (figs.2 & 3).

Despite the early provision for paupers, it seems clear that the Vale of Health became a popular place both to visit and to live in the early nineteenth century. One of the early residents was the writer Leigh Hunt who came to live in the Vale of Health in 1815 (after spending two years in prison for libelling the Prince Regent) and remained until at least 1821. It seems likely that he lived in the house known as Vale Lodge, where he was visited by many literary figures including the poets Coleridge and Crabbe.

By the late 1840s several properties in the Vale of Health including Rose Cottage were owned by Joseph Munyard, whose widow Jane Munyard enfranchised all the buildings in 1860. There was some dispute over the enfranchisement and the record of the dispute in the manorial documents² lists all the properties with their owners and rents at this date:

No.1 Vale Lodge, occupied by G W Lovell, rent £70

No.2 Woodbine Cottage, occupied by W H Hooper, rent £30

¹ Much of the background history is drawn from H C Bentwich, *The Vale of Health on Hampstead Heath*, (1968).

² London Metropolitan Archives E/MW/H old no 37/8

No.3 Vale House, lately occupied by Bole, rent £35

No.4 Pavilion Cottage, occupied by Mrs French, rent £52

No.5 Rose Cottage, heretofore occupied by John Bentley, now by John Thomas, rent £30

No.6 three cottages (formerly one house) occupied by Milton and tenants, rent £66

The 1869 Ordnance Survey (fig. 5) shows a steady increase in buildings, but the cluster of cottages is still a distinct group with some of the houses (including Rose Cottage) having the long thin rear wings which are still a distinctive feature and may be original. At present it is not possible to be sure whether the rear wing was always of two storeys or whether it was originally single-storeyed. The latter was the usual, with the single-storey range containing the kitchen and scullery.

In 1870 Alfred Harmsworth, with his wife Geraldine and five children, moved into Rose Cottage where they lived for three years. Harmsworth was an unsuccessful barrister but of his sons Alfred (1865-1922) became Lord Northcliffe, owner of The Daily Mail and the Daily Mirror; Harold (1868-1940) became Lord Rothermere, co-founder of the Mail and Mirror and a supporter of Nazi Germany; Cecil (1869-1948) became Lord Harmsworth, a Liberal politician. A plaque on the house commemorates their residence.

A subsequent occupant of Rose Cottage was Ernest Rhys (1859 –1946), a Welsh/English writer who was the founding editor of the Everyman's Library series of affordable classics, begun in 1906. Rhys lived in Rose Cottage between 1893 and 1899, during which time he re-named the house Hunt Cottage because he was convinced (mistakenly) that it had once been the residence of Leigh Hunt. In his autobiography *Everyman Remembers*, published in 1931, Rhys said of the cottage, 'The rooms were low-ceilinged and dark and got no morning sun...' He also remarked on, 'the French windows which were the only entry to the house from the front...'

Shortly after Mr Rhys's departure the then owner of Milton, Sydney, Woodbine, Hunt and St Anne's Cottages, a Mr L H Canton, arranged for the drainage to be improved. The plan attached to his 1906 application to the Hampstead Local Board shows the general arrangement of the buildings at that time, with a block plan and part-elevation of each building. In the case of Rose Cottage it is the rear wing which is shown (figs.6 & 7).

It appears that at some time in the later twentieth century Rose Cottage and the adjoining Woodbine Cottage may have been amalgamated into a single dwelling. The statutory list of historic buildings (Appendix 1) which was revised in 1999 describes them as '2 cottages, now one dwelling'. If this was ever true, the amalgamation has now been reversed and the two houses are two separate dwellings.



Fig.1 A detail from the Hampstead Manor map of 1762, with the approximate area of the Vale of Health indicated (Camden Local Studies)

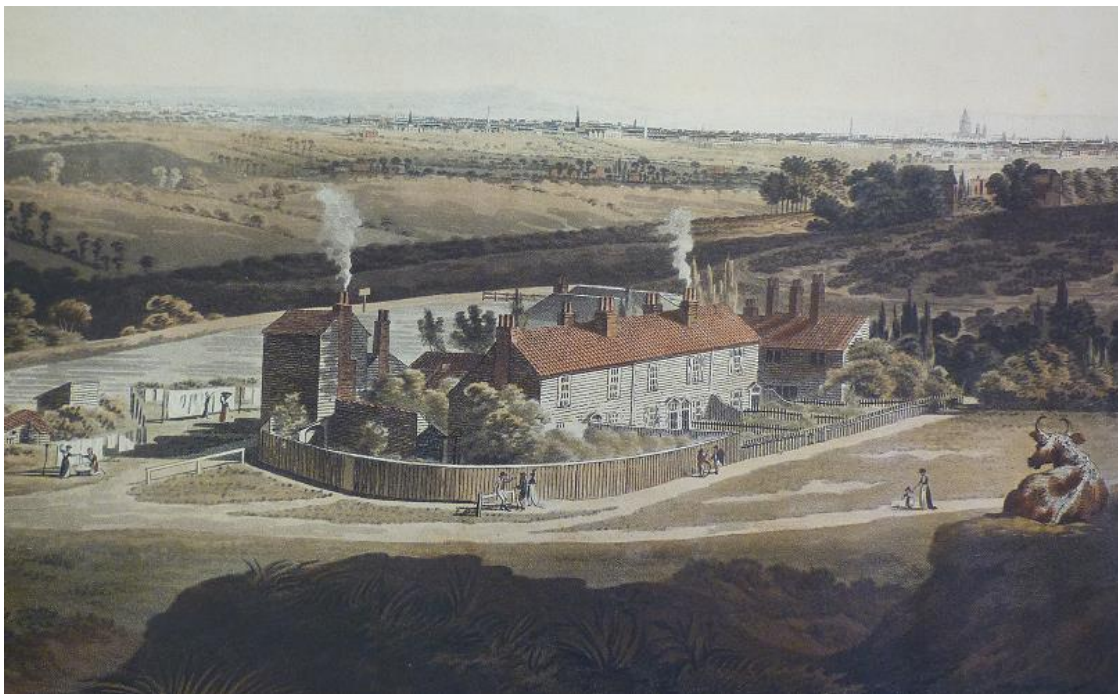


Fig.2 A detail from F J Sargent's View of Hampstead Heath, engraved in 1804, showing a row of cottages which presumably includes Rose Cottage (Camden Local Studies)



Fig.3 A detail from Newton's 1814 Map of Hampstead



Fig.4 A detail from Crutchley's 1835 map of London

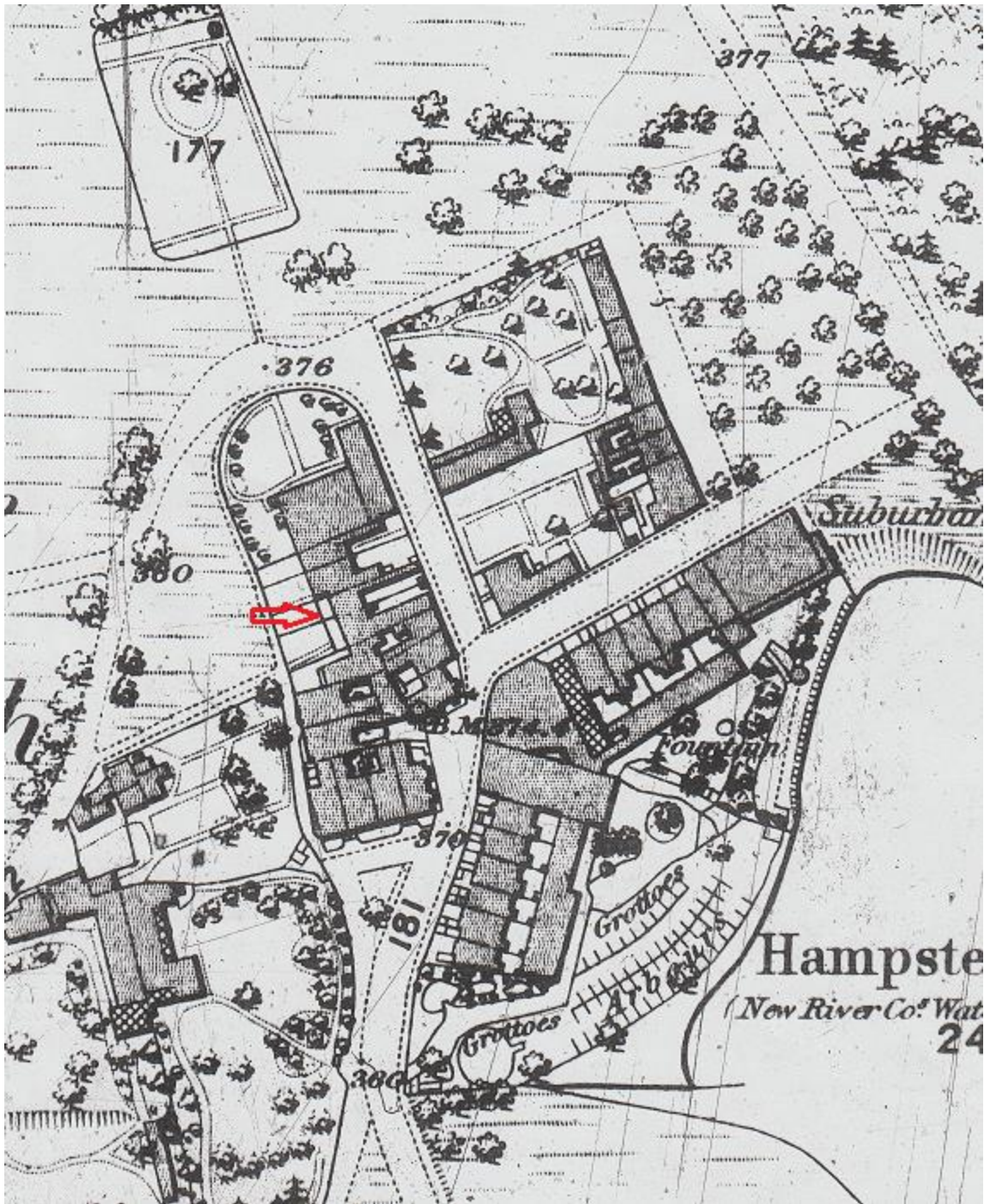


Fig.5 A detail from the Ordnance Survey published in 1869 (surveyed in 1866)



Fig.6 a block plan of the group of cottages including Rose Cottage, from a Drainage plan dated 1906 (Camden Local Studies)

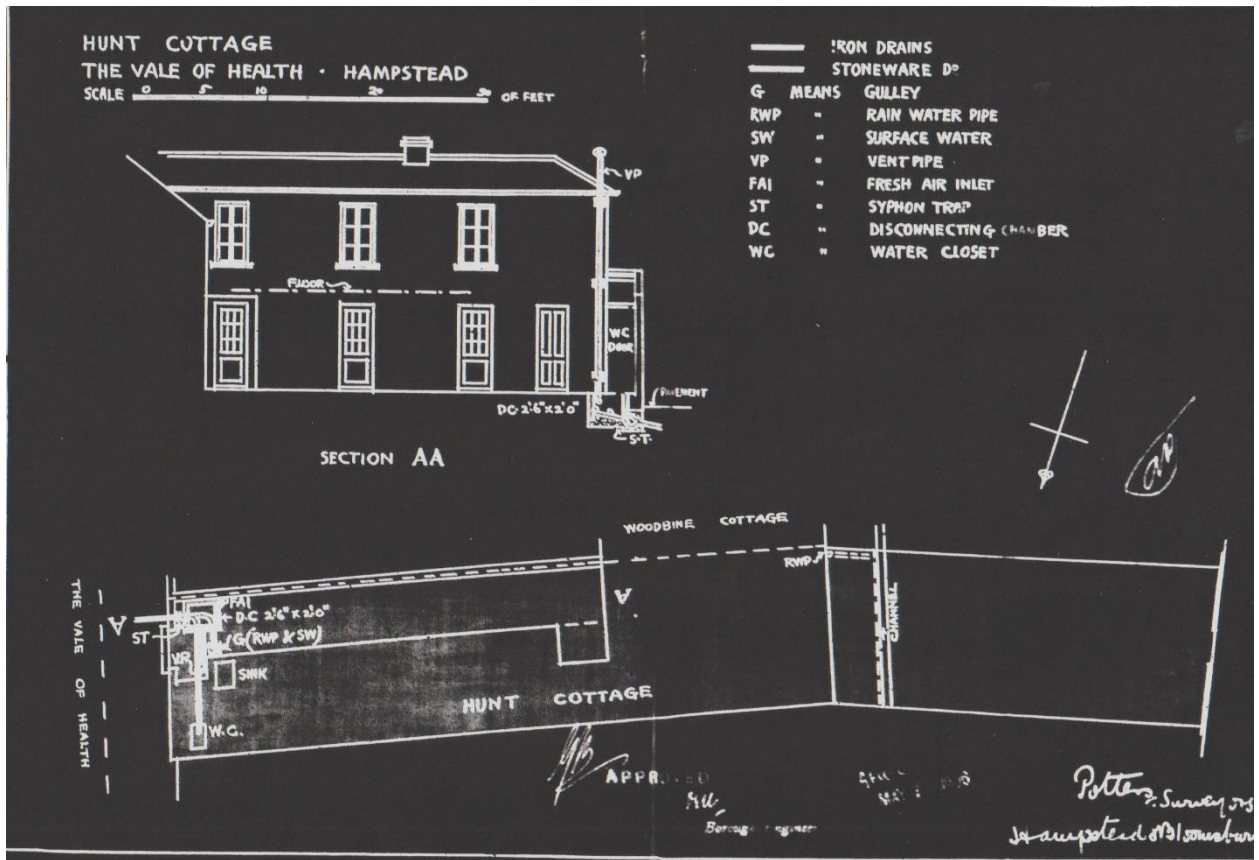


Fig.7 A block plan of Rose Cottage and an elevation of the rear wing, from a Drainage plan dated 1906 (Camden Local Studies)

3.0 Brief Description & Analysis

Exterior

It seems clear that the original arrangement of the building has been reversed, and that what was originally the front elevation with the main entrance now faces onto the garden. The original front elevation is shown on Sargent's 1804 View of London from Hampstead Heath (fig.2), when Rose Cottage was part of a row of five uniform two-storey cottages, with weatherboarded fronts. The present main entrance is by a doorway at the junction of the main building and the long rear wing and is reached from what is now a public road. The former entrance front, now the garden front, is still fully weatherboarded and has French windows in the centre of the ground floor, set under a projecting full-width timber balcony with a canopied roof. At first floor level is a narrower French window, also in the centre of the elevation.

If Sargent's view is to be believed, the front has been wholly altered from its original state. The original front door has been lost, the windows have been moved and enlarged, the balcony has been added and, presumably, all the original weatherboarding had to be replaced when the new arrangement were made. It is clear from Mr Rhys's remark quoted in Section 2 above that the French windows, on the ground floor at least, were already in place by the 1890s.

The rear wall of the main building is also weatherboarded and this cladding suggests that the building is constructed with a timber frame, though the frame is nowhere visible either externally or internally. The long two-storey rear wing is faced with render and could be either timber-framed or brick-built. The wing has four openings on the ground floor and three on the upper floor, with a single-storey addition at the end of the wing. This is the same arrangement as is shown on the 1906 drainage plan (fig.7). The long thin rear yard between the rear wings of Rose Cottage and Woodbine Cottage which adjoins it to the south, is divided by an old brick wall, with timber doors onto the street.

Interior

No documentary information has been found about changes to the original internal arrangements. The original interior layout presumably provided two rooms on each floor, all with fireplaces served by the single brick chimneystack on the party wall. There may once have been a passage on the ground floor leading from the entrance to the staircase at the rear of the building, but of this there is now no sign and the ground floor rooms have been thrown into a single space, with a timber lining to the wide central opening.

The detailing of these ground floor rooms is of the simplest, with plain plank skirtings, papered walls and flat ceilings without cornices. The chimneypiece in the front room has the reeding and roundel ornament typical of the early nineteenth century, but the yellow brick raised hearth is clearly modern. Some of the alcove cupboards also have reeding and roundels. All the woodwork has been stripped of paint.

The staircase is located immediately next to the rear wall of the main house within the rear wing. The stair is very simple, with a closed string, plain timber stick balusters, turned newel posts at top and bottom and a moulded handrail. All these elements could perfectly well date from c1800 but there may have been some replacement.

The rear wing beyond the staircase is divided into two by a large chimneystack with a narrow passage on the south side towards the yard. The room next to the staircase is now the kitchen and may always have been so.

On the first floor, the two rooms in the main building have simple nineteenth century chimneypieces which are probably original and the panelled passage leading from the stair head to the front room could also be part of the original arrangements. The timber roof structure of the main house appears (from a superficial inspection) to be largely modern.



Fig 8 The original front elevation, now the garden front



Fig.9 The rear elevation with the long rear wing



Fig.10 The ground floor of the main house, showing the wide opening between what were originally two rooms



Fig.11 The first floor front room, with what is probably the original chimneypiece



Fig.12 The roof space of the main house, looking south



Fig.13 The first floor of the rear wing, looking from the stair head.



Fig.14 The lowest flight of the stair, with its turned newel and stick balusters

4.0 Assessment of Significance

The assessment of the significance of historic buildings and their settings is not an exact science, but is based on detailed knowledge of the building type, a comparison with what exists elsewhere, and the extent to which it may be distinctive or have special meaning for different groups of people.

Statutory designations provide some guide to the importance of historic buildings. Rose Cottage is listed Grade II. This means that the house is considered to be a building of special interest. 92% of all listed buildings are in this class. The list description is included at Appendix 1. The whole of the Vale of Health lies within the Hampstead Conservation area, which was first designated in 1968. A Conservation Area Statement with management guidelines was published in October 2002.

In 2008 English Heritage published *Conservation Principles*, which identified four principal heritage values which might be taken into account when assessing significance and which can be used to amplify the assessments in the statutory lists. These values are *Evidential*, deriving from the potential of a place to yield (mainly archaeological) evidence about past human activity; *Historical*, deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present; *Aesthetic*, deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place; *Communal*, deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory.

In 2012 the Department of Communities and Local Government issued the National Policy Planning Framework which suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of historic buildings should be assessed under the headings of *archaeological*, *architectural*, *artistic or historic* (which are closely related to the English Heritage values) and points out that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.

Heritage Significance is essentially a hierarchical concept, using descending levels of value. These follow guidelines established by James Semple Kerr, which have been adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and others. The levels of significance are:

- *Exceptional* - important at national to international levels
- *Considerable* - important at regional level or sometimes higher
- *Some* - usually of local value only but possibly of regional significance for group or other value
- *Little* - of limited heritage or other value
- *Neutral* - features which neither enhance nor detract from the value of the site
- *Negative/intrusive* - features which detract from the value of the site

Evidential value

The house was constructed on a greenfield site and there is probably little below-ground archaeology of any value. The fabric of the standing building may contain evidence which could help towards an understanding of its original form. The house is of *Some Evidential Value*.

Historical value

The house is of *Considerable Historical Value* both as one of the earliest of the buildings erected in the Vale of Health but also as the home for part of their childhood, of the Harmonsworth brothers who founded the Daily Mail and Daily Mirror newspapers and also of Ernest Rhys, originator of the Everyman series of popular classics. The historical value is acknowledged by the blue plaque on the building.

Aesthetic value

Rose Cottage is of *Some Aesthetic Value* for its picturesque external appearance with white-painted weatherboarded walls and pantiled roof. The interior planform has been very considerably altered and much of the original fabric has been lost.

Communal value

The house has always been a private residence and has little communal value, except as a valued part of the street scene and an important element in the Vale of Health section of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

Setting

The immediate setting of Rose Cottage is the small village-like community of the Vale of Health with its modest late Georgian and Victorian buildings; the wider setting is Hampstead Heath which encloses the Vale on all sides. The setting is highly unusual for London and is on that account of *Considerable Significance*.

5.0 The Proposed Works and their Impact on the Built Heritage

The proposed works are fully set out in the drawings and statements prepared by Cooke Fawcett Architects. In sum, they comprise the re-furbishment of the whole building in a conservative manner, emphasising repair or like for like replacement. The external elevations of the building will remain virtually unaltered, though there will be some very minor changes to the appearance of the rear wing. Internally, the main part of the house will remain largely unaltered but there will be some modifications to the interior spaces in the rear wing. The proposals are here described under the headings of external and internal works.

External Works

The external appearance of the building will remain substantially unchanged. All external joinery will be refurbished; repaired where possible or if beyond economic repair replaced like for like.

On the original south-west-facing main front, the existing timber balcony will be discreetly strengthened and the balustrade made safer by the addition of timber uprights and a steel bar at handrail height. These changes will improve the safety and stability of the existing structure but will have no effect on its appearance. The modern pvc guttering will be removed.

On the south-east elevation of the long rear wing facing the rear yard, the existing left-hand ground floor window will be replaced by a French door copying the appearance of the present window and within the original opening.

The external wall surfaces of the rear wing which are currently faced with a hard cementitious render will be stripped and replaced by a soft and permeable lime-based render, which was doubtless the original finish. This will not affect the appearance of the wing.

The existing paving in the rear yard will be lifted and re-laid to new falls to improve water run-off away from the building.

Internal Works

In the main house, there will be no alterations to the ground floor beyond normal refurbishment, which will be carried out on repair or a like for like replacement basis. At first floor level the existing timber partition between the rear bedroom and the side passage will be lined on the bedroom side to improve sound insulation. The panelling will remain exposed on the passage side. The lath and plaster ceilings will be left *in situ* but will be boarded-over as an insurance against collapse.

The rear wing is flimsily built and currently suffers from damp problems. A new solid reinforced concrete floor will be installed, to eliminate existing damp issues in this part of the building and to provide additional stability to the flank wall. The existing stone floor finishes will be re-used, and supplemented by new stone where necessary. The external wall of the wing will be lined internally with insulated studwork, separated from the external wall by a damp-proof membrane. The stair and stair compartment will remain unaltered.

The kitchen chimney stack in the centre of the wing will be removed at ground and first floor level. On the ground floor this will allow the creation of a larger kitchen. On the first floor it will allow a re-planning of the space to provide a first floor bathroom, something which is presently missing. The lower part of the stack will be replaced by a steel frame supporting the upper part of the stack, which will be retained above the level of the first floor ceiling and will continue to rise above the roof. On both ground and first floors the steel frame will be concealed in projecting nibs on both side of the internal space, which will indicate the former location of the stack. Together with the retained upper section, this will allow the former arrangement of the rear wing to be 'read'.

Conclusion

Most of the proposed work consists of conservative repair and refurbishment which will clearly benefit the listed building. Hardly any alterations are proposed to the main part of the house, and those very minor in nature.

The repairs and alterations proposed to the rear wing are more intensive, but this largely reflects the poor construction of the original build and will have little effect on the character of the internal spaces. The only element of the work which could be considered controversial is the proposed removal of the lower part of the chimneystack with the two first floor chimneypieces, but in this case the benefits outweigh the loss, which will be mitigated by leaving indications of the stack's former presence.

The proposed works will have no effect on the external appearance of the listed building and no effect on the character of the conservation area. They amount to a well-considered and conservative programme of repair and refurbishment to the whole of the house, with some reconfiguration of the interior spaces in the rear wing to provide a convenient kitchen and first

floor bathroom. The partial loss of the chimneystack in this part of the building could be considered as 'less than substantial harm' in the terms of Section 132 of the NPPF but the effects of the loss on the character of the listed building will be minimised and will not detract from the significance of the heritage asset. The proposed works will help to secure the 'optimum viable use' for the building in order to preserve it for future generations, and this benefit outweighs any 'less than substantial harm'.

6.0 Sources and Bibliography

Camden Local Studies

Drainage Plans, historic maps, Post Office directories

London Metropolitan Archives

E/MW/H old no 27/15, sales particulars 1801

E/MW/H old no 21/18 (rental 1820)

E/MW/H old no 37/8 (enfranchisement 1858)

Published material

Bentwich, H C, *The Vale of Health on Hampstead Heath*, (1968)

Victoria County History of Middlesex, *Volume 9, Hampstead and Paddington* (1989) pp 71-73

APPENDIX : List description

ROSE COTTAGE

List entry Number: 1379081

Location

ROSE COTTAGE, VALE OF HEALTH

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

District Type: London Borough

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-May-1974

Date of most recent amendment: 11-Jan-1999

Details

CAMDEN

TQ2686SW VALE OF HEALTH 798-1/16/1663 Rose Cottage 14/05/74 (Formerly Listed as: VALE OF HEALTH Hunt Cottage and Woodbine Cottage)

GV II

2 cottages, now one dwelling. Early C19. Weatherboarded. Pantiled roof. 2 storeys. 1 window to each former cottage. Main entrances on east side. Left hand cottage with wood trellis verandah supporting 1st floor balcony with canopy; French windows to both (1st floor architraved). Right hand cottage with French doors to ground floor with pointed lights and architraved casement to 1st floor. INTERIORS: not inspected. HISTORICAL NOTE: Hunt Cottage was the early home (1870-3) of Alfred and Harold Harmsworth, newspaper tycoons. Woodbine Cottage was the home of Compton Mackenzie.

Listing NGR: TQ2648686478



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