Design and Access Statement and Incorporating Heritage Statement

3 Wren Street
Roof Renewal and Building Maintenance rev. A

20.02.20

1.0 Existing Building, Site and Significance- Overview

The terraced house at 3 Wren Street, Waterloo, London WC1X 0HE is found within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in the London Borough of Camden and is grade II listed. The five storey residential dwellinghouse is a fairly well preserved example of a late Georgian terraced house that is uniform in appearance, gently austere and represents a human scaled yet urban housing form. The original house morphology and room distribution all appear to be as per the original for 3 Wren Street as is witnessed by the 10 no. chimney flues that confirm two fireplaces for each of the five levels of the house. A lower ground floor level gives access from the front lightwell to the two front coal holds that were directly supplied by public pavement originally. And there are four dwelling levels from ground level up to the third floor in the inhabited roof.

3 Wren Street front façade

To the front the house has four steps up to the original 6 panelled painted timber door with fanlight window over and brick arch detail. There is a complimentary ground level brick arch created ground level drawing room window that is quite wide and generous. The sliding sash window here is unusually 8 paned to the lower sash and 6 paned to the upper sash.

The first floor has two very tall, almost full height, windows with two sliding sashes 6 paned each window and cut flat London yellow arches. The second floor windows are smaller but also have the same cut flat arches. The stone coping at the top of the second floor above appears to be original and the party parapet walls separating the neighbouring houses are set back from the coping edge to allow this to be continuous and defined. All above is subordinated to the front façade below.

At ground level there are original black painted iron railings with natural stone set stones and four steps up to the front door. Remedial repairs in the late 20th Century/ early 21st Century included applications of waterproof render to the railings set stones around the front lightwell and to the front stone paved steps. This remedial work has run its course and is now damp and has given a degraded appearance to the front ground level. The front steps appear subtly, but definitely out of proportion to the original too high. Presumably the steps and railing set stones were topped not only to waterproof the stonework but to raise the level in which to set the ironwork railings that will have rotted in time from contact with the stonework and will now require lengthening.

3 Wren Street front steps

Over the front lightwell there is black painted iron security bar arrangement supported from four iron flats spanning the front lightwell. The brickwork at the level of the ground level front door threshold thickens and is painted white.

The brickwork to the front façade is in general London yellow face brickwork and has survived intact with the previously described window and door arches that have been cleaned. The main façade though has been darkened through age and appears generally blackened. There has been some unsympathetic pointing done under the vertical rainwater pipe to the west side of the front façade full height and in two localized areas above the first floor windows and a smaller area and a couple of bricks around the front entrance door. This pointing appears to have been done in cement based mortar that is 'heavy' and modern in appearance and stands out visually inappropriately.

The house in the rear gives on to a rear garden. There is also a single storey attached rear extension that very likely was originally a scullery. There is no visible evidence of the original conveniences, but undoubtedly this was somewhere in the rear garden. The existing kitchen is in the rear ground level room and this gives the present access to the garden via a door and window arrangement that appears to be a 20th Century intervention converted from a previous window. The single storey extension has a bricked-in window with the window arch still visible and a new window towards the east made in the original manner, so this might be an old alteration. The ground level rear access is now via the kitchen starts at a steel landing and steel steps that is more modern and not as sympathetic as it might be.

3 Wren Street rear ground level access via kitchen

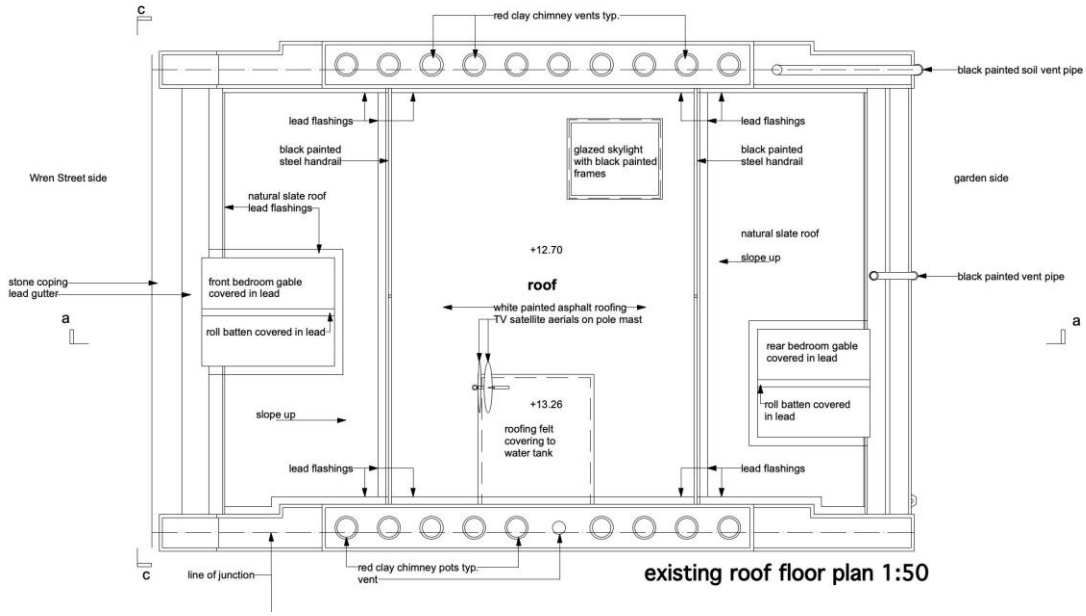
The rear façade brickwork is intact okay in London yellow stock brick with a few reds sporadically mixed in. The rear brickwork façade is in need of repointing with some areas showing dilapidated and blowing pointing and other areas badly repointed. It is very mixed and needs to be gone over with a uniform treatment and for the future long term maintenance of the building.

The rear windows have brick arches and all are sliding sash timber painted white. There is a large cast iron soil vent pipe, and another waste vent pipe in cast iron as well as another cast iron rainwater with hopper to the west serving 2 and 3 Wren Street. Another unsympathetic black plastic drain pipe has been added from the second floor level bathroom that drops in front of one of the window arches and continues to the ground level.

3 Wren Street rear façade

Roof

The existing roof of 3 Wren Street is configured having two sloping portions front and rear with a centrally placed flat roof section or bay. This appears to be the original roof configuration and indeed this allows the third floor bedroom level volume to be a big as possible. The flat roof section also allows for access to the roof on a safe flat portion of it. The whole of the roof is flashed into the two party walls either side in lead throughout. The roofing stops short and behind the front and rear facades to formed lead gutters. Presumably the gables inform access for clearing the gutters that is required as they could easily block and being within the building on top would cause flooding in the event of a downpour.



There is gravity fed water tank at the roof level to the west that is housed and weathered in a lead covered box with a top lid in felt roofing. This is quite sizeable and also supports the TV and satellite dishes and mast. On the east side there is the self raising glazed lid to the skylight and access hatch. These features are found within the central flat roof portion that is roofed in asphalt and painted white that has dimmed and is quite dirty now with moss. The present roof construction is uninsulated and unventilated as well. There is concern for the timber roof structure that remains hidden from view and inspection and maintenance. There are 2 no. steel handrails to the front and rear sides of the flat roof portion, these are in place for maintenance access safety only as all access to the flat roof can only for this reason. The handrails are not to full balustrade height and are not infilled.

3 Wren Street main roof flat portion looking west

The chimney stacks evolving from the two party walls are intact and show the 10 no. original flues to both sides. The typically distinctive chimney pots are present on the west side, and on the east side short clay vent pots only.

The two gables are covered and roofed in lead and have a single lead roll batten each on their respective roofs.

2.0 Roof Renewal, Repair and Building Maintenance

The proposal has three essential parts:

1) Renewing the existing roof and installing glazed safety balustrading:

It is proposed to remove the roofing entirely throughout including lead flashings keeping the roof structure insitu and exposing it for inspection. The natural slates will be retained where possible and set aside for relaying. All lead flashing shall be recycled. The existing asphalt roofing shall be demolished and redecked in marine plywood for renewal in a lead coloured roofing membrane. The existing roof profiles are to be retained throughout and code 5 lead flashings renewed as per the existing. The revised roof section shall allow for a breather membrane under the natural slate sloping roof portions to allow for cross ventilation over Rockwool insulation cut to fit and over in two layers providing the thermal insulation the roof has never had and responsibly saving energy in the house generally. The same profiles are to be retained inside and externally. Lead clips are to be employed to the slates in the vertical portions of the slate roofing. The existing lead gutters front and rear are to be inspected and tested and renewed if found to leak.
It is proposed to reduce the water tank box in size in plan and to replace the top lid covering in a lead.

It is also proposed to remove the two steel handrails to the rear and front of the flat roof section and replace these with clear low iron Opti-white glazed balustrade panels with centrally place grit-blasted stainless steel minimal posts centrally placed where the existing handrail posts are placed.

2) Repointing the front and rear brickwork facades and general maintenance:

Front Façade

Steam clean the front façade gently of the blackened areas of the London yellow stock brickwork.

There are localised areas of blown pointing on the front façade, but here there are areas under the rainwater pipe to the west and in other localised areas over the first floor windows and around the front door where the brickwork has been pointed in a cement based mortar that has been heavily 'weatherstruck'. This is wholly inappropriate to the Georgian brickwork that was in this case simple flush pointed in a limed based mortar. The cement based mortar pointing must be carefully removed not damaging the existing brickwork, joints carefully raked out to take a new pointing key and repointed in a lime based mortar compound with a hydroscopic action to shed rain and initial moisture, but importantly allow for moisture to travel out of the mortar joints out of the brickwork generally allowing the brickwork to breathe.

General preparation and repainting of the window joinery and painted stone sills are also proposed.

The existing plastic rainwater pipe and hopper to the west is proposed to be replaced in black painted castiron with all iron accessories.

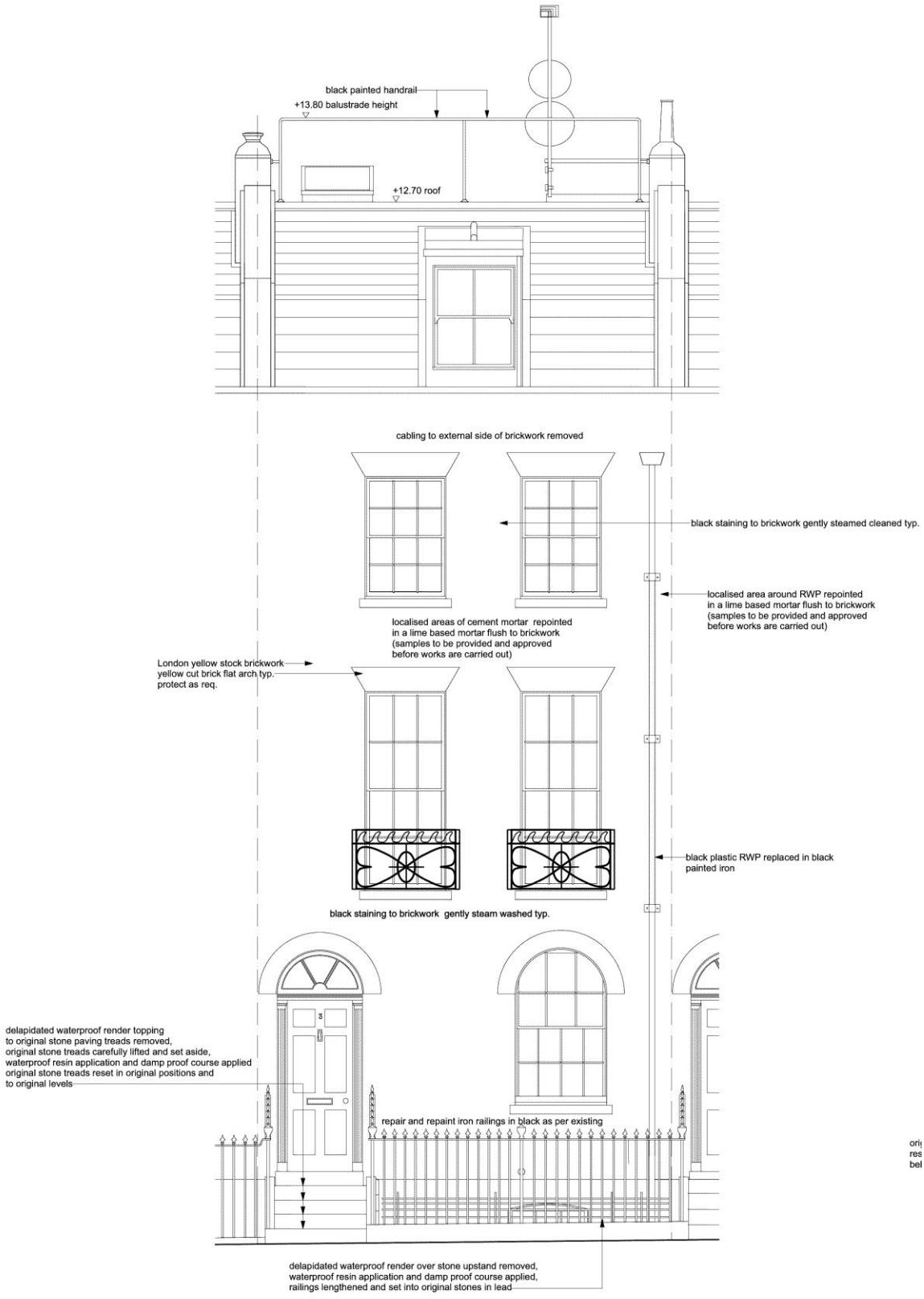
The existing various cabling run down the front façade shall be removed, and, if not redundant, routed internally.

Rear Facade

Some considerable original lime based mortar pointing has blown and is efflorescing and falling off the rear façade. Here the existing brickcourse joints need raking out and repointing in a limed based mortar pointed flush. It is recommended too that the brickwork be sponge cleaned as it is repointed to ensure that there is no mortar staining of the brickwork face. There are areas to of inappropriate pointing where the individual bricks are not exposed entirely that is very crude and defacing. This pointing must be carefully removed before repointing. There are other areas of the same type of 'weatherstruck' cement based pointing too that need removal before repointing.

General preparation and repainting of the window joinery and painted stone sills are also proposed.

The proposed 50mm dia. bathroom waste drain is proposed to be rerouted internally back to the soil vent pipe without causing damage to original building fabric.



proposed front elevation from street 1:50

Elden Croy Architect

3) Reviving the original stone steps and railing set stones and waterproofing:

It is proposed to gently break up the waterproof render to the front ground entrance steps and the railings set stones without damaging the existing stonework underneath using handtools only. The iron railings will have to be temporarily removed and stored to be refitted and lengthened as required. The front stone steps will have to be unearthed from the render and related previous alterations. And so it is unknown just how must will have to be replaced, this will have to be assess at the time, recorded and monitored. There is some required archeology of sorts to bring the old original stonework back to life.

Once the stonework has been exposed and assessed, it is proposed to remove it and apply a resin based waterproofing system upon the original brick arch substrata and waterproof comprehensively before resetting the stone steps and lightwell railings setstones. Then the iron railings can be reset in into the setstones and steps using molten lead.

Repainting of the ground level iron railings as required is also proposed.

Another proposal is to renew the two timber lintols over the entrances to the coal holds and ensure that the brickwork over is supported adequately, then fix stainless steel mesh to the inside of the coal holds throughout leaving a void line with a waterproof lining directs seepage moisture down the sides of the arches and to a drain connection to the front lightwell combined drain. The existing brickwork of the coal hold arches and surrounding brickwork is to remain insitu as found.

4) Renewal of the asphalt roofing at the top of the building is included in the works to be replaced to the same finish levels and lines in a lead coloured welded membrane.

5) Replace the existing black painted railings at the rooftop with renewed black painted handrailings up to the regulation height of 1100mm from the existing roof level.

3.0 Visual Expression of the Roof, Façade and Steps Renewal and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area

The external visual manifestations of the proposals are:

-The replacement of the white painted asphalt roofing on the flat roof section with a lead coloured roofing membrane.

-The replacement of the two black painted steel handrails over the top flat roof portion with two black painted steel handrails set to the correct height 1100mm from the top of the roof.

-The gentle steam cleaning of the front façade.

-The removal of all cabling from the front façade.

-The replacement of the existing black plastic rainwater pipe to the front façade west in black painted iron.

-The uniform repointing of the front façade in a lime based mortar pointing pointed flush.

-The removal of the black plastic drainpipe from the bathroom externally to the rear façade.

-The uniform repointing of the rear façade in a lime based mortar pointing pointed flush.

-The exposing of the original stonework form steps and railings set stones to the ground level front of the house.

Overall the above works will be a local upgrade to the Conservation Area at this the form of this house and as a precedent for future refurbishment.

4.0 Demolition

The demolition for the scheme involves:

-The removal of the asphalt roofing to the central flat roof section.
-The removal of the two steel handrails at the central flat roof section.
-Repointing of the front and rear brickwork facades including removal of the existing pointing beforehand.
-The removal of the plastic rainwater pipe and hopper head to the front façade.
-The removal of the black plastic 50mm dia. drainpipe from the rear façade.
-The removal of the waterproof render to the front step and the railings set stones.
-The removal of all cabling from the front façade.
-The removal and replacement of the timber lintols to the two coal hold entrances.

5.0 Concerns Regarding How the Proposals Affect Immediate Neighbours

The two immediate neighbours at 2 and 4 Wren Street will be affected insofar as works proposed affect the two party walls shared with each neighbour at high level and pointing up to the line of junction between properties. Beyond this, there are no issues arising from the proposal that can affect the neighbours in any significant way.

6.0 Access

The refurbishment scheme will be not be changing access in any significant way and certainly will not be detrimental.