

**APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR WORKS AT
31 DOWNSHIRE HILL PROPOSED IN OWNER'S REQUEST
SUBMITTED 4 FEBRUARY 2018**

APPENDIX 3

HISTORY AND LAYOUT OF 31 DOWNSHIRE HILL

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HISTORY AND LAYOUT OF 31 DOWNSHIRE HILL

1. It is believed that the house at 31 Downshire Hill was built in the early 19th century as a single family dwelling. It was Listed as Grade II on 14 May 1974. The English Heritage Legacy ID is 477098.
2. The house has four floors with two rooms on each floor. Each of the back rooms originally occupied the full width of the building and more than one half of the depth of the building. For ground floor and first floor the dimensions of the back rooms are 5290 X 4020 mm and the back basement room would also have originally been this size. For an artisan dwelling these back rooms are on the large side and well proportioned, and this is one of the most pleasing aspects of the house, see photo no. ***Sitting room 1***, which shows, as a guide to size, the ground floor back room which is presently used as a sitting room.
3. Directly to the right of the house, as viewed from the front, is the Freemason's Arms public house. This pub, in its previous incarnation appears in photo no. ***Façade 5***, and in its present incarnation in photo no. ***Façade 1***. The significance of the pub in this context is that its owners in 1977, Bass Charrington, also owned 31 Downshire Hill. 31 Downshire Hill was purchased from Bass Charrington by the present owner in that year. You will note from the older of the two pictures that in front of 31 Downshire Hill (which is not visible in the picture) is a pitch roof building. This building does not appear in the newer picture because it has been partially demolished. Bass Charrington undertook certain major work at 31 Downshire Hill to update it and to make it blend in well with the new Freemasons Arms. These I believe included:
 - 3.1. Partial demolition of the pitch roof building in front of 31 Downshire Hill.
 - 3.2. Complete replacement of the house front wall from ground level.
 - 3.3. Installation of a reinforced concrete forecourt with iron fence and iron stairs to basement level.
 - 3.4. Increase in height of the two chimney stacks.

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- 3.5. Installation of a toilet in the basement pantry cupboard with modification of the cupboard to suit, using salvaged panelling.
- 3.6. Installation of a wooden partition made of salvaged panelling to separate the toilet from the back room and form a corridor for access to the back door.
- 3.7. Installation of a drain underneath the house to bring sewage and water run-off from the back of the house to the sewer in Downshire Hill
- 3.8. Lowering of the floor level in the back basement room and installation of a timber floor replacing the original solid masonry floor.
- 3.9. Lowering of the ground level on the garden side of the back basement room, with installation of drainage for this area and air bricks for ventilation of the sub-floor.
- 3.10. Rendering the inside surface of the basement external walls with impermeable sand/cement, to ceiling level in the front basement room and to 1.5 m above floor level in the back basement room.
- 3.11. Installation of two alcove cupboards in the back basement room.
- 3.12. Bricking up on both sides and the front of the back basement fireplace to reduce the hearth opening to suit a 20th century fireplace.
- 3.13. Installation of a modern concrete and mottled tile fireplace in the back basement room. (This has since been replaced with an incomplete Victorian slate and cast iron fireplace).
4. The old Freemasons Arms was demolished and rebuilt in neo-Georgian style in 1936. I believe that it may have been about this time, and perhaps as a condition of planning permission, that the owner of the Freemasons Arms and 31 Downshire Hill undertook these works. Reasons that I have come to the conclusion that most, if not all, of these works were done in the 1930's, around the time the new Freemasons Arms was built are as follows:

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- 4.1. The new façade wall and forecourt were designed to complement the neo-Georgian pub. (Replacement of the front wall may have been necessary because of subsidence).
- 4.2. The taller chimneys were necessary to ensure the new pub was not troubled by smoke. (The extension can be identified from the change in brick colour, see photo no. **Facade 1**),
- 4.3. The addition of a drain from the back of the house, under the floor, to the sewer in Downshire Hill links the addition of a basement toilet with reduction of the ground level on the garden side since both utilize this drain.
- 4.4. Replacement of the solid floor in the back basement room, which was undertaken as a consequence of necessary trenching for the drain, required air bricks for sub-floor ventilation and this necessitated the reduced level on the garden side of the back wall.
- 4.5. Addition of the basement toilet occasioned the addition of the wooden partition between back room and corridor since this permits access to the toilet without entering the back room.
- 4.6. Modification of the pantry cupboard was necessary to accommodate the toilet.
- 4.7. The front wall of 31 Downshire Hill is made of modern fletton bricks. This became apparent to me when a plumber knocked a hole through the wall at basement level for a sink drain and I was able to see the inside of the wall and the pieces of brick that came out. That the front wall is not the original is also confirmed by internal beams supporting the joists, see photo no. **Façade 3**, and by attention to the sash windows which have 'horns', see photo no. **Façade 4** showing the newer windows and photo no. **Back view 1** showing original windows. (Sash horns were introduced to strengthen sash joints when larger panes made glazing bars unnecessary). I make particular reference to the front wall because it demonstrates that initial impressions of age may be modified by close attention to details, also because a similar modern fletton was found directly underneath the

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lifted floorboard in the back room which had not been taken up previously, see photo nos. **Fletton 1 and 2**. As a guide to dating this fletton I attach a London Brick Company (LBC) brochure page showing a brick with the same identifying information on the frog, see image **Fletton 4**. This brochure page bears the inscription 'By appointment brickmakers to the late king George VI'. George VI died in 1952. Forterra, who took over the London Brick Company, tell me that manufacture of this particular brick, a Bedfordshire fletton, ceased in 1983. They were unfortunately unable to tell me the earliest date the brick might have been made, however it is clearly modern.

- 4.8. The iron fence and stairs in the forecourt are of modern design, see photo no. **Façade 2**. Styling of the fence suggests construction in the 1930's.
- 4.9. Photo no. **Inspection pit 1** shows an inspection pit at the back of the house. This inspection pit has a cast iron cover supplied by Snewin Bros. of Upper Clapton, see photo Inspection pit 3. I have not been able to date this cover and the best guidance that I can offer in this respect is a Snewin sale catalogue dated 1933, see photo no. **Inspection pit 4**. The inspection pit contains connections for the toilet, the run-off from the roof and the reduced level concreted area beside the back wall, to the drain that runs underneath the back and front basement rooms to connect with the sewer in Downshire Hill, see Image no. **Inspection pit 5** for routing of the drain.
- 4.10. Demolition of the old pub would have yielded bricks and slates (for supporting the replacement floor), doors (for the two alcove cupboards), wood panelling (for the corridor partition and toilet conversion). A particular merit of this supposition is that it goes some way to answering the puzzling question as to why the owner chose to install a timber floor in the back basement room rather than reinstate the solid floor after trenching the room to a depth of some 700 mm to lay the drain. The new floor would have met the building regulations and much of the material for the work, like the salvaged panelling, was going begging. Alternatively the work may have been done after the war. This would be another time that salvaged materials would have been readily available.

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- 4.11. The pub's business is selling beer, not management of rented property. When work needed to be done on 31 Downshire Hill, Bass Charrington would have been incentivised to get it done in one go. Furthermore, replacement of the front wall would have necessitated that the house be unoccupied. Other works, in particular the front forecourt, the drain under the house, replacement of the back room floor and the sand/cement rendering of internal walls would have been much easier to undertake in an unoccupied property.
5. Putting aside the chimney breast, the only fabric which this proposal requires to be removed or reassigned is material which has been clearly salvaged from elsewhere and, whereas I have not been able to establish definitively a date for installation of these materials, the evidence points to the 1930's or the 1950's. In my extensive investigations I have not found one scrap of evidence that these might have been installed prior to the 1930's.
6. A previous tenant, who grew up in the property, advised me that when she was young three families lived in the house. This multiple occupation explains the necessity of a downstairs toilet and the partition to separate the toilet from the back basement room. This lady, as a thank you, sent me the postcard showing the Freemasons Arms in 1905 which is included as photo no. **Façade 5**. Now that the house is back in single family occupation the basement toilet is not required and there is no good reason why the pantry should not be restored to properly reflect its original form.