

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT  
& HERITAGE STATEMENT**

In respect of

**Renewal of Two Staircases  
and the  
Provision of Two Lead Overflow Pipes to the Front Parapet Gutters**

at

**48 & 49 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX**

Prepared on behalf of

**The Charles Dickens Museum  
48/49 Doughty Street  
London WC1N 2LX**

Ref: PW/84.09  
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## **1.00 ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE**

### **1.01 Introduction**

The Charles Dickens Museum occupies 48 & 49 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX with 48 Doughty Street being used mainly as the Museum and 49 Doughty Street currently used as office and storage space.

48 Doughty Street is Grade I Listed and 49 Doughty Street is Grade II Listed.

Both buildings form part of a Georgian terrace and were constructed from 1807 as homes for the middle classes and generally their fabric has remained relatively unchanged since their construction.

Charles Dickens lived at 48 Doughty Street from 1837 to 1839 and it has been opened as a Museum since 1925 when the Dicken's Fellowship purchased both buildings.

This Statement forms part of a Listed Building Consent Application submitted to the London Borough of Camden and there are photographs appended to this Statement and separate drawings also submitted as part of the Application.

The Listed Building Consent Application has been prepared by Peter Wade FRICS who is a Certified Historic Building Professional under the RICS Conservation Accreditation Scheme. Peter Wade FRICS is employed by Murray Birrell who are Chartered Surveyors and who have been employed by the Charles Dickens Museum to prepare a specification of external repairs and decorations to the front elevations with the works due to commence shortly.

It has been confirmed by the London Borough of Camden that as the external repairs are generally on a like for like basis they do not require the benefit of Listed Building Consent.

However the Charles Dickens Museum is also keen to replace the rotted modern timber staircase at 48 Doughty Street and the inappropriate older brick and concrete staircase to 49 Doughty Street which provide access to the lower ground floor pavement vault areas.

In discussions with the Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Camden, it has been agreed that the renewal of these two staircases with more appropriate and sympathetic cast iron and steel staircases require the benefit of Listed Building Consent.

In addition, following some blockages and damage to the fabric last year at 48 Doughty Street, Peter Wade FRICS has recommended that two new 50mm diameter lead overflow pipes are inserted in to the mansard lead parapet gutters to both properties. In the event of the downpipe serving both properties becoming blocked again, early warning would be provided by the overflows for the Maintenance Staff to take the required action. Again Murray Birrell have been informed by the London Borough of Camden that these two new overflow pipes will require the benefit of Listed Building Consent.

### **1.02 Setting**

48 & 49 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX are situated approximately mid-terrace on the east side of Doughty Street and are located in the terrace numbered 39-63 Doughty Street.

Generally the properties are all of a similar style and appearance constructed from London stock brickwork with timber double hung sash windows, balconettes and cast iron rainwater goods. Most of the properties also retain their original panelled and fielded entrance doors and there are mansard roofs covered either in slates or clay tiles to most of the properties.

The properties on the opposite side of Doughty Street are also of a similar age and style and Doughty Street runs between Guilford Street and Theobald's Road.

48 Doughty Street is Grade I Listed and is the former home of the eminent Victorian author, Charles Dickens and this property is currently used as a Museum celebrating his life and works. Immediately adjacent and to the south side of 48 Doughty Street is 49 Doughty Street and this is currently used as offices and storage space by the Museum.

Most of the properties in this Georgian terrace have a basement level with three main storeys above and then a mansard roof. The properties are generally three bays wide incorporating large double hung sash windows with rendered painted reveals. There are steps up to the main entrance doors to most of the properties on this side of Doughty Street. Most of the properties retain the original painted iron railings set into stone plinths. These railings tend to incorporate an original painted iron gate and in some cases, these gates give access to an original cast iron and steel staircase with open treads giving access to the pavement vault areas. However in some instances, these staircases have been replaced with more modern steel staircases incorporating newel posts and solid treads and landings and in other cases, such as 48 Doughty Street, the original staircase has been replaced with a more modern timber staircase probably installed thirty to forty years ago and which is now showing extensive signs of timber rot and is too dangerous for the Museum to use.

The original staircase to 49 Doughty Street has long since been removed and replaced with a part brick and part concrete staircase. Brickwork has been used to form the strings and then in-situ concrete treads laid.

Reference should be made to the appended photographs showing the existing staircases.

From Murray Birrell's research and from discussions with the Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Camden, it was agreed that the property that is likely to still retain an original staircase is the one at 47 Doughty Street which is the adjoining property. This staircase incorporates a black painted steel string with 20mm diameter black painted balusters and handrail together with checker-plate cast iron treads and half landings. Reference should be made to the appended photograph showing the staircase at 47 Doughty Street and it is intended that we match this staircase for 48 & 49 Doughty Street.

We have included both Existing and Proposed Plans and Sections as part of this Listed Building Consent Application and reference should therefore be made to these drawings.

Both properties underwent a major refurbishment following an HLF Grant in 2012 and this work included both internal and external repairs.

## **2.00 DESIGN & APPEARANCE**

### **2.01 Staircases**

The first purpose of these proposals is to replace the inappropriate timber staircase to 48 Doughty Street and brick and concrete staircase to 49 Doughty Street with new cast iron and steel staircases providing safe access to the pavement vault areas and both of these staircases will be of a design to match the one at 47 Doughty Street which we believe may be an original staircase.

The design has been discussed with the Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Camden and general agreement has been reached that this would be the correct approach and we have therefore designed the staircases and provided details within our Application.

The removal of both staircases should not cause any damage to the fabric of either

building and if any limited damaged is caused, for example, by the removal of one of the concrete treads which currently sits on a stone window cill, this will be carefully repaired using stone mortar and other similar conservation repairs if necessary.

The existing steel gates at pavement level will be retained and repaired by a Specialist and then the new staircases will be fixed to the pavement plinths at high level and will turn through 90° approximately at their half heights before being supported on the existing York Stone slabs. There will be no newel post incorporated but there will be 20mm diameter round painted steel balusters which will also have a slightly rounded painted steel handrail to match the one at 47 Doughty Street.

Upon completion of the installation of both staircases, they will be decorated using a good quality black gloss paint which will be applied by hand brush. At the same time, the pavement railings and gates will also be redecorated in black gloss and repairs carried out to the stone plinths where necessary using conservation techniques.

### **Overflows**

With regard to the proposed lead overflow pipes, the intention is to site these approximately 600mm away from the two lead rainwater outlets which are set into the ends of the lead parapet gutters to both 48 & 49 Doughty Street. The 50mm diameter lead overflow pipes will be core-drilled through the existing splayed timber upstand to the parapet wall at a height of approximately 60mm above the bottom of the parapet gutters. Both lead downpipes will be taken through the front face of the painted parapet wall just above the top of the existing projecting cornice and ideally terminated no more than 50mm proud of the front edge of the cornice so that any rainwater can be discharged clear of the cornice allowing Staff to have warning of a blockage.

A blockage occurred to 48 Doughty Street last year caused by leaves and seeds from the nearby London Plane trees and although the parapet gutters are cleared regularly, a partial blockage was noted within the lead downpipe connecting the parapet gutter to the external hopper head. This blockage caused a build-up of rainwater in the parapet gutter to 48 Doughty Street and this then bypassed the lead upstands to the parapet gutter and entered the building.

Fortunately the damage caused was relatively limited to plaster and decorations only but this could have been worse.

To avoid the possibility of this happening again, Murray Birrell have recommended the installation of these two new lead overflows as a precaution.

This is a fairly normal addition to historic buildings where parapet gutters cannot be readily accessed for maintenance purposes.

If there are any concerns about the 50mm projection proud of the projecting cornice, the overflow pipes could be terminated flush with the cornice but this may then allow some rainwater to discharge on top of the cornice which we would prefer to avoid.

It would be possible to paint the new lead overflows in a matching colour to the cornice which will disguise the two overflows fairly well.

We do not believe that the installation of the new staircases or the provision of the new overflows will have any impact on the adjoining neighbours and the provision of the new cast iron and steel staircases will enhance the appearance of both properties.

With regard to the wider impact on the street scene, many of the properties already have some form of cast iron and steel staircases installed and we do not therefore believe that the street scene will be adversely impacted.

### **3.00**      **HERITAGE STATEMENT**

48 & 49 Doughty Street form a terrace of similar Georgian houses constructed around 1807 with both being Listed.

48 Doughty Street is Grade I Listed because of the association with Charles Dickens whereas 49 Doughty Street along with many of the other properties in Doughty Street are Grade II Listed. The properties are also within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

We do not believe the renewal of the two staircases will have any adverse impact on the appearance of either property and in fact will enhance their appearance once the timber and brick and concrete staircases are removed.

Whilst the provision of the two new lead overflows may be visible from pavement level, we feel that these are an essential addition to the properties to avoid future damage occurring to the internal fabric and this is based on a previous incident last year. The presence of the London Plane trees creates significant numbers of leaves and also seeds and access to the parapet gutters is only possible via the use of a harness arrangement which is precarious. Therefore for the Maintenance Staff to have early warning of future blockages to these parapet gutters this will be a great advantage in organizing clearance works.

### **4.00**      **CONCLUSIONS**

We feel that the Charles Dickens Museum has taken a proactive approach to replacing the inappropriate staircases to both properties and are prepared to fund the provision of new cast iron and steel staircases of a matching style to those used at the properties when they were first constructed.

With regard to the provision of the new overflows, we feel this would be a sensible precaution and should help to avoid future damage occurring due to blockages of the parapet gutters.

**Appendix A: Photographs**



Photograph 1: Front elevation of 48 & 49 Doughty Street



Photograph 2: Photograph showing the existing downpipe and hopper to the front elevations of 48 & 49 Doughty Street. The 2no. proposed overflow pipes will be installed above the cornice visible above the hopper.



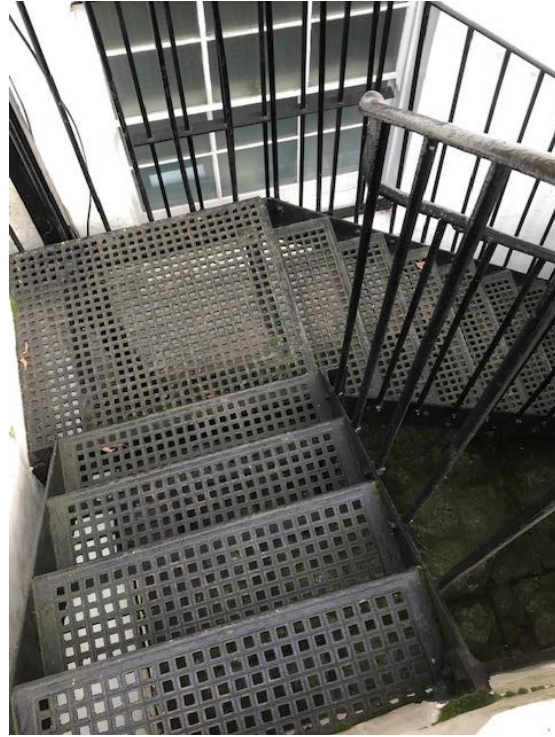


Photograph 3: Existing timber staircase to the front elevation lightwell of 48 Doughty Street. It is proposed to replace this with a new cast iron and mild steel staircase.



Photograph 4: Existing concrete staircase to the front elevation lightwell of 49 Doughty Street. It is proposed to replace this with a new cast iron and mild steel staircase.





Photograph 5: The proposed new staircase will match the existing lightwell staircase at 47 Doughty Street.