

ASSESSMENT OF CONDITION

**Front Garden Walls
at
48 Downshire Hill,
London.
NW3 1NX**



14, Cornard Road
Sudbury
Suffolk CO10 2XA

1.0 Location and General Description

- 1.1 The property is one of a pair of Listed Buildings on Downshire Hill close to the junction with Keats Grove.
- 1.2 The property is a C19 semidetached property, four storeys including basement. There are masonry garden walls to the frontage with cast iron railings. The main house and garden walls are rendered to the highway face.
- 1.3 This assessment is limited to the frontage garden walls only.

2.0 Garden Walls

- 2.1 The main road frontage walls are solid masonry with low plinth wall, approx. 1.2m high with stone copings and cast-iron railings, with piers, approx. 2m high, all with stone copings.
- 2.2 The highway facing elevations are rendered which is painted. The rear, garden face of the plinth wall is face brickwork.
- 2.3 Separating the front garden areas of Nos 47 & 48 is a solid brick wall, approx. 1.3m high above garden level. There is a lower ground floor level where this wall extends to be 4.1m high.
- 2.4 A vaulted storage area extends under the front garden, accessed from the lower ground floor level. Typical of early C19 townhouse construction.

3.0 Damage

- 3.1 The main frontage wall has a number of vertical cracks to the renderwork face. These are a mix of category 1 and 2, mostly small minor cracks. Generally these can be filled and made good and monitored for reoccurrence.





- 3.2 At the junction of the boundary pier and plinth wall to No 47, there is a wider vertical crack, Category 3, medium, which does require repair.



- 3.3 Coincident with a vertical crack to the front plinth wall, lefthand side of the pedestrian gate, is a crack in the coping. There is a small cherry tree to the front garden, close to the wall. Given the crack pattern present and undulating ground paving this is likely to be the result of tree root damage. However the cracks currently are minor although the wall is neither plumb or level.

- 3.4 To the boundary pier in the frontage wall, a large patch of render to the north east face, approximately 1.5m above ground is missing and surrounding render 'hollow' and loose. Water can penetrate behind the render causing further deterioration. This requires repair.



- 3.5 The frontage plinth all has face brickwork to the rear, garden, face. The pointing is in very poor condition, eroded, loose and missing and requires repointing to the entire length.



- 3.6 The most significant damage is to the front garden separating wall. A prior existing holly tree has been removed although part of the trunk remains.



This clearly grew against the wall 'pushing' it over as it grew. A 2m length of the wall now has a significant bulge and is leaning approximately 100m from the vertical.

This puts it outside the middle third and is therefore unstable.



The mortar pointing to this wall is also in very poor condition, eroded and missing, adding to the instability.

It is likely on the creeping vegetation, which covers the wall on No 47's side, is preventing its collapse.

The wall needs to be rebuilt above higher ground level.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The following works are required:-

- Fill and make good hairline cracks
- Cut out, fill and/or restitch brickwork to the boundary pier medium crack, repair render to match and make good.
- Remove loose render to the boundary pier, and patch repair to match existing render to make good. Approx area 0.3m² to the north east side face between railings and coping.
- Rake out loose and eroded pointing to the rear, garden, face of the frontage plinth wall and repoint with matching mortar and joint finish.
- Remove vegetation from the garden separating wall and carefully take down full length to higher ground level. Clean and set aside bricks for re-use.
- Rebuilt in matching 225mm thick brickwork, Flemish bond with matching mortar and joint. Supplement with good quality matching secondhand bricks to make up any deficiency.
- Reuse, and rebed existing copings.

4.2 The front highway wall and piers should be monitored for reoccurrence of the repaired cracks or further movement.