

LONDON IRISH CENTRE, 50-52 CAMDEN SQUARE, LONDON NW1 9XB

Built Heritage Statement

JCH00918
London Irish Centre
February 2020
FINAL

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS on behalf of the London Irish Centre with regard to their premises at 50 - 52 Camden Square (the 'Site').

Proposals for the Site comprise:

Retention and elevational alterations of existing buildings at No. 50, 51 and 52 Camden Square and the McNamara Hall. Demolition in part and redevelopment to provide new and reconfigured community floorspace; associated landscaping and cycle parking.

The Site is located within the Camden Square Conservation Area, at the junction of Camden Square and Murray Street. Those buildings fronting Camden Square, 50, 51 and 52 Camden Square are all identified within the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy as positive buildings within the conservation area, whereas those buildings proposed for demolition and redevelopment are identified as neutral buildings.

Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), requires that the significance of any heritage assets affected is described, including any contribution made by their setting, as the basis from which to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. This Built Heritage Statement presents a summary of the relevant legislative framework and planning policy at national and local levels, with special regard to policies and guidance relating to development within conservation areas. It provides an overview of the development of the Site and describes the significance of relevant heritage assets, along with an assessment of the proposals and any impacts on those identified heritage assets.

The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing and all findings and conclusions are time limited to no more than 3 years from the date of this report. All maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.



Figure 1: The Site comprises the London Irish Centre, 50 - 52 Camden Square. The frontage facing Camden Square is made up of three nineteenth century former residential properties, with a glazed link between 50 and 51 Camden Square.



Figure 3: To the rear the Site has a series of later buildings, including café and ballroom facilities, accessed via a number of different access points.



Figure 2: The Site is positioned on the corner of Camden Square and Murray Street, on a prominent plot.



Figure 4: The Site is located within the Camden Square Conservation Area, a nineteenth century planned estate with Camden Square featuring as the centrepiece of the designated area.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE & PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 LEGISLATION & NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The statutory requirements and national and local policy provide a framework for the consideration of development proposals that affect the historic built environment. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, provides the overarching statutory requirements in the determination and assessment of development proposals in the historic environment. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies and requirements at a national level and the Planning Practice Guidance reflects the Secretary of State's views on the way policy should be applied. It is acknowledged that matters of legal interpretation are determined in the Courts but the NPPF and the Practice Guidance set out clearly the Government's priorities and aspirations for planning nationally. The Historic England documents provide technical advice that is designed to explain and assist in the implementation of legislation and national policy. Therefore there is a clear hierarchy of statutory duty, policy and best practice and this has been used to inform the assessment of the application proposals that is included in this report.

The current national legislative and planning policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applicants should consider the potential impact of development upon 'heritage assets'. This term includes: designated heritage assets which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings and conservation areas); and non-designated heritage assets, typically compiled by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List or recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

Legislation

Where any development may affect certain designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard to their impact on the historic environment. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The Civic Amenities Act of 1967 introduced conservation areas in the UK and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the framework for the designation and review of these areas. The 1990 Act places a duty on local planning authorities to determine areas suitable for designation (section 69 (1)) and to keep the matter under review (section 69 (2)). Once designated, there is a requirement to protect the area from development that would adversely affect its character or appearance.

Conservation areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Designation provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character and appearance that define an area's special interest. Section 72 of the 1990 Act requires that when planning authorities determine applications for development within conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or

enhancing the character or appearance of that area. This provision means that proposals for development should at least leave the character or appearance of an area unharmed.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, published February 2019, updated June 2019)

The NPPF is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

It defines a heritage asset as a: 'building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and decision taking. It emphasises that heritage assets are 'an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'.

For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 189 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected, including any contribution made by their significance. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 190, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.

Under 'Considering potential impacts' the NPPF emphasises that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets.

Paragraph 200 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. It emphasises that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset should be treated favourably.

Furthermore, paragraph 201 states that not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. When determining the impacts arising from the loss of a building or element that does positively contribute, consideration should be given to the relative significance of that building and the impact to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

2.2 NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (MHCLG)

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted in order to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.

The guidance sets out to explain how proposals can avoid or minimise harm to the significance of a heritage asset or the wider historic environment. It states that a clear understanding of the significance of a heritage asset and its setting is necessary to develop proposals which avoid or minimise harm. Early appraisals, or specialist investigation can help to identify constraints and opportunities arising from the asset and such studies can reveal alternative development options, for example more sensitive designs or different orientations, that will deliver public benefits in a more sustainable and appropriate way (paragraph 8).

It is crucial that the significance of a heritage asset is understood and consideration of this incorporated into decision making. Paragraph 7 of the guidance explains that heritage assets may be affected by, direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally substantial harm is a high test that will only arise where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed.

BS 7913:2003 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (December 2013)

The British Standard 7913:2003 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings provides helpful guidance on the assessment of heritage values and significance (Section 4). It states that significance represents a public interest, and the planning system, and the policy and legislation which support it, reflect this. It also states that research and appraisal into the heritage values and significance of the historic building should be carried out to ensure that decisions resulting in change are informed by a thorough understanding of them.

In identifying how significance may be assessed it is stated that heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values, and that the attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can

relate to its physical properties or to its context.

The guidance identifies that there are many different ways in which heritage values can be assessed. It recognises that some heritage bodies of the United Kingdom have suggested that these fall into the following groups:

- a) aesthetic value, derived from ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place (this encompasses things purposely designed for that effect and those that are not (e.g. the picturesque, the sublime));
- b) communal value, derived from the meanings of a place for people who relate to it in different ways, associations with social groups and individuals (this changes over time);
- c) evidential value, derived from the potential of a place to yield evidence about the past (e.g. archaeology);
- d) historical value, derived from the ability of a place to demonstrate or illustrate an aspect of the past or association with historic figure or event (for example a battlefield or memorial).

The guidance goes further to suggest an alternative approach and to think of a historic building's significance as comprising individual heritage values from a list that might include:

architectural, technological or built fabric value; townscape characteristics; spatial characteristics; archaeological value; artistic value; economic value; educational value; recreational value; social or communal value; cultural value; religious value; spiritual value; ecological value; environmental value; commemorative value; inspirational value; identity or belonging; national pride; symbolic or iconic value; associational value; panoramic value; scenic value; aesthetic value; material value; and technological value.

The guidance acknowledges that a wide range of factors can contribute to the significance of a historic building. As well as physical components, significance includes factors such as immediate and wider setting, use and associations (e.g. with a particular event, family, community, or artist and those involved in design and construction). The relative importance of these varies.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

The PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn in March 2015 and replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) published by Historic England. GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans provides guidance to local planning authorities to help them make well informed and effective local plans. GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Making includes technical advice on the repair and restoration of historic buildings and

alterations to heritage assets to guide local planning authorities, owners, practitioners and other interested parties. GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets replaces guidance published in 2011. These are complemented by the Historic England Advice Notes in Planning which include HEAN1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2019, 2nd Edition), HEAN2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016), HEAN3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (October 2015), and HEAN4: Tall Buildings (December 2015).

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

This document provides advice on numerous ways in which decision making in the historic environment could be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. The advice suggests a structured, staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information:

- 1) Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- 2) Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
- 3) Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
- 4) Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- 5) Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance balanced with the need for change; and
- 6) Offset negative impacts to significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

Overview: Historic England Advice Notes in Planning

In addition to the above documentation, Historic England has published three core Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs) that provide detailed and practical advice on how national policy and guidance is implemented. These documents include: HEAN1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2016), HEAN2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016), HEAN3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (October 2015), and HEAN4: Tall Buildings (December 2015).

2.2 NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

HEAN1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2016)

This document forms revised guidance which sets out the ways to manage change in order to ensure that historic areas are conserved. In particular information is provided relating to conservation area designation, appraisal and management. Whilst this document emphasises that ‘activities to conserve or invest need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected,’ it reiterates that the work carried out needs to provide sufficient information in order to understand the issues outlined in Paragraph 129 of the NPPF, relating to the assessment of any heritage assets that may be affected by proposals.

There are different types of special architectural and historic interest that contribute to a Conservation Area’s significance. These include:

- Areas with a high number of nationally designated heritage assets and a variety of architectural styles and historic associations;
- those linked to a particular industry or individual with a particular local interest;
- where an earlier, historically significant, layout is visible in the modern street pattern;
- where a particular style of architecture or traditional building materials predominate; and,
- areas designated on account of the quality of the public realm or a spatial element, such as a design form or settlement pattern, green spaces which are an essential component of a wider historic area, and historic parks and gardens and other designed landscapes, including those included on the Historic England Register of parks and gardens of special historic interest.

Change is inevitable, however, this document provides guidance in respect of managing change in a way that conserves and enhances areas, through identifying potential within a conservation area. This can be achieved through historic characterisation studies, production of neighbourhood plans, confirmation of special interest and setting out of recommendations. NPPF Paragraph 127 states that ‘when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest,’ this document reiterates that this needs to be considered throughout this process.

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Area) Act 1990 places on LPAs the duty to produce proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. This document provides guidance for the production of management plans, which can ‘channel development pressure to conserve the special quality of the conservation

area’. These plans may provide policies on the protection of views, criteria for demolition, alterations and extensions, urban design strategy and development opportunities. Furthermore, it includes information relating to Article 4 Directions, which give the LPA the power to limit permitted development rights where it is deemed necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of an area.

HEAN2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016)

The purpose of this document is to provide information in respect of the repair, restoration and alterations to heritage assets. It promotes guidance for both LPAs, consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in order to promote well-informed and collaborative conservation.

The best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, or to find an

appropriate new use. This document states that ‘an unreasonable, inflexible approach will prevent action that could give a building new life...A reasonable proportionate approach to owners’ needs is therefore essential’. Whilst this is the case, the limits imposed by the significance of individual elements are an important consideration, especially when considering an asset’s compatibility with Building Regulations and the Equality Act. As such, it is good practice for LPAs to consider imaginative ways of avoiding such conflict.

This document provides information relating to proposed change to a heritage asset, which are characterised as:

- repair;
- restoration;
- addition and alteration, either singly or in combination; and,
- works for research alone.

2.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

Strategic Policy

The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (Greater London Authority (GLA), March 2016)

In March 2016, the Mayor of London published The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011. From this date, the policies set out in this document are operative as formal alterations to the London Plan the Mayor's spatial development strategy and form part of the development plan for Greater London. In particular, the document encourages the enhancement of the historic environment and looks favourably upon developments which seek to maintain the setting of heritage assets.

Policy 7.1 Lifetime Neighbourhoods states that 'The design of new buildings and the spaces that they create should help reinforce or enhance the character, legibility, permeability and accessibility of the neighbourhood.' The importance of local character is further expanded upon in Policy 7.4 Local Character, which states that 'Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings.'

Policy 7.5 Public Realm states that 'Development should make the public realm comprehensible at a human scale, using gateways, focal points and landmarks as appropriate to help people find their way.'

Policy 7.6 Architecture states that 'Architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.' It sets out a list of requirements of new buildings and structures, the most relevant to heritage, townscape and visual assessment are listed below, stating that buildings should:

Be of the highest architectural quality;

be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm;

comprise details and materials that complement, not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character;

not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings, in relation to privacy, overshadowing, wind and microclimate. This is particularly important for tall buildings; and optimise the potential of sites.

Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets and Archaeology provides the relevant policy with regards to development in historic environments and seeks to record, maintain and protect the city's heritage assets in order to utilise their potential within the community. It states that 'Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by

being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.' Policy 7.8 also further supports Policy 7.4 in its requiring local authorities in their policies, to seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London's environmental quality, cultural identity and economy, as part of managing London's ability to accommodate change and regeneration.

Emerging Policy: Draft London Plan – Intend to Publish Draft London Plan (December 2019)

The Examination in Public (EiP) on the London Plan was held between 15th January and 22nd May 2019. The Panel of Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State issued their report and recommendations to the Mayor on 8th October 2019.

The Mayor has considered the Inspectors' recommendations and, on the 9th December 2019, issued to the Secretary of State his intention to publish the London Plan along with a clean and tracked version of the Intend to Publish London Plan, a statement of reasons for any of the Inspectors' recommendations that the Mayor does not wish to accept and a note that sets out a range of interventions that will help achieve the housing delivery set out in the Plan.

The draft policies highlighted below merit consideration.

Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth (C) states,

Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings, should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

Local Planning Policy

In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

Local planning policy for the Site is set by Camden Council. The Camden Local Plan (Adopted June 2017 provides the local planning framework for the application Site.

Camden Local Plan (July 2017)

The Camden Local Plan was adopted by the Council on 3 July 2017 and replaced the Core Strategy and Camden Development Policies documents as the basis for planning decisions and future development in the borough.

Policy D2 Heritage states:

The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas.

The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

Designated heritage assets

Designed heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings. The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas. The Council will:

- require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;

2.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

- f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;
- g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and
- h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden’s architectural heritage.

Other heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including non-designated heritage assets (including those on and off the local list), Registered Parks and Gardens and London Squares. The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, balancing the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The appraisal identifies that 50-52 Camden Square is a positive building within the conservation area, whereas the building to the rear is a neutral feature.

Local Planning Guidance

To support the policies of Camden’s Local Plan, Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) forms a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), an additional ‘material consideration’ in planning decisions, which is consistent with the adopted Core Strategy and the Development Policies. Following statutory consultation, the Camden Planning Guidance documents (CPG1 to CPG8) replaces Camden Planning Guidance 2006.

CPG 1: Design (March 2019)

This guidance provides information on all types of detailed design issues within the borough and includes a section on heritage. CPG1 Design supports Policy D1 Design and Policy D2 Heritage of the Camden Local Plan.

It states that with regard to heritage, it states that Camden will only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area.

Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (March 2011)

The Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy provides an overview of the character and appearance of the conservation area. It describes its location, topography, and development, with further analysis of key views, character zones, land use activity, local detail, local materials and public realm. It also provides an audit of heritage assets.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: CAMDEN SQUARE

Camden Square

Camden Square was first developed during the nineteenth century as part of the massive outward expansion of the London suburbs, spreading across former rural estates around the city. The development of the area around Camden Square dates from the Act of 1788 which permitted Charles Pratt, Earl of Camden and his heirs to lay out streets on his property to the east of what is now Camden High Street.

Development continued apace and in 1824 Camden Road was built across what was then still open fields. It was at this time that the streets around Rochester Square, to the south of Camden Square, began to be laid out. The terraces around Rochester Square were developed in a piecemeal manner by small speculative builders developing only a few houses at a time.

Development of the Camden Estate was continued by the Earl's descendants from the 1840s, designed as a set piece of town planning. It was intended from the outset that this phase of development would provide a higher class of housing than previously, much of which was already deteriorating under the intense pressures created by population expansion. This was achieved by selling building leases on a wholesale basis, to avoid piecemeal development. It was therefore possible to include a generous provision of green open space within the new developed area, as well as an imposing Gothic church within a central square, the Church of St Paul's.

Large houses were concentrated around the edges of this square, Camden Square, with more modest sized houses contained within the surrounding streets.

There was much building activity from the mid-1840s and by 1849 Camden Square was complete, as was Murray Street. The two mews were laid out at the same time as Camden Square, then known as 'Camden Mews North' and 'Camden Mews South'. They were laid out with the intention of providing stables and coach houses to service the grand townhouses of the square, with mains drainage and a roadway of granite setts. After a further burst of building activity during the 1860s the surrounding area was fully developed by the 1880s.

Despite initial success as a residential estate, Camden Square's popularity became undermined whilst it was still in the process of being developed by the arrival of the railway in 1863, with the Midland Railway passing beneath Camden Square and emerging to the east. The cut and fill technique required for building the tunnel cut the square in half for a time and a number of properties were also demolished to facilitate its construction, both in the 1860s and again in 1898 when the line was widened. The vibration from the tunnels and smoke from the ventilation shafts were immediately detrimental to the environment and popularity of the area, undermining its higher class aspirations. The railway also had a knock on effect for the ongoing residential development in the area. Building work to the north of Camden Square assumed higher densities and there was a

greater social mix than initially envisaged. The mews also remained mostly undeveloped.

During the twentieth century Camden Square remained largely unchanged up until the Second World War, with an emphasis upon subdivision of existing properties rather than any new development. The area's association with the railway placed it in the firing line of the Luftwaffe and large sections of streets were destroyed by bombs, including some buildings around Camden Square. After the end of the conflict this led to infill development across bomb sites. Alterations were also made to Camden Square Gardens, including the insertion of a Council playground. A later casualty of war damage was St Paul's Church, which suffered ongoing subsidence and was eventually demolished in 1956, replaced with a low church hall.

From the mid 1960s Camden Square experienced a revival, benefitting from the withdrawal of steam trains from service and the introduction of clean air legislation, as well as a renewed appreciation of Victorian architecture. Many of the houses around the square returned to single family use and the general standard of maintenance and upkeep improved. New development became focused within the mews on either side of Camden Square, which had largely been undeveloped until the 1950s.

In the present day Camden Square is an attractive and sought after residential area, having ultimately achieved those initial nineteenth century aspirations that were thwarted by the imposition of the railway for so long.

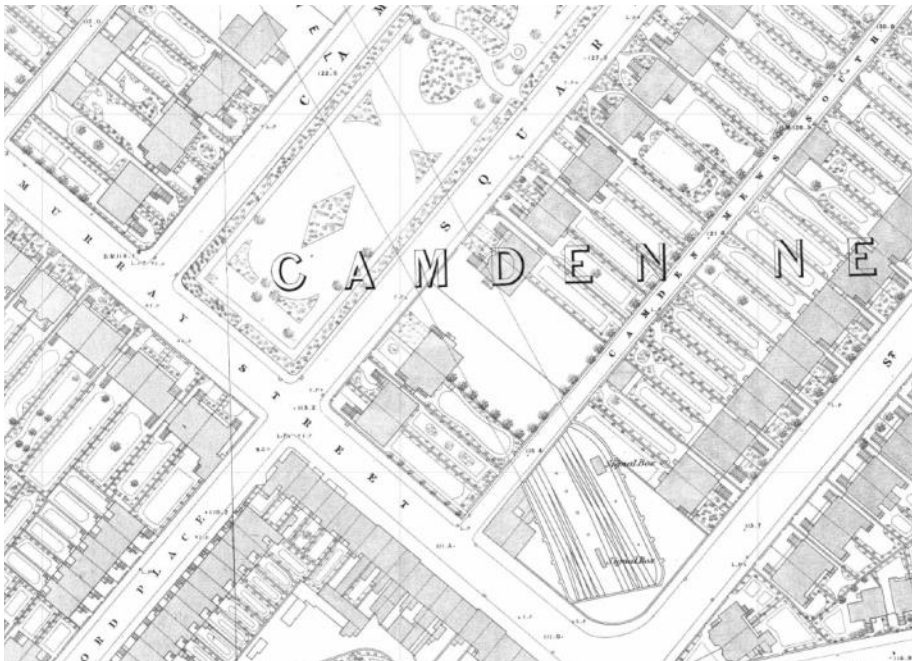


Figure 5: The 1873-4 Town Plan shows Camden Square laid out, after the construction of the railway. The square itself, the size of the properties surrounding it and their generous sized gardens all indicate the original aspirations of the developers for a high quality estate, but this vision was immediately undermined by the construction of the railway and its associated smoke and vibration.

3.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: LONDON IRISH CENTRE

The history of the London Irish Centre is rich with the stories of individuals who worked there, the people whom it has helped over the decades and the social and community events that it has hosted as a focal point for the Irish Community in London, as well as for other groups. The brief overview provided below focuses principally upon the history and development of the centre's buildings, as the basis to understand the historic context of the proposals.

London Irish Centre

During the nineteenth century Ireland suffered from periods of horrendous famine and there was a surge of immigrants to London seeking work and accommodation. There had previously been a resident Irish population concentrated in what was known as Agar Town, but the estate was completely cleared to make way for the Midland Railway Line by 1867 and the people were evicted or encouraged to move away. It was at this stage that Camden Town became a new focus for Irish settlement, amongst others. The influx of Irish emigrants seeking work and opportunity in London continued into the twentieth century. Post-war rebuilding of the capital offered jobs in the construction industry in particular. Such was the level of emigration from Ireland, often young and sometimes inexperienced adults, that leaders of the Catholic church set up a bureau from 1942 to manage and instruct those embarking on the journey, advising about suitable accommodation and employment, as well as seeking to provide moral and religious guidance.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s growing concern amongst leaders of the clergy about the welfare of emigrants became translated into action, and thoughts turned towards the option of providing a bureau in London for this purpose. This process was not entirely smooth or straightforward given the various political and practical considerations of the venture, but ultimately by 1954 the search began to find suitable premises.

52 Camden Square was purchased in August 1955 for £3,887 10s. It had the dual benefits of being a former Methodist home for mothers and babies, with existing facilities that could be upgraded, as well as having good proximity to the terminals of Kings Cross, St Pancras and Euston. As such, the London Irish Centre was founded in 1955 as a hostel for thirty men and welfare centre, with Father Tom McNamara as resident chaplain. At this time it was known as Blessed Oliver Plunkett House, after the Irish scholar, patriot and martyr. Soon after this date the adjacent property at 51 Camden Square went up for sale and that too was purchased for £2,740, which at the time consisted of self-containing flats.

The London Irish Centre became a first port of call for the new arrivals in London, who stepped off the train at Euston or other main railway terminals with nothing more than a suitcase and a card bearing the centre's address, distributed on the dockside to those departing by the Legion of Mary (a lay service that supported the clergy). In addition to the Irish community, however, the centre found itself providing support to other nationalities and



Figure 6: This photograph shows the poor condition of 52 Camden Square and reveals how much restoration work was subsequently undertaken to bring it to its current state of repair. (Harrison, 2004; 18). This photograph also now shows the rear extension in its current form.

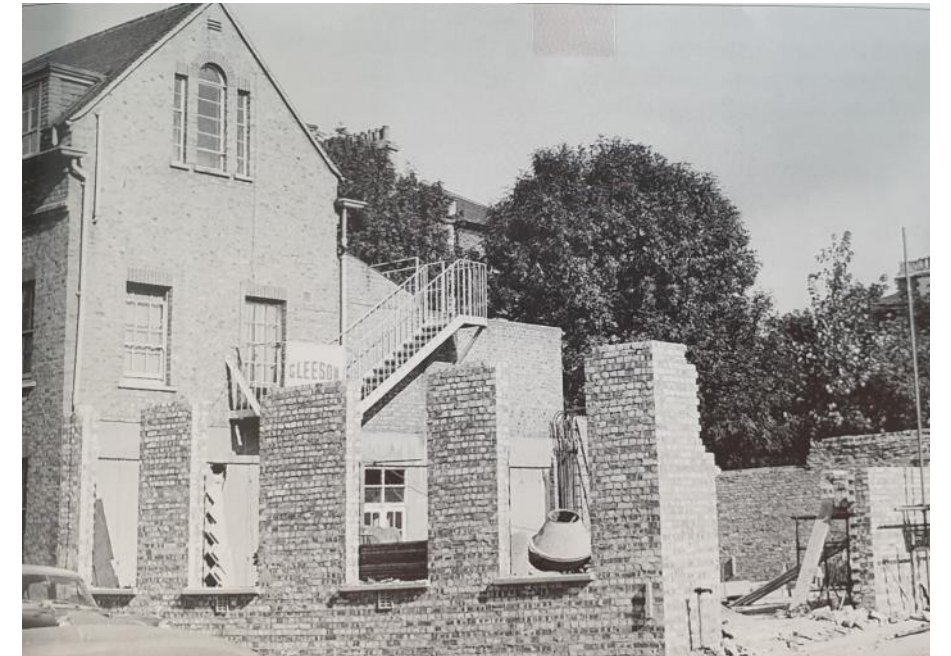


Figure 7: Photograph showing construction of the John F Kennedy Memorial Hall in 1964 (Harrison, 2004; 65)

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: LONDON IRISH CENTRE

groups as well. The success of the newly opened centre was such that it soon needed to expand its premises in the following years, along with refurbishment of the existing buildings.

After a prolonged planning process the Kennedy Memorial Centre was built during the 1960s to accommodate social functions and also to provide a much needed source of revenue for the centre. Building on site began in 1964 and after various construction difficulties along the way the ground floor hall was opened in 1965.

In 1975 focus turned towards the plot of land to the north (44-49 Camden Square) which had been purchased from British Rail. It was developed with a social housing scheme in partnership with the Community Housing Association (CHA), and later sold to them on the grounds that its management lay beyond the skills and key objectives of the London Irish Centre.

Also in 1975 a restoration scheme was undertaken for the exterior of the buildings fronting onto Camden Square, which had suffered some loss of architectural detailing over the years. The architects took castings of the cornices and mouldings from a house on the opposite side of the square and applied them to the centre's buildings. The London Irish Centre looked greatly enhanced by the works, although it is not clear how historically authentic they were.

The sale of land by British Rail opened up opportunities for a new hall on space to the rear of the CHA land. The construction process was fraught with complexity, given the railway tunnels beneath, but the McNamara Hall was eventually opened in November 1980.

In 1982 a new welfare department was opened at 50 Camden Square becoming known as the Irish Centre Community Services, a name which it retains to the present day. This expansion of the facilities also facilitated the creation of a much-needed new entrance to the McNamara Hall.

In the present day the London Irish Centre is a thriving focal point of Irish society in London, and provides valuable facilities supporting a whole range of groups and communities. The complex of buildings and infill extensions within the Site are somewhat bewildering to navigate and increasingly unfit for purpose as a twenty-first century community facility, but they reflect the success and expansion of the centre over the course of decades and are also testament to the centre's fundraising efforts as well.

3.23 HISTORIC MAP PROGRESSION



Figure 8: 1874 Town Plan showing 51 and 52 Camden Square as separate residential properties, with separate entrances and long demarcated gardens stretching the mews behind. The railway is now built beneath the square with an empty plot to the north of 50 Camden Square where demolition was necessary as part of its construction.



Figure 10: 1916 OS map showing that the railway has been widened, enlarging the area of open track to the east of the Site. There has also been some associated demolition track to the north west of Camden Square in association with the railway works.



Figure 12: 1952 National Grid map showing the steps to 52 Camden Square now removed. To the north of the Site there is a new building to the rear of 49 Camden Square, possibly a workshop. There is now a larger gap site along the north western edge of the square. Camden Square itself has been altered by the construction of a playground.



Figure 9: 1896 Town Plan showing 52 Camden Square now with a range to the rear, running along the edge of Murray Street.

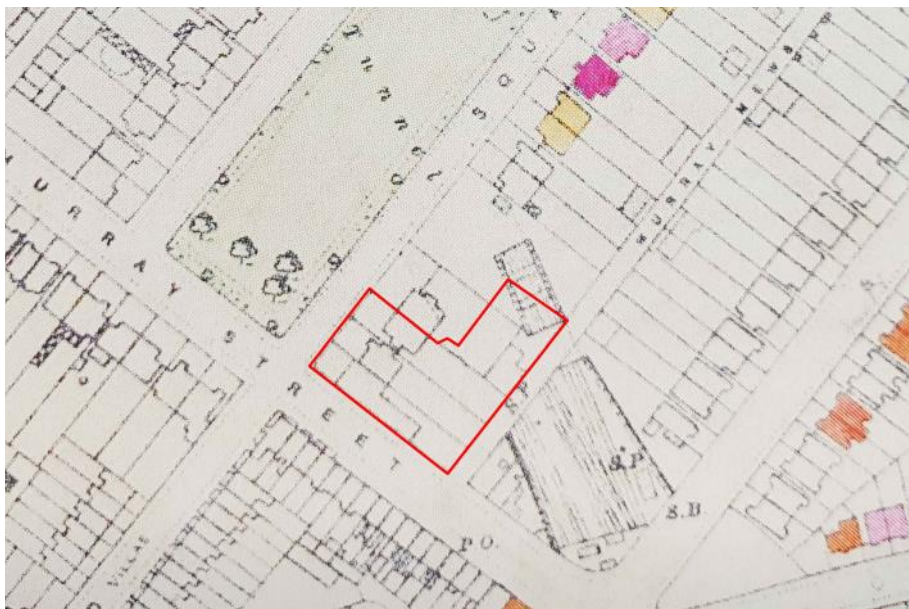


Figure 11: The London County Council Bomb Damage Map 1939-45 (Ward 2015) showing bomb damage suffered in the vicinity of the Site. Camden Square experienced damage to the north western corner of the square and the south eastern edge. There is also a concentration of damage to the east of the Site, in association with the railway as a prime target for the Luftwaffe.



Figure 13: 1968 OS map showing the London Irish Centre expanded across the former back gardens, including the Kennedy Memorial Hall now in place. The workshop to the north, in the grounds of 49 Camden Square remains extant.

3.23 HISTORIC MAP PROGRESSION



Figure 14: 1982 National Grid map showing the McNamara Hall now built to the north eastern corner of the Site. There has also been further infill extensions within the Site in the space surround by those elements fronting the surrounding streets.

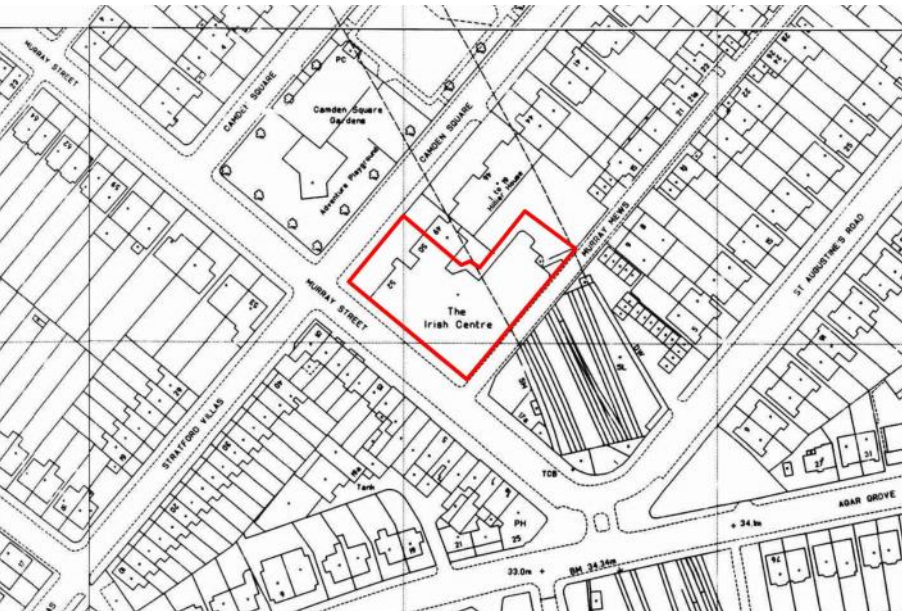


Figure 15: 1993 National Grid map showing new social housing on the former gap site to the north of the Site. There is also a new building within the southern section of Camden Square as part of the playground.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 SITE ASSESSMENT

Site Assessment

Exterior

The London Irish Centre is located at the junction of Camden Square and Murray Street, to the south eastern corner of the square. The centre is the result of multiple building phases since the nineteenth century, comprising a range of forms, functions, styles and materials.

The principal elevation fronting onto the square comprises three nineteenth century former residential properties. All have stuccoed facades, with 51 and 52 Camden Square forming a pair. 50 Camden Square is linked to them by a glazed atrium that is somewhat dated in its appearance. In front of the buildings is a walled forecourt, containing garden planting, hardstanding and an access ramp leading up to the glazed atrium. The original staircase to 52 Camden Square was removed by the end of the nineteenth century, according to the evidence of historic mapping.

51-52 Camden Square are three storeys in height, raised on half basements. The principal elevation of the pair is dominated by a projecting porch to 51 Camden Square and a projecting bay window to 52 Camden Square, the latter of which is topped with cornice and balustrade. The elevation is also enlivened by giant Corinthian pilasters that extend up to a projecting cornice with dentil detailing between the second and third storeys. The fenestration comprises timber sashes, with smaller windows to the upper storeys.

To the rear there has been piecemeal development over the course of the twentieth century, with a two storey (with attic) range with pitched roof to the rear of 52 Camden Square and beyond this a later two storey extension known as the Kennedy Memorial Centre that extends up to the edge of Murray Mews. The Kennedy Memorial Centre comprises a two storey rendered block with flat roof, with an entrance opening onto the southern end of Murray Mews. Set back within the Site's north eastern corner is the two storey McNamara Hall, a brick built extension which provides banqueting suites and function spaces. These elements enclose an area of single storey rear extensions, added piecemeal as the centre expanded its facilities.

To the north of the Site are three twentieth century developments that were built on sites that were formerly cleared to make way for the railway.

To the east of the Site is a residential block that backs onto the railway line.

On the south east side of the Square, over the railway, Hillier House Housing Association flats occupy the raised south east corner.

Interior

The interior of the London Irish Centre comprises an almost entirely modern interior, characterised by narrow halls and landings providing access to a range of offices, and hostel and kitchen facilities. The nature of



Figure 16: The front elevations of 50 - 52 Camden Square, with glazed link between 50 and 51. These facades are largely the product of restoration work in 1975, but they are in keeping with the wider character of the conservation area.



Figure 18: To the rear of 52 Camden Square is a mid-twentieth century brick range, rising two storeys with attic.



Figure 17: The buildings to the rear of 52 Camden Square are subservient to the principal building, but they have become dated in their appearance.



Figure 19: To the north east corner of the building plot is the McNamara Hall.

4.1 SITE ASSESSMENT

piecemeal development with various building phases has resulted in a complex plan form that that is not easily navigated between the various extensions.

Significance

The London Irish Centre is housed within a number of buildings that date from the earliest stages of development of Camden Square during the nineteenth century and are identified as positive buildings within the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (discussed further in Section 4.2). These sections of the London Irish Centre, fronting onto Camden Square, have some modest architectural detailing, but it has been shown that this is largely the produce of twentieth century restoration rather than authentic nineteenth century work. The interior retains no features of historic or architectural interest.

Perhaps more significant than any architectural or historic interest, the London Irish Centre as a whole is a place of great value to the Irish community in London, providing a focal point for community and social events. It also serves many other groups who use the facilities and benefit from the services they provide. As such it may be said to hold communal value.



Figure 20: Internally the layout of the centre comprises a complex series of corridors that do not have easy accessibility.



Figure 22: Interior of the Kennedy Memorial Centre.



Figure 21: There are few principal spaces in the former residential spaces, which is dominated by offices and meeting rooms.



Figure 23: Buildings to the rear of 50 - 52 Camden Square comprise piecemeal development of various building phases and infill extensions.

4.2 CAMDEN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA

The Site falls within the Camden Square Conservation Area, designated by Camden Council in October 1977 and extended in April 1980 and November 2002. The Site is located within the portion of the original designated area that was designated in 1974.

Description

The overall character of the Camden Square Conservation Area relates to its identity as a nineteenth century inner London suburb, designed as part of a planned estate with strong but eventually thwarted intentions to attract a wealthier set of residents. The area was laid out over fields as a planned development from the 1840s and completed by around 1880 (previously described in Section 2.1). The streets form a grid network running parallel and perpendicular to Camden Road to the west, arranged around Camden Square as the centrepiece of the estate. To the south there was also Rochester Square as another but smaller square, although this was originally a nursery garden.

There is no particular consistency to the architecture and detailing of those residential buildings surrounding the square. There is a range of stuccoed Italianate villas to the south and plainer brick houses with arched windows and projecting eaves towards the higher density northern end. This changing pattern of development is due to phased development around the square, with some plots developed individually, but also due to the diminishing aspirations for the estate during the course of its development once the railway cut its way through the area and became a blight on the lives of its residents through its associated vibration and pollution.

The conservation area has a clear pattern of wide streets with mews behind. The two mews behind Camden Square were not fully developed as originally intended after the railway arrived, with only some plots developed to serve the larger properties. They now contain a unique mix of nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century buildings, illustrating the evolution of the mews concept, from originally functional service areas to modern day exemplars of urban living (one of which is Grade II listed (22 Murray Mews)).

Murray Street also has a particular character relating to the parade of shops along its southern edge. Many of the shops have been converted to residential use and so the former commercial character has been somewhat eroded, but the shopfronts generally survive to varying degrees. On the corner with Agar Grove, the Murray Arms public house has suffered similar changes. Opposite this parade is The London Irish Centre and a modern block of flats (2010).

In terms of building materials within the conservation area there is an emphasis upon the use of stucco, stock brick, slate roofs (often hidden behind parapets) and timber sash windows. Granite setts survive as the historic surfaces within the mews, and are particularly characterful.

The green spaces of the conservation area are a fundamental aspect of its



Figure 24: The interplay of built form and Camden Square as the central green open space is a fundamental aspect of the conservation area's character and appearance.



Figure 25: There is no particular consistency to architectural detailing around the square, although there is some emphasis on stucco to the southern edges and stock brick to the northern end.

character and appearance, with mature tree planting and hedgerows surrounding the lawns of Camden Square. Rochester Square, however, is overgrown and derelict as private land. The original houses of the conservation area have small front gardens, with semi-basements and steep steps to their front doors, and rear gardens of varying lengths. The grandest houses have the deepest front gardens and these complement the proportions of Camden Square. The quality of this central space has been diminished, however, by the loss of St Paul's Church as the original central focal point of the estate, and its replacement with modern and inferior buildings. To the south the gardens have also been truncated by the insertion of a playground.

The Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) identifies a series of key views through the conservation area. Linear views around the outside of the square are recognised as positive views, revealing the complementary spatial relationship between the verdant square and surrounding residential properties. These views are also useful for revealing the rising slope of the land, steepening towards the northern end of the square.

Heritage Significance

The Camden Square Conservation Area is a good example of a middle class Victorian estate, as shown by the quality of the architectural detailing, the size of houses and surrounding gardens. It also derives its significance from the strong hierarchy of spaces, between the main streets and mews developments, and from the interplay between built form and open spaces, particularly Camden Square as the centrepiece of the planned estate. This character has been eroded in places by post-war infill development that failed to reflect the prevailing character of the estate but overall the conservation area retains its architectural and historic interest.

Camden Square also has significance as the home of the Climatological Station, founded by George Symons, former president of the Royal Meteorological Society. It has also been associated with numerous artists and figures, both historic and more recent, of local and some national importance in various fields of expertise and professions.

A number of key views contribute to the significance of the conservation area, including views up and down the Square, and the grid of roads that spread from it.

Contribution of the Site to Significance

The London Irish Centre fronts onto Camden Square as the focal open space of the conservation area and as such the nineteenth century buildings contribute positively to its overall character and appearance. The exception to this is the glazed link between 51 and 50 Camden Square, as a later addition. The Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and

4.2 CAMDEN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA

Management Strategy also states that the access ramp is overly lit at night time.

It should be noted, however, that this positive contribution is based upon restoration works carried out in 1975 and are not original to the building. A comparison of Figures 6 and 16 reveal the degree of restoration work undertaken; any similarity of the façades with buildings on the other side of the square is due to the copying of features during the restoration work.

The centre sits at a prominent location at the junction of Murray Mews and Camden Square and there are longer distance views towards it. This includes the various key views identified with regard to Camden Square and the grid of roads that spread from it. These views also reveal the buildings to the rear of the plot, however, which are identified as neutral buildings within the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy. The buildings are a testament to the London Irish Centre’s success, popularity and expansion as a social and community focal point but externally they have become increasingly dated, and internally are now barely fit for purpose as an accessible community building in the twenty-first century.

During the 1890s a noted novelist and suffragette lived at 52 Camden Square, Annie S Swan, who was also the agony aunt for The Woman at Home magazine as part of her “Over the teacups” column.



Figure 26: Camden Square is characterised by its grassed lawns, mature tree planting, serpentine pathways and boundary planting. The railings now enclosing the square are modern in date, with the earlier iron railings removed during the Second World War. .



Figure 28: A mix of bomb damage and demotion associated with the construction of the railway created various gap sites around the square that have since become infilled with modern development of variable quality.



Figure 27: The overwhelming residential character of the conservation area changes along Murray Street, where a parade of shops were built in the nineteenth century. In the present day many of the shops have been converted to residential use, but the retention of the shopfronts in various states of repair still preserves that former commercial character to some degree.



Figure 29: There are key views along Camden Square and the network of streets that extend away from it. This view shows Murray Street, revealing how the Site sits at a prominent point in this view.

5.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 PROPOSALS

Proposals

The proposals comprise:

Retention and elevational alterations of existing buildings at No. 50, 51 and 52 Camden Square and the McNamara Hall. Demolition in part and redevelopment to provide new and reconfigured community floorspace; associated landscaping and cycle parking.

The scope of the proposals focus on refurbishing the façades of the nineteenth century villas on Camden Square and rebuilding a new, fully accessible building along Murray Street to connect with both the retained villas and the McNamara Hall. The existing roof structure of the McNamara Hall is proposed to be removed to allow for the insertion of new mezzanine, availing of the redundant space taken up by the ceiling void.

These proposals would shift the principal entrance of the London Irish Centre from Camden Square to Murray Street.

Redevelopment proposals may be summarised as:

- Refurbishment and repair of 50 - 52 Camden Square facades;
- Landscaping works to front garden facing Camden Square;
- Demolish glazed link building and re-build with high quality link building between 50 & 51;
- Extensions between 50-52 Camden Square and the McNamara Hall to be demolished;
- New, fully accessible corner building to Murray Street/Murray Mews;
- Enlarge existing basement for community function spaces, with additional storage and plant space;
- Refurbishment to McNamara Hall; and,
- Raise McNamara Hall roof structure and insert mezzanine.

These proposals have been brought forward further to two formal pre-application meetings with Camden Council and were separately presented to the Camden Design Review Panel. This finalised scheme represents a positive response to feedback received during this pre-application consultation process.



Figure 30: Illustrative views, showing new link between nos. 50 and 51 (left), view showing the proposed Murray Street elevation from Stratford Villas (middle) and view looking westwards along Murray Street (right). The new building would be entirely submissive to 50 - 52 Camden Square. 52 Camden Square's role as a focal point in key views within the conservation area would therefore be preserved (Coffey Architects).

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The Site is located within the Camden Square Conservation Area. As such any proposals for the Site will be required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Demolition

Existing buildings to the rear of the London Irish Centre are identified within the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy as neutral buildings within the conservation area.

The range to the immediate rear of 52 Camden Square was erected during the 1950s in association with the opening of the London Irish Centre. It comprises a two storey building with attic, fronting onto Murray Street. The use of brick visually associates it with the buildings on Murray Street, rather than any association with Camden Square, which is the centrepiece of the conservation area. The purpose of the building as part of the London Irish Centre is clearly asserted through the use of moulded shamrocks on either side of the entrance and crests of each Irish province above it. Aside from this limited embellishment to the entrance and some string courses/recessed brick panels at eaves level, the building is architecturally very modest. The Kennedy Memorial Centre (opened 1965) by comparison is more functional and externally very plain, with a poorly functioning exist opening onto Murray Mews.

Both buildings are now demonstrably no longer fit for purpose as part of the London Irish Centre, comprising of many linked elements that have been developed on a piecemeal basis, resulting in an overly complex interior plan and somewhat chaotic roovescape (Figure 31). There is therefore an important opportunity to enhance the exterior appearance of the Site and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area through a unified redevelopment scheme. It also represents an opportunity to enhance the community value of the Site, through the provision of modern and accessible community facilities as part of the London Irish Centre.

The glazed link (Figure 32) is also proposed for demolition. This structure and its internal lift serve an important function as part of the existing building and its accessibility, but visually has become somewhat dated. The opportunity is now taken as part of this redevelopment scheme to replace the link with a new structure, more befitting the character and appearance of the conservation area (see below).

Refurbishment

The nineteenth century properties fronting Camden Square are to be retained and refurbished as part of the proposals. The current buildings are in much need of repair, particularly with regard to the roof that has suffered



Figure 31: View looking eastwards across the roovescape of the rear extensions of the London Irish Centre. There is now an opportunity to improve this roovescape through a unified scheme.

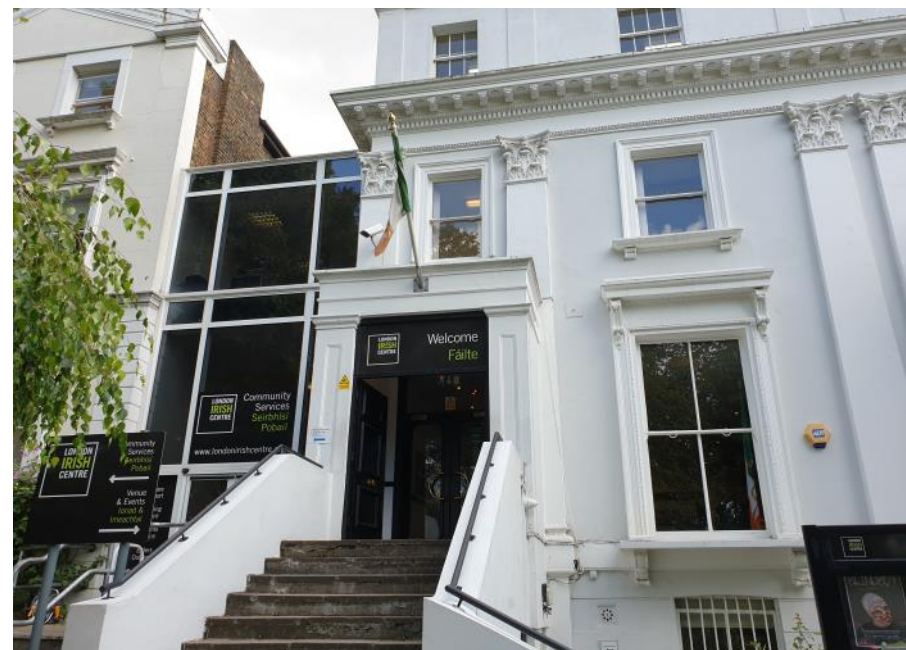


Figure 32: Replacement of the glazed link between 50 and 51 would be an enhancement to the character and appearance of the conservation area, relating to Camden Square as an important focal point of the designated area. The existing steps would be reconfigured and their visual impact on the street scene reduced.

from various leaks, causing internal damage. Key architectural features such as mouldings and render have also been damaged over the years. The repair and refurbishment of these facades would enhance and reinforce the positive contribution that these buildings make to the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area.

Redevelopment

As part of the proposals a new main entrance for the London Irish Centre would be provided from Murray Street, allowing the entrance on Camden Square to be downgraded and partly restored to its more historic domestic context. Re-provision of the external lighting along this elevation with an improved scheme would also offer important enhancements to the conservation area, particularly with regard to the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, which states that the access ramp is “overly-well lit” at night time.

Additional enhancements to the building are offered by the replacement of the existing glazed link between 50 and 51 Camden Square with a high quality rebuild, faced with a perforated brick screen. This new structure would be built with a reduced height to the existing link building and also with a recessed frontage, emphasising its subservience to the existing villas. This would additionally serve to restore a sense of the original urban grain that is predominant around Camden Square, created by the rhythm of villas and gaps between them. These works are considered to enhance the overall contribution that this elevation makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

As part of the reconfiguration of the centre and rationalisation of its various entrances, the steps to the front of 51 Camden Square would be reduced in scale and allow the creation of a fully accessible, attractive garden space to complement the services and facilities of the centre, connected at ground floor level to the villa. This new garden space would be enclosed by a new garden wall. These particular works would enhance the contribution that the properties make to Camden Square and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Redevelopment to the rear of 50-52 Camden Square would allow for the provision of a much needed, fully accessible building for the London Irish Centre, facilitating the many community services they provide. The new building elements fronting Murray Street and Murray Mews would appear as exciting additions to the streetscape, the designs for which have drawn inspiration from a range of sources that include Celtic culture, the community functions of the centre and its historic links with major railway terminals to the south. In particular, the glazed corner window represents a architecturally dramatic and symbolic link with the railway stations, referencing the arrival points from which many Irish people entered London on their journey from Ireland, needing refuge and support that the centre could provide.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Throughout the design development stages, consideration has been given to the heritage significance of 50-52 Camden Square and the need to preserve the visual prominence of the villas within the conservation area, particularly in views along Murray Street. Their form has also inspired the proposals, with the three storey corner element at the junction of Murray Street and Murray Mews designed to act as a counter balance to 52 Camden Square, which itself acts as an important focal point at the junction of Camden Square and Murray Street.

The materiality of the Murray Street elevation is a key aspect of the scheme design, and demonstrates how the context of the Murray Street built environment has been considered as part of the proposals. The new three storey corner element has been appropriately designed with a light, white toned brick to reflect and complement (but not imitate) the white stucco of the villas. Between these two areas the overall massing would be broken up with a section of earth toned brick masonry, which would unambiguously mark the junction between the new and historic buildings of the Site, as well as referencing the nineteenth century brick terrace on Murray Street. As such, this key elevation would be read as a collage of buildings volumes that enhance the setting of the historic villas and the surrounding streetscape.

The scale of the proposals has similarly been designed with close regard to 50-52 Camden Square and existing built environment. In particular, the earth toned section of the Murray Street elevation would step down towards the street, referencing the height of the terrace on the opposite side of the street. It also reinforces the hierarchy of the various building elements, visually deferring to the historic villas.

The stripped simplicity of the Murray Street elevation, enlivened purely through its creative form and materiality, effectively lends visual emphasis to the more delicate detailing of 50-52 Camden Square, including in particular the string course and cornice detailing of the side elevation (fronting Murray Street, which will be experienced alongside the new building elements). In this way it is considered that the proposals fully respect and respond to the heritage significance of 50-52 Camden Square.

With regard to the south east elevation, the refurbishment works to the McNamara Hall would provide a welcome uplift to the building's external appearance. The works would also serve to visually integrate the retained structure with the new build areas, using the juxtaposition of light and dark brick to minimise the appearance of the massing along the Murray Mews elevation. The arrangement of fenestration adds further interest to the façade.

Overall the materiality and form of the proposed extension appropriately lays visual emphasis entirely upon the Site's historic villas fronting onto Camden Square, but at the same time it distinguishes itself as a modern building of considerable merit in its own right. As such, the proposed



Figure 33: View looking northwards along Murray Mews (Coffey Architects).

development would enhance the contribution that 50-52 Camden Square make to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and in its own right would also represent an enhancement to significance of the conservation area.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support proposals for the London Irish Centre, Camden Square. It has provided an overview of the Site and its historic development, along with a full assessment of the relevant heritage assets and their significance, as required by paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

The Site is located within the Camden Square Conservation Area. As such any proposals for the Site will be required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Proposals comprise:

Retention and elevational alterations of existing buildings at No. 50, 51 and 52 Camden Square and the McNamara Hall. Demolition in part and redevelopment to provide new and reconfigured community floorspace; associated landscaping and cycle parking.

The nineteenth century former residential properties of 50-52 Camden Square contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area and these would be retained and refurbished as part of the proposals. It is considered that internal works would not affect the contribution that the buildings make to the significance of the conservation area.

The existing buildings to the rear of the centre developed on a piecemeal basis and are now barely fit for purpose as twenty-first century community facilities, particularly with regard to accessibility. These buildings make a broadly neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and in itself the proposed demolition work would not cause harm to its significance. Indeed, the proposals for redevelopment offer a welcome opportunity to provide a high quality unified scheme that offers important enhancements to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Proposals for the Site include a range of repair and improvement works that enhance the contribution that 50-52 Camden Square make to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The new build elements of the scheme represent an outstanding architectural composition that would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in its own right. As such the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area would be enhanced, in accordance with section 72 of the 1990 Act.

This Built Heritage Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information and assessment to identify the potential impacts arising from the development of the Site on the historic built environment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CAMDEN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA MAP





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