

Supporting Statement

**ROSE COTTAGE, THE VALE OF HEALTH,
HAMPSTEAD**

LONDON NW3 1AX

**Alterations to existing chimneystack
in rear wing and to internal partitions**



April 2018

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement about proposals affecting Rose Cottage in the Vale of Health on Hampstead Heath was commissioned in June 2017 by Nicola George of Nicola George Project Management Ltd, on behalf of Mr & Mrs Walker, the owners of the building. The statement concerns the proposed removal of the lower part of a brick chimney stack in the rear wing of the house and some minor internal alterations. Rose Cottage (National Grid Reference TQ 264864) is a small early nineteenth century timber-framed dwelling. The cottage was listed Grade II in 1974 and lies within the Hampstead Conservation Area.

1.2 This statement has been commissioned to supplement the Heritage Statement prepared by The Architectural History Practice (AHP) in June 2017. The Heritage Statement was submitted with the 2017 application for listed building consent for alterations to the stack (ref. 2017/7064/L), which was refused in February 2018.

1.3 Both reports were prepared by Neil Burton BA FSA IHBC, a director of The Architectural History Practice Ltd. AHP is an established research-based consultancy, providing advice for owners and others concerned with historic buildings in the form of listed building assessments, heritage impact assessments, conservation plans and statements and conservation area appraisals. Clients include Historic England, The National Trust and many Local Councils and public bodies, as well as private individuals.

1.4 Neil has been a director of AHP since 2001. He is an architectural historian with over forty years experience of the listed building and planning control process. For fifteen years he was an historian with the Greater London Council Historic Buildings Division. After the abolition of the GLC he became an Inspector of Historic Buildings within English Heritage where he drafted the *Guidance on Alterations to Listed Buildings* contained in Government Circular PPG15 concerned with Planning and Historic Environment. In 1994 he left English Heritage to become Secretary of the Georgian Group, one of the National Architectural Amenity Societies, where he remained until joining AHP. His publications include *'Behind the Façade: London House Plans 1660-1840'* published by Spire Books in 2006 with the financial assistance of English Heritage.

2.0 The Proposals

2.1 The proposals are set out in detail in the drawings and statements prepared by Cooke Fawcett Architects. In sum, it is proposed to remove the lower part of the chimney stack in the rear wing at ground and first floor levels to allow the creation of a larger kitchen on the ground floor and the re-arrangement of the first floor with a new bathroom to replace the present bathroom on the ground floor of the wing. The upper part of the stack would be retained and supported by steel members set against the walls and covered-in. Downstands in the ceiling would show the position of the former stack and allow the former planform to be 'read'.

2.2 The chimneystack proposals are part of a more extensive programme of repairs and refurbishment to the whole of the house which has already received listed building consent. The programme includes the formation of a new concrete floor under the whole of the rear wing to provide a stable foundation and the replacement of the existing hard external rendering on the walls of the wing with a new lime-based render and external wall insulation. These works are all carefully considered and detailed. They will not detract from the significance of the listed building and will help to preserve the historic fabric.

3.0 The Heritage Significance of the Building.

3.1 The development history of the house (as far as it can be established) is set out in the Heritage Statement dated June 2017 prepared by the Architectural History Practice. In brief, the main house was probably built in c1800 as part of a row of modest dwellings. Early maps appear to show several of the dwellings with rear wings and the 1866 Ordnance Survey, which is the earliest accurate detailed map, shows Rose Cottage with a long thin rear wing of the present extent. The Heritage Statement makes it clear that both the exterior and the interior of the house have seen various alterations over the years.

3.2 Between 1870 and 1873 the cottage was the home of Alfred Harmondsworth and his family. His three sons went on to become Lord Northcliffe, owner of The Daily Mail and the Daily Mirror; Lord Rothermere, co-founder of the Mail and Mirror and Lord Harmsworth, a Liberal politician. A plaque on the house commemorates their residence. Between 1893 and 1899 the cottage was occupied by Ernest Rhys the founding editor of the Everyman's Library series of popular classics.

3.3 The Heritage Statement contains an assessment of the heritage significance of Rose Cottage under the headings of evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value, as suggested in the Historic England document *Conservation Principles*, which relate closely to the headings of archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic significance suggested in the 2012 National Policy Planning Framework.

3.4 Significance is a hierarchical concept, using graded levels of value and significance which have been adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and others. The levels 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 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

3.5 The Heritage Statement considered that Rose Cottage has Some Evidential Value, Considerable Historical Value (mainly because of the Harmondsworth connection), Some Aesthetic Value and Some Communal Value (as an element in the conservation area).

4.0 National and Local Policy Guidance

4.1 Para. 131 of The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) notes that, In determining planning applications local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

4.3 Para.132 of the NPPF states that, 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, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

4.4 Para 134 of the NPPF states that, 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 its optimum viable use.

4.5 Local guidance is contained in the Camden Local Plan which was adopted in 2017. Proposals affecting the Historic Environment are covered in Policy D2 Heritage.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Since the preparation of the Heritage Statement there has been some limited opening-up of external and internal finishes. This has revealed timber-framed construction with brick nogging on the long south flank wall of the rear wing. The north wall of the wing adjacent to the west side of the chimneystack appears to be of red brick with no timberwork. The stack has been stripped of plaster revealing poor construction with poor-quality bricks and extensive brick

patching in several places on the eastern side. The stack is not bonded into the brickwork of the wall. On the upper floor of the wing, the ceiling joists of the west room carry old boards and it has been suggested that there may originally have been a flat roof which was later covered with the present pitched roof.

5.2 There are also some indications that the rear wing at one time only extended as far as the chimneystack and was subsequently lengthened. The principal evidence for this is that the main stack only has hearths on the west side at ground and first floor level. The eastern hearth on the first floor is clearly an addition, with a separate brick flue carried up on the east side of the main stack. There is also a step in the line of the north wall at ground floor level, which suggests that the wall is not continuous. A similar step is visible on the north wall of the rear wing of Woodbine Cottage, the other half of the handed pair of dwellings, which suggests both cottages once had shorter rear wings.

5.3 The position of the stack in Rose Cottage, set across the body of the wing, also suggests that it was once the termination of the wing. Otherwise one would have expected the stack to be on the side wall. This is the position of the chimney in the few documented examples of such modest early 19th century service wings (e.g. 125/7 Jamaica Street Stepney and 176 Samuel Street Woolwich, both of c1820 and both recorded by the GLC Historic Buildings Division before demolition).

5.4 It is possible that both Rose Cottage and Woodbine Cottage were constructed with rear wings which contained the staircase, together with a kitchen on the ground floor and perhaps a single room above. It seems clear that the present rear wing of Rose Cottage is not the product of a single design, or any kind of 'design', but is an accretive structure, not particularly well-built, which has been adapted and enlarged to suit changing needs.

5.5 The officer's report recommending refusal of Listed Building Consent suggests that combining 'the volumes of the two historic cellular [ground floor] rooms...would create an arrangement wholly atypical of any range of historic domestic service rooms.' This is simply not true. There are several documented examples of service ranges with chimneys on the side walls (see para 5.3 above), and this was probably a common arrangement.

5.6 The officer's report also objects to the introduction of vertical structural steels to support the upper portion of the retained stack as 'invasive' and 'non-traditional', but there is ample precedent in historic buildings for the discreet but honest use of modern materials and in this case the steels would be enclosed in a way which would allow the original location of the chimneystack to be understood from inside the building. Externally, of course, the stack itself would be clearly visible.

5.7 The officer's report argues that the 1994 consent which allowed the removal of the chimneystack in the rear wing of the adjacent Woodbine Cottage should not form a precedent in this case and actually increases the significance of the Rose Cottage chimney as surviving evidence. In truth, the cases are not comparable because the clearly visible external portion of the Rose Cottage stack will be retained and the location of the stack will also be marked internally.

5.8 The officer's report states that there is no public benefit to outweigh the less than substantial harm caused by the proposals, as required by the NPPF. The insistence on securing public benefit as a condition of almost any change to listed buildings, even houses in private occupation, can seem onerous, but such benefits do not have to be visible or accessible to the public. One generally recognized benefit is securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation. Provision of a bathroom on the upper floor close to the bedrooms in Rose Cottage and improving the size and amenity of what is presently a very small kitchen may only be slight improvements but they will certainly help to secure the optimum viable use of the cottage as a dwelling.

5.9 When considering proposed changes to the fabric it is important to try to distinguish between levels of significance for individual parts of the building. The rear wing is clearly a subsidiary part of the main house, built to contain circulation and service spaces, which have no original fittings and are generally of less interest than the principal rooms. There is strong evidence that the wing is not in its original form but has been altered and extended, possibly re-roofed and the exterior faced with cement render. These alterations mean that the original appearance, planform and pattern of use are unclear, which reduces the evidential value of the fabric and the internal spaces. Where the original construction of the wing has been exposed, much appears to be of a poor standard using inferior materials and this is particularly true of the chimneystack in the rear wing. While the poor standard of the materials may be of some historic interest, it does not enhance the heritage significance of the structure.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The partial removal of the chimneystack in the rear wing and the re-arrangement of the living spaces in the wing as proposed will have little or no adverse effect on the character, special interest or heritage significance of Rose Cottage. There will be no change to the external appearance of the building. Little old fabric will be lost and what will be removed is of poor quality. The plan of the wing as it is at present will still be legible. If the work is considered to be 'less than substantial harm' in the terms of the NPPF, the low level of harm to a subsidiary part of the building will be offset by improvements to amenity which will help secure the optimum viable use of the whole cottage as a dwelling and support its long-term conservation.

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