

Design Statement

**1 Chamberlain Street
London
NW1 8XB**

Proposed Development-

Air conditioning unit

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Location Plan



Existing Property

The property at 1 Chamberlain Street is a Grade II, single family, townhouse. It sits at the end of a row of terrace houses on the south side of the street within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The house has five storeys with the lower ground floor being below pavement and rear garden level. There is a light well to the front and rear of the property. There are steps up to the front door and down to the front light well. There is a single storey closet wing to the rear and a rear garden.

An extensive report relating to the heritage asset was prepared by Turley Heritage and submitted with the previous application: 2016/2785/P and 2016/3086/L which has been subsequently withdrawn. The following paragraphs relating to the heritage asset refer to the report by Turley Heritage.

The property is listed for group value as part of a group of mid-19th century terraced properties at Nos.1-8 Chamberlain Street. Nos.1-8 were included as a group on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade II on 11th January 1999. The list entry is as follows:

“Symmetrical terrace of 8 houses. Mid C19. Yellow stock brick with blue brick bands and stucco dressings. Slated roofs with overhanging bracketed eaves. Nos 1 & 11 have pediments and slightly project. 3 storeys and basements. 2 windows each. Prostyle porticos; panelled doors with overlights. Ground floor tripartite sashes have channeled stucco voussoirs, keystones and triglyph with guttae drops; cast-iron window guards to bracketed cornice sills. Architraved 1st floor sashes with bracketed cornices and pediments, cast-iron window guards and continuous sill band. 2nd floor sashes have bracketed sills, continuous sill band and are flanked at the top by the large enriched eaves brackets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast iron railings with spearhead finials to areas. The houses in Chamberlain Street form a very complete group.”

The listed building is of architectural interest as an example of a high-status, end of terrace townhouse dating from the mid-19th century, which overall retains its original character and appearance and some internal elements of historic fabric. As a whole, the house is a typical example of the 19th century Classically-influenced style applied to domestic architecture, which is expressed in its elevational proportions and design, remaining elements of its plan form and interior features. The property has, however, undergone a number of phases of alteration which have compromised its architectural interest. The listed building has group value as part of the listed terrace to the south side of Chamberlain Street, and as part of the wider terraced group to both sides of the street, which together form a harmonious street frontage.

The principal elevation of the mid-19th century property at No.1 Chamberlain Street (Figure 3.3) overall retains its Classical appearance. There are a number of elements to this elevation which are typical of the buildings architectural style and period, including the fenestration pattern, with the windows decreasing in size as the building rises, reflecting the difference in status between the floor levels.

The property comprises four storeys with basement and is constructed of yellow stock

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brick with blue brick bands and stucco dressings. It is two windows wide and has continuous sill bands below the first and second floor windows, and a slated roof with overhanging bracketed eaves. The ground floor tripartite sash windows and the architraved first floor sash windows display cast-iron window guards, and to the second floor the sash windows have bracketed sills. The main entrance to the building is situated within the left hand bay at ground floor level and is accessed via stone steps from the street. It has a prostyle portico and a panelled door with overlight. The attached cast-iron railings with spearhead finials demarcate the front area or lightwell, with steps leading down from street level to the basement. These steps are a later replacement and therefore do not contribute to the architectural interest of this principal façade.

The wider terraced group at Nos. 1-8 Chamberlain Street comprises a symmetrical terrace, with Nos. 1 and 11 slightly projecting and with pediments. The houses display uniform Georgian facades, which provides an overall cohesiveness to the street frontage. As noted within the list entry, the houses on Chamberlain Street form a very complete group and as such, the street frontage of the listed building forms the principal element of its architectural interest.

Historically, the overall appearance of the rear elevations of properties of this date were much simpler in terms of their design, architectural detailing and materials, in comparison to the principal street frontage, reflecting the difference in status between the public and private elevations. The rear elevations were also more liable to be subject to change and alteration over time. The rear elevation of the listed building at No.1 Chamberlain Street (Figure 3.4) consists of three storeys and basement, with the basement visible from the rear lightwell. The rear elevation is of plain yellow stock brick with sash windows, and with a rear projecting closet wing on the buildings east side, as shown on the 1871 Ordnance Survey map

The rear elevation of No.1 Chamberlain Street is an element of the building that has experienced alteration over time. This includes the raising of the roof and the addition of a balcony at third floor level, which was undertaken as part of the conversion to maisonettes in 1971. This alteration is an incongruous element, which does not contribute to the significance of the listed building.

Through comparison with other buildings in the terrace, it can be observed that the ground floor rear window has been shortened as part of proposals to introduce a kitchen within the rear room. Overall, however, the original composition and traditional character of the rear elevation remains legible, through the subsidiary scale of the later alterations and additions. The general elements of this building typology, such as the closet wings, also remain legible, although there is a history of upward extension and alteration of the closet wings within the wider terraced group (Figure 3.5). This history of adaptation has resulted in a more varied and informal character, in contrast to the more elaborate and unified principal street frontages, indicating the significantly lesser contribution of the rear elevations to the character of the wider townscape and the group value of the listed buildings.

The rear elevation of the lower ground floor level is visible from the rectangular open lightwell. As found today, this level features a double door opening providing direct access to the light well. This is a modern opening, which appears to have been introduced after 2004 (figure 3.8, page 13), replacing a window opening in the same location. As such, the opening, as well as the modern timber double doors make a considerably lesser contribution to the character of the rear elevation.

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Internally, the building comprises the entrance corridor along its east side, with the staircase sited to the rear of the house, and corresponding landing/corridor spaces to the other floors. Historically, the ground and first floors would have been the principal and high status levels within the house, where the key functions of business and family life would have taken place. The lower status levels at the upper / attic floors and lower ground floor would have been ancillary to these principal levels, being used for bedrooms, servant accommodation and a kitchen (lower ground floor). This hierarchy of spaces would have been expressed internally through the change in ceiling heights, the size of the rooms and the extent and quality of the decorative schemes. This hierarchy has, however, been somewhat eroded through the heightening of the former attic storey at the rear. The historic plan form and interior scheme have also been adapted through later successive schemes of alteration and conversion, however, the original cellular layout remains broadly legible at certain levels.

The lower ground floor level of No.1 Chamberlain Street is illustrated in a drainage plan for the property dating from 1899, held by Camden Archives. This plan broadly shows the footprint of the building and the rear closet wing, as well as the front and rear lightwells and the vaults; however, the drawing has little detail and therefore is of limited use in understanding the historic development of the property. A much later drainage plan for the building, dating from 1960, shows the rear closet wing at lower ground level, however is again of limited use in understanding the building's evolution.

The floorplan at this level would have historically consisted of two rooms, one to the front and one to the rear of the property, to the west side of the staircase, and the vaults to the front of the building, below the pavement. In 1971, permission was granted for the conversion of Nos.1 and 2 Chamberlain Street into one flat and four maisonettes, with No.1 divided into two maisonettes; one occupying ground and lower ground floors, and the other occupying first, second and third floors. In 2004, this conversion was reversed and the building was reinstated as a single family dwelling. The drawings associated with the planning application submitted in 2004 illustrate the layout of the lower ground floor level as it existed prior to conversion back to a single family dwelling house. This shows that changes to the historic plan form at this level predominantly consisted of the creation of an opening between the two rooms. The supporting information included with the application also outlines that the period fireplaces within the lower maisonette were probably removed during the 1970s conversion.

Other changes at this level include the replacement of the door from the present bathroom leading to the rear lightwell has been replaced with a window. As previously stated, the stairs to the front lightwell have also been altered to curve around the west end of the lightwell, rather than being a straight flight. Overall, the historic plan form at this floor level remains broadly legible. There are some historic shutters that survive to the front room at this level, however, the majority of the historic fabric and features, such as the fireplaces, have been lost and the decorative scheme at this level is modern.

At ground floor level, the conversion to maisonettes in the 1970s resulted in a reconfiguration of the rear room and insertion of partition walls in order to provide separate access to the two dwellings, as shown in the existing floorplan included with the 2004 planning application. The floorplan shows that an opening was created within the principal dividing wall between the front and rear rooms, as well as within the east wall of the rear room to create a new diagonal access. A partition wall was also added alongside the staircase.

The layout of the ground floor as found today is consistent with the proposed plan submitted in

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2004. The modern partition walls and associated doorways from the entrance hall were removed, and a floorplan more closely mirroring the original was reinstated. A double doorway was added within the wall between the hallway and the new dining room and an opening was created between the dining room and kitchen.

In 2004 a new kitchen was installed to the rear room at this level. It is believed that at this time the rear window was truncated in order to accommodate the level of the new kitchen units. This is further evidenced by the ground floor rear window within the property situated opposite to No.1 at No.14, which is much deeper in comparison. As such, this has interrupted the legibility and balance of the fenestration pattern to the rear elevation.

The supporting information that accompanies the 2004 planning application also outlines that the banisters and rail were reinstated to the stairs at ground floor level. The fireplace to the front room appears to be of a design in keeping with the property. The shutters to both the front and rear rooms appear to be the only surviving original internal features.

In general, the upper floors of the listed building have undergone a lesser degree of alteration through conversion to maisonettes in comparison to the lower floors, although more recent changes have occurred at second floor level. In 2004, the kitchen was removed following the conversion of the building back to a single dwelling. Visual inspection would indicate that the rear window at this level was also shortened at the time that the kitchen was installed in the 1970s.

The front room at first floor level remains largely unaltered in terms of layout and retains decorative cornicing. The room also retains its historic proportions and outlook to the north, which provides an appreciation of the historic use of the listed building. A rather awkwardly sized opening has been created within the main dividing wall which appears to some extent rather squat, however, the legibility of the historic plan form remains.

There were no changes proposed to the second floor level as a result of the reinstatement of the house as a single family dwelling in 2004. The proposed floorplan shows this floor level as it was in the 1970s, with the front and rear rooms and a small rectangular bathroom and toilet within the volume of the front room at its north east corner. However, as found today, the bathroom and the toilet have been altered to incorporate curved walls which are at odds with the cellular layout of this level. This has compromised the understanding and appreciation of the historic proportions of the front room. The decorative scheme at this level is also modern; no original features appear to survive.

At third floor level, the property would have formerly had a small attic room. In the 1970s, this room was enlarged through the alteration of the rear pitch of the roof, and a narrow balcony was added with access provided through glazed timber doors. This floor level has not been altered since the 1970s and has a modern decorative scheme. As found today, this level does not contribute to the special interest of the listed building, forming a later, more substantial level which would have resulted in the alteration of a large extent of the original roof structure.

Overall, the historic plan form remains legible throughout the listed building and therefore allows an understanding of the historic room proportions. Some historic features survive, particularly to the ground and first floors, however, as a result of the conversion to maisonettes, a degree of historic fabric has been lost and overall the building has a largely modern decorative scheme.

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The special interest of the listed building as a mid-19th century end of terrace townhouse is principally manifested in the high quality architectural character of its main elevation and the contribution it makes to the unified composition of the terraced group within Chamberlain Street. The rear elevation has experienced alteration over time, particularly during the 20th century and is notably plainer in appearance and character, reflecting its lower status. Within the wider terraced group, there is a history of upward extension of the single bay closet wings, particularly at first floor level and individual windows have been subject to change, diluting the historic unified character of the group.

Existing Site Photos



Front light well- existing stair and vault door, prior to removal of the stair



1 Chamberlain Street- front elevation



1 Chamberlain Street- rear elevation

Proposed Development

Air conditioning unit-

To counteract the heat gain and heat loss experienced in the third and second floor bedrooms, it is proposed that air conditioning is introduced to make these spaces more habitable. The air conditioning will allow cooling in the summer and heat input in the winter.

A previous application for approval of air conditioning (2017/0036/P and 2017/0254/L) was withdrawn after communication with the case officer Matthias Gentet regarding the location of the external plant (condenser unit). The unit was located at roof level in these applications but was deemed to have a negative impact on the building. Matthias Gentet in consultation with Rachael Parry suggested that the condenser unit would be better located to one of the front vaults with a louvred door providing ventilation. This location however would take up the entirety of the front vault which the Client wants to retain for storage. It is therefore proposed that the unit would be better located in the front light well below the stairs behind an acoustic louvred enclosure. This location will satisfy the technical requirements for the unit whilst be visually unobtrusive, not affecting the fabric of the building and complying with Camden's noise requirements for mechanical services equipment with the unit inaudible above background street noise.

The existing open tread stairs to the front light well have been removed and are to be replaced with solid closed tread stairs as the approved applications 2017/4723/L and 2017/3820/P. The enclosed stairs with the louvred enclosure to the front of the condenser unit will reduce the sound output from the unit as detailed in the accompanying acoustic report.

The acoustic survey and report compiled by Philip Acoustics summarises that the air conditioning unit will comply with London Borough of Camden's planning consent noise requirements for mechanical services equipment. Vibration has also been addressed in the report.

The report states:

“Based on results of the background noise survey and noise model calculations using equipment manufacturer's noise data, the overall noise level due to the proposed new air conditioning unit (with noise reduction treatment fitted) is calculated to comply with London Borough of Camden's planning consent noise requirements for mechanical services equipment.”

The application is also accompanied by a letter in support from the next door neighbour at 2 Chamberlain Street.

Access for All

The proposal is the refurbishment and extension of the existing house.

Within the constraints of an existing building the works to the house have been designed to allow ease of accessibility and use. The design complies as follows with the 16 Lifetime Homes Standards:

01 Car Parking

Cars will be able to stop outside the property in an on street parking bay.

02 Access from car parking

Access from the car to the front door is direct although there is an existing kerb to the pavement.

03 Approach

Access from the car to the front door is direct although there is an existing kerb to the pavement.

04 External Entrances

The entrance is illuminated by overhead lights as existing.

05 Communal Stairs

There is no communal stair within the building.

06 Doorways and Hallways

Any new internal doors will have a minimum 700mm clear opening width.

07 Wheelchair accessibility

Access to the house is stepped without the inclusion of a lift therefore due to the nature of the existing building wheel chair access is difficult.

08 Living Room

A dining room and kitchen features on the entrance level of the house. The dining room could be adapted to living space in the future if required.

09 Bed space at ground floor

All bedrooms are located on the upper floors.

10 WC at ground floor

There is a WC on the entrance level.

11 Bathroom walls

New walls in the bathrooms will be constructed with timber stud plywood and plasterboard finish that would be capable of supporting adaptations such as handrails.

12 Lift

The inclusion of a future lift within the building is not possible. A stair lift could however be fitted in the future if required.

13 Main Bedroom

Bedrooms and bathrooms are located on the second floor and third floors.

14 Bathroom Layout

The bathroom is reasonable in size and could be adapted in the future for access requirements.

15 Window Specification

Sliding sash windows will match the original windows as located in a conservation area.

16 Fixtures and Fittings

New switches, sockets, ventilation and service controls will be located at a height that is between 450mm and 1200mm from the floor.