

HERITAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

THE WORRELL HOUSE, 36 STEELE'S ROAD, LONDON NW3 4RG

HISTORY

Until the 19th Century, the only building on the Hampstead portion of the Chalcots estate, apart from the two farmhouses in England's Lane, was Steele's Cottage, where Sir Richard Steele the essayist stayed in 1712 to evade his creditors. On the direction of George Pownall, Steele's Cottage was demolished in 1867 and replaced by 1870 with a 'very respectable row of shops' in Haverstock Hill and by the new Steele's Road, in which 22 houses, 9 studios, and 7 stables were built between 1871 and 1879. At the east end were the mews and beyond them were stock-brick terraces. Among detached houses opposite on the north side were five (nos. 35-9) built by Thomas Batterbury & W. F. Huxley for individual artists, including no. 37 for Frederick Barnard, a Punch illustrator, no. 38 for Edwin Hayes who was a marine painter and no. 35 for J. D. (later Sir James) Linton, a landscape painter. Dating from between 1872 and 1875 and in styles proceeding from Gothic to 'Queen Anne', these houses illustrated a significant moment of change in English taste.

In spite of early efforts to exclude mews, by the end of the 1880s there were several in the area which were classified as 'fairly comfortable' and Steele's Mews housed, besides the coachmen, tradespeople serving a community which was classified as middle class.

The social changes associated with the First World War reinforced a tendency to convert large houses to flats or for institutions. In 1930 the whole area was still classified as middle class and wealthy. Many writers, musicians, painters, ceramists, other artists and academics occupied neighbouring properties, contributing to the artistic developments of the 1930's.

THE PROPOSAL

In line with the area's academic, historic and artistic associations Wake Forest University acquired Worrell House in 1977. The property is used for student courses and student accommodation.

It is proposed to upgrade the means of escape at the rear of the property with the introduction of a new set of period style spiral stairs between the Upper Ground Floor and First Floor linked to the existing set between the Lower Ground to Upper Ground levels.

This will meet current Building Regulations and Health and Safety requirements while at the same time will not impact on the amenity or residential character of the property.

The proposal also includes improvements to the front of the property with better lighting and the re-laying of tiles to match existing to the front path, steps and landing area to the main entrance at Upper Ground Floor level.

Please see attached photos showing the locations of the proposed works.

AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

There will be no substantive external impact as the proposal to the front of the property is like for like, while the new spiral stairs at the rear will link with the existing spiral stairs between Lower Ground and Upper Ground Floor.

CONCLUSION

The works are essentially an upgrade of the 1970s facilities which have become worn and need refurbishment. The surface of the tiles to the path and steps at the front of the property are uneven and some of the risers are coming away so there are safety concerns and it has an undesirable appearance.

The means of escape at the rear of the property no longer meets Building Regulations and Health and Safety requirements and the proposed new spiral stairs will rectify this concern.

We wish to recommend these proposals as we consider they will be beneficial to the property as a whole and in order to meet current regulations.



Entrance to property
showing area of pathway, entrance steps and
Upper Ground Floor landing level to be re-tiled



Existing rear view of property showing spiral stairs
between Ground Floor and First Floor Balcony.