



Frog Capital Mews Entrance - Design and Access Statement

1A Birkenhead Street, London, WC1H8BA

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FLETCHER CRANE
ARCHITECTS

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Introduction

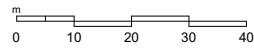
Nos.1-7 Birkenhead Street is a Grade II listed Terrace of 7 houses. c1827-32.

The gated entrance to number 1 Birkenhead Street provides access to the mews which has been subjected to extensive re modelling works in the late 20th century whilst the gates, stucco surround, wrought-iron sign brackets and attached cast-iron railings remain intact. The cobblestone carriageway to the mews entrance forms part of the curtilage.

Description of the Proposals and their Impact on the Heritage Assets:

The proposals involve the repair redecoration of the timber gates and enlargement of the pass door opening to improve ambulant disabled access. It is also proposed to repair and re level the carriageway to improve both Wheelchair and ambulant access both into the mews and between the public footpath either side of the carriageway.

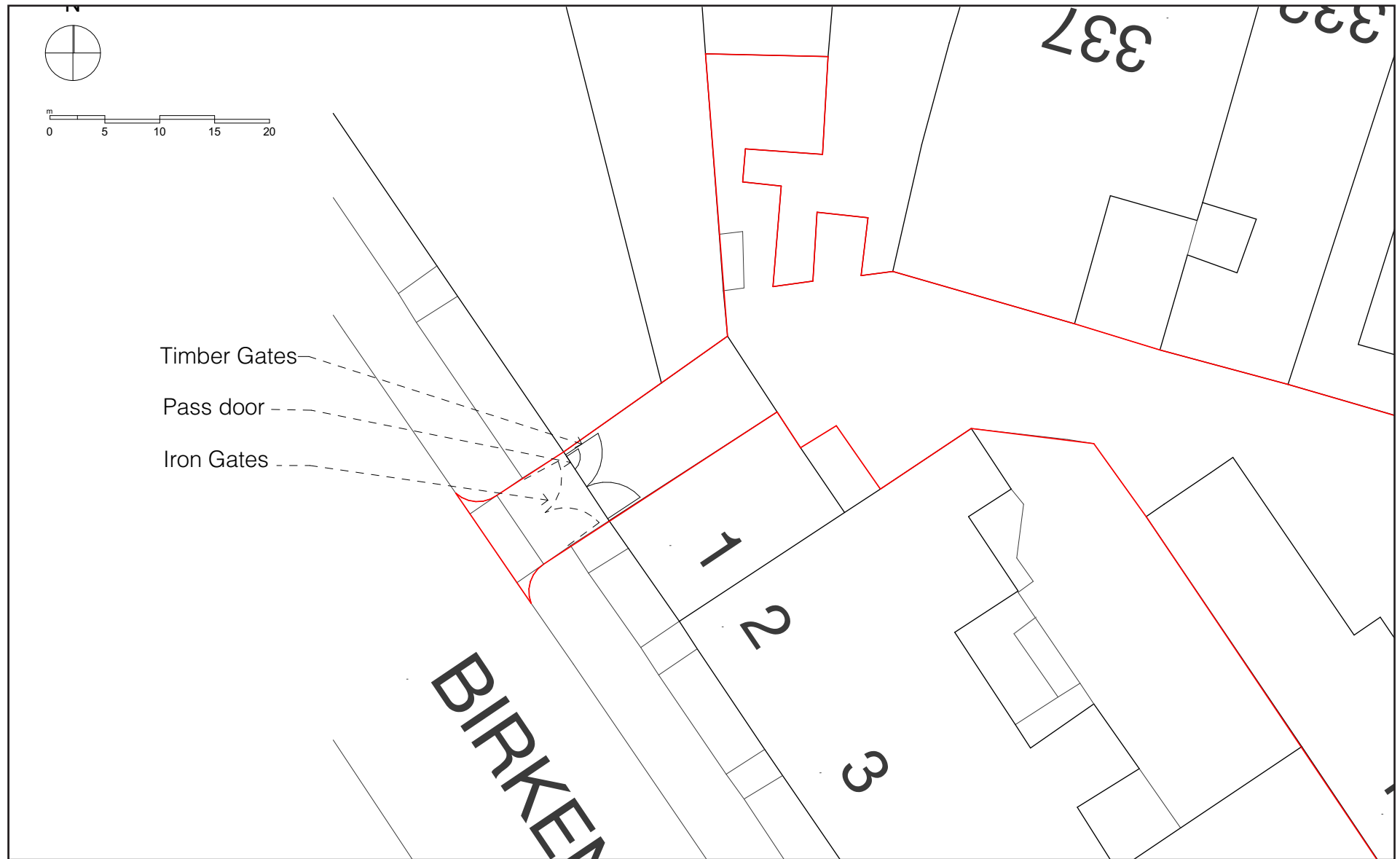
Due to the gate construction It is considered impractical to increase the width however it is proposed to increase the height of the opening as this would make it easier for an ambulant disabled person to negotiate the entrance. It is not possible or desirable to remove the step over cill (fig 1) as it is part of the gate frame structure so wheelchair access to the mews will remain as presently achieved by opening the gate completely.



Key:

Site Boundary

Site Area = 634m²



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Description of the Proposals and their Impact on the Heritage Assets:



Mews Entrance

The entrance consists of low level iron gates to the back of pavement which are functional but remain open in general use. The storey height timber gates capped with iron railings form the secure entrance to the mews. The gates are opened occasionally, usually on a daily basis for vehicular deliveries. They are currently functional but in need of consolidation repair and redecoration. The gates have been repaired previously in an ad hoc manner with an aluminium plate added to cover timber decay and damage to the ends of the timber panels.



Entrance Gates - View from street

Pedestrian access is provided through the gates via a pass door which is openable from the inside and also controlled via an audio linked electronic access control system. The gates are heavy and difficult to open on a repetitive basis.



Entrance Gates - View from within mews

The current door with does not meet the criteria for width and height as set out in Part M of the Building Regulation's being approximately 600mm wide and 1270mm high.

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Description of the Proposals and their Impact on the Heritage Assets:



Current Pass door

Door control to main gates and pass door.



Current Pass door

Access control to the 3 units via intecom. To be retained and assistance to be offered to visitors who are unable to negotiate the pass door. As the reception is remote from the gates it is desirable for as many visitors as possible to be able to use the pass door thus avoiding the need to open the main gates.



Pass door step over threshold

The currnet step over is to be retained. It is acknowledged that this will limit the possibility of access to some ambulant disabled users and wheelchair users how ever it is integral to the structure of th frame. The possibility of providing a removable ramp to be considered to further increase usage of the pass door without having to open the whole gate.



Proposed Adjustments View from outside mews

- 1 - Consolidation/repair and redecoration
- 2 - Increasing Pass door height. with matching reclaimed timber as necessary
- 3 - Removal aluminium cover plate splice repair timber boards behind
- 4 - Strengthen and add additional steel plates as necessary

Current appearance maintained and heritage feature retained and consolidated.



Proposed Adjustments View from inside mews

- 1 - Increase Pass door height up to next rail height
- 2 - Reinforce increased height opening as necessary
- 3 - Repair and redecorate doors generally.
- 4 - overhaul existing hinges

Minimal impact to current appearance Historic access method retained.



Carriageway View from outside the mews

The cobblestones between the gate and the road are in a poor state of repair, with areas that of uneven surface and areas covered with weeds and macadam. The granite kerbs are not level and concrete haunching has been added at the base of the cast iron railings.



Carriageway View from inside the mews passage

The cobblestone carriageway within the mews is fairly level and in a reasonable condition, therefore No upgrade works proposed



Proposed carriageway / Pavement works

- 1 - Lift clean, re-lay and level existing cobblestones
- 2 - Removal of organic matter and weeds
- 3 - Removal of surplus macadam patching
- 4 - Cutting back Macadam to align with full course of cobblestones
- 5 - Adjust kerb levels and remove surplus concrete flaunching

Justification of the Proposals

Historic England guidance on access to historic buildings (section 1.2) recognises that the Equity Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality and opportunity for all. It also imposes a duty on owners to make reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantage to disabled employees and as part of general access improvement works implement improvements which will allow disabled people to be employed in future without the need for future alterations.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 66 and 72 of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings, their setting and conservation areas.

As can be seen from the description of works above the proposed alterations would preserve both the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area and, as such, the presumption against the grant of listed building consent outlined within the Act is not engaged.

Furthermore, in line with and the concept of sustainable development outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework, the heritage assets would be very much conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. It is the conclusion of this statement that no harm would be caused by the proposals and rather they would preserve the listed building's significance and, consequently, the proposals should be consented.



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