

No. 9 Leigh Street WC1H
London Borough of Camden
HERITAGE STATEMENT
Rev A

An Appraisal of the Heritage Asset and the Possible Impact of the Proposals
February 2020



mark fairhurst ARCHITECTS

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1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.01 This report seeks to describe the heritage significance of No. 9 Leigh Street. The proposals will be discussed in the context of both local and national policies and guidance for the management of change in the historic environment.

2 THE SITE & DESIGNATIONS

- 2.01 No.9 Leigh Street is a mid-terrace house in a row of houses on the south side of the street. It is a typical London terrace house of the early 19th century and of many neo-classical houses that make up much of Camden's historic housing. No. 9 is currently licensed for use as HMO accommodation.

- 2.02 The house is four storeys high over a basement and is two windows in width. The front elevation has a stucco-faced ground floor with London stock brick facing to the floors above, rising to a stone coped parapet, behind which is a slated roof storey which has two dormers on the rear slope. The upper half of the front elevation appears to have been refaced, perhaps after wartime bomb damage. The windows are recessed from the front face and all have glazing barred sashes, although not all the joinery is original. The house retains its original robustly detailed front door and there is a cast iron balcony serving the tall first floor windows.

- 2.03 The rear elevation from first floor level upwards is also faced in London stock brick. Below, the ground and basement floors have a two storey rear extension and both the extension and the remaining original rear wall of the house at these levels are stuccoed.

- 2.04 The basement rear extension appears to be of some age, but the existing ground floor is of lighter construction from perhaps during the 20th century.

- 2.05 At the rear of the site is an original servant's annexe. The stuccoed building is single storied with a central front door flanked by two sash windows. The annexe is built against the rear boundary wall and has a tiled mono pitch roof.



Figure 1. Rear Elevation of 9 Leigh

- 2.06 No. 9 forms part of a terrace, Nos. 1-19 (consecutive) which forms the remaining section of the original street development. The terrace is listed Grade II. The listing description reads;



Figure 2. Elevation of Rear Annexe

Nos.1-19 (consec)

1810-13 built by J.Payne. Yellow stock brick with extensive refacing. 4 storeys and cellars.2 windows each. No.5 wooden shop front with pilasters carrying projecting entablature with rounded ends and projecting cornice; altered shop window and doorway with over-light having margin lights and panelled door. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows. Parapet. INTERIORS; not inspected.

- 2.08 Leigh Street is situated within the designated Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3 HISTORY

- 3.01 The Skinners Company is one of the twelve historic Livery Companies of the City of London. It was granted a Royal charter in 1327 and became a rich institution by virtue of its member's wealth, initially obtained from dealing in expensive furs and then later as general merchants.
- 3.02 The Skinners Company have a long history of charitable enterprise. In 1572, Sir Andrew Judd vested the land known as the Sandhills Estate, (subsequently the Skinners Company Estate) for the benefit of Tonbridge School in Kent. The estate was agricultural land situated northwest of the Foundling Hospital.



Figure 3. 9, 10 and 11 Leigh Street, 1952

- 3.03 By the late 18th century the urban expansion of London was casting its shadow over the Skinners Company Estate. In 1809, the Company granted James Payne, builder, of Marchmont Street, sites on the south side of the newly-laid out Leigh Street. Three adjacent plots were granted to James Richard Parry of Everett Street. The street was developed by 1813.
- 3.04 The original occupants of the Leigh Street houses were what were then known as the “middling class” which included doctors, surgeons, lawyers and senior clerks.

4 THE PROPOSALS

- 4.01 No.9 Leigh Street is operated as a licensed HMO premises and requires updating to meet current standards, particularly as regards the communal kitchen and bathroom facilities and repurposing of the first floor rear bedroom which has been declassified for HMO use.



Figure 4. Existing Utility Room and entrance to WC

- 4.02 The current proposals would only affect the ground floor rear room and the basement, ground floor rear closet wing and first floor bedroom accommodation of the original house.
- 4.03 At basement level, it is proposed removed the bathroom and utility room to provide a new kitchen and dining area. The new kitchen requires the basement floor to be lowered to gain head room.
- 4.04 The disused rear annexe building would become a studio unit. Two skylights are proposed for the roof of the rear annexe. It will be reliant on the HMO kitchen facilities to comply with HMO policies.
- 4.05 At ground floor level, the existing kitchen will be removed to provide a new bathroom and utility room.
- 4.06 The existing ensuite bathroom to the front bedroom will be removed and existing skirting and coving restored.



Figure 5. Aerial view of rear annexe

- 4.07 At first floor level, a part of the existing wall between unit between unit 5 and unit 6 is to be removed to create a new opening and combine the units into a single unit. The room will be reconfigured to provide a shower room towards the rear and a small kitchenette and dining and bedroom/living space towards the front.

5 POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.01 The policy guidance from Government is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF). Section 16 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in paragraphs 184 to 202. The NPPF places much emphasis on heritage 'significance', which it defines in Annex 2 as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."

It states in paragraph 185 that local planning authority strategies should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation can bring;*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and*
- *Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of the place.*

- 5.02 In cases where harm may be caused to a heritage asset, paragraph 195 advises that this may be acceptable if it shown that;
'The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'

Under paragraph 196, it states:

'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.'

- 5.03 English Heritage provides design and conservation advice in its publication; 'London Terrace Houses 1660-1860'; On page 12, it states:

“.....The balance between preservation and change may not always be easy to strike. The aim should be to minimise the impact on the building while helping the owner to adapt the property to suit reasonable needs.”

- 5.04 Whilst English Heritage advises that extensions should generally utilise traditional forms and materials;

“However, there may be some occasions where a more modern design approach may be acceptable.”

- 5.05 The London Plan 2016 supports the proper management and recognition of heritage assets in London. In chapter 7, London’s Living Space’s and Places, under Heritage Assets and Archaeology, policy 7.31 and 7.31A, it states:

‘Crucial to the preservation of this character is the careful protection and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and their settings. Heritage assets such as conservation areas make a significant contribution to local character and should be protected from inappropriate development that is not sympathetic in terms of scale, materials, details and form. Development that affects the setting of heritage assets should be of the highest quality of architecture and design, and respond positively to local context and character outlined in the policies above.’

‘Substantial harm to or loss of a designated heritage asset should be exceptional, with substantial harm to or loss of those assets designated of the highest significance being wholly exceptional. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimal viable use. Enabling development that would otherwise not comply with planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset should be assessed to see if the benefits of departing from those policies outweigh the disbenefits’

- 5.06 London Borough of Camden has policies within the Camden Local Plan (2017) that echo central Government’s commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment (DP25). Within section 7 ‘Design and Heritage, under policy D2, Heritage,

‘The Council will require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area.’

- 5.07 Policy UDP NN31;

In pursuing the preservation or enhancement of heritage assets, the council will require applicants to provide sufficient information to properly fully describe the proposal.

- 5.08 The council have produced SPG in the form of “Bloomsbury C.A. Appraisal and Management Strategy”. Leigh Street is briefly described in Sub Area 13 Cartwright Gardens/Argyle Square;

“5.237 The properties on Judd Street and Leigh Street are of 4 storeys and a number have had shop fronts inserted in the 19th century, several of which retain traditional architectural details.”

6 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

- 6.01 The heritage significance of No. 9 Leigh Street resides both in its contribution to the wider historic townscape and in its intrinsic value as an early 19th century neo-classical house.
- 6.02 No. 9 forms part of a terrace of 19 terrace houses that are a significant example of early 19th century townscape. The terrace in turn forms part of the wider grid of streets and terraces that form the particular quality of the Bloomsbury area. This is recognised by the designated Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 6.03 The intrinsic historic interest of No.9 as an example of an early 19th century neo-classical house is recognised by its statutory listing Grade II. The house has a virtually complete ground plan with the original hall, staircase and main rooms intact together with many original internal features. The rear elevation, however, has been altered and there is a later two storey rear extension of limited heritage significance. The single storey rear annex building is of some interest as a curtilage service building.

7 COMMENTARY ON THE PROPOSALS

- 7.01 This house is in use as HMO accommodation and is in need of upgrading to meet current standards. The current proposals seek to address this issue.
- 7.02 The front elevation will not be altered apart from necessary repairs and maintenance. The changes and additions would be limited to the rear extension, the basement and ground floor rear annex and first floor bedroom accommodation.
- 7.03 The proposals in the basement, ground and first floor of the house, the existing extension and annexe do not detrimentally affect any spaces or features of high heritage significance.
- 7.04 A small external terrace area would be resurfaced as a general amenity for the house occupants. An external area and rear extension that is visually unattractive and neglected will become a well-designed and pleasant oasis for the communal life of the house.

8 CONCLUSION

8.01 The proposals are aimed at improving facilities for a HMO, which is an important social community asset. The proposed alterations are concentrated in the areas of low heritage significance and are handled in a sensitive and contextual manner. Any questions concerning the cumulative impact of the proposals on this listed building can be addressed by reference to the NPPF (2019); under paragraph 196,

'134 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use'

This proposal both meets the need to improve the HMO facilities, an important social amenity, and respects the heritage significance of No 9 and the wider conservation area.'