

DESIGN & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Job Reference:	20 Downshire Hill, NW3	Date:	5 February 2021
Subject:	Replacement of Portico	Ref	P1
Issue:	Listed Building Application	Our reference:	20DOW-A4-ST-DHS210205

**1.0 Introduction and background**

- 1.1 This statement relates to the planning and listed building applications in connection with the intended dismantling and rebuilding of the 20th century portico of the owner applicant's family home, 20 Downshire Hill. The property, a grade II listed coach house, was originally built in the early 19th century and had been altered many times including a partial redevelopment in 2012.
- 1.2 The reason for this application is the need to address the progressive differential movement between the portico and the parent building which causes widening cracks and gaps between the two elements. In essence, the portico is tilting away from the

house. This has been a problem for many years, in fact local remedial works had been carried out as part of the works which were granted in 2011.

- 1.3 As of summer 2020 the issues had got to a point where it has become clear that more substantial remedial works are required. Investigations have been carried out and it has been identified that a combination of factors are likely to cause the problem. One being a nearby mature Magnolia tree in the front garden (which is the subject of an imminent separate application to be pruned back and so restrict further potential root growth). The other problems are ground conditions being made ground and shallow foundations of the portico.
- 1.4 Full removal of the tree is for now being resisted, and underpinning of the existing portico is not only extremely impractical but also would not resolve its tilting away from the main front façade. The conclusion by the professional team has been reached that the best permanent solution is to dismantle the portico and rebuild it like-for-like onto new foundations.
- 1.5 This design statement, incorporating the heritage assessment, aims to demonstrate that the proposal is compliant with national and local guidance and the appropriate and only feasible way to maintain the historic asset of the property.



Widening gap covered with flashing tape



Internal cracking between portico and house



2.0 Policy Framework

2.1 National framework

2.1.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

2.1.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.2 Local framework

2.2.1 LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies:

- Core Strategy Policy 16: Conservation areas, heritage assets and the historic environment.
- DM Policy 36: Listed buildings, conservation areas, and other designated heritage assets
- DM Policy 30: Urban design and local character

2.2.2 Hampstead Conservation Area guide

3.0 Relevant Planning History

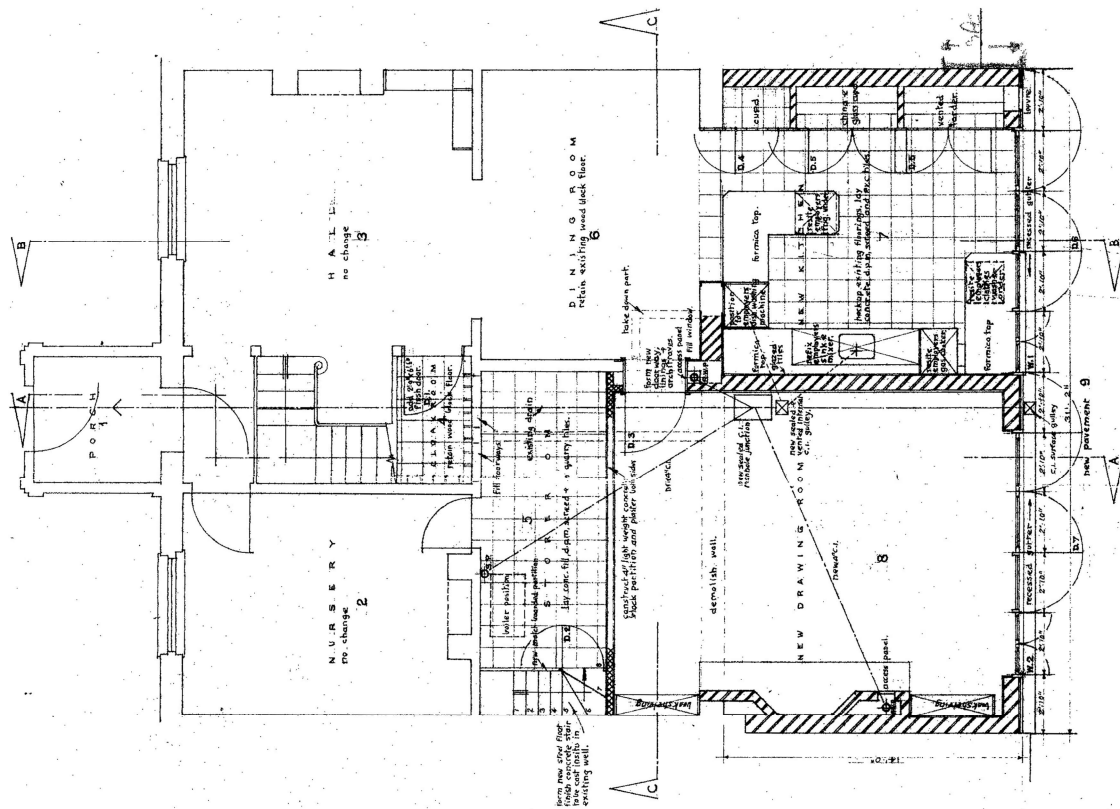
- **E7/17/14/21213** - The carrying out of alterations and extensions at the rear of the existing dwelling-house. Granted 08/03/1963
- **E7/17/14/16391** - The erection of an attic bedroom at 20, Downshire Hill, NW3. Granted 13/11/1973 (This permission does not appear to have been implemented).
- **PWX0103631** - Erection of roof extension at second floor level, and excavation offront and rear basement areas to create external access to basement. Refused 12/03/2002.
- **PWX0202871 & LWX0202872** - Erection of mansard roof extension at second floor level, excavation of front and rear basement areas to create external access to basement, removal of shutters to windows on front elevation, alteration to fenestration on rear elevation, and internal alterations at all Floor levels. Refused Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent 18/03/2003. Appeals (APP/X5210/E/03/1114367 & APP/X5210/A/03/1114280) subsequently dismissed on 08/12/2003.
- **2011/0390/P** - Erection of a single storey rear extension, a basement extension and lightwell to residential dwelling (Class C3). Withdrawn prior to a formal decision being made by the Council.
- **2011/0391/L** - Internal and external alterations in association with erection of a single storey rear extension, a basement extension and lightwell to residential dwelling. Withdrawn prior to a formal decision being made by the Council.
- **2011/3253/P & 2011/3254/L** - Erection of replacement two storey rear extension at ground and first floor levels, excavation of enlarged basement level, erection of replacement ancillary residential outbuilding in rear garden and associated alterations to single family dwelling. Granted 08/03/2012

Architectural floor plan of a building, likely a residence or institutional structure. The plan shows a central staircase and a large hall. Various rooms are labeled, including a 'Bed room' and a 'Bath'. The drawing includes annotations such as 'APPROVED', 'Borough Engineer', 'Iron drain', and 'Front'. The plan is a detailed technical sketch showing walls, doors, windows, and furniture like beds and a desk.

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- 4.3 The property has been extended to the rear, first with a single bay deep extension and later by a modern (at the time in the 1960s) 2 storey extension at the rear.



- 4.4 That 1960's extension itself was replaced by a new 2 storey extension along with a partial basement in 2012-14, along with internal alterations to reinstate the original plan form of the coach house, and a garden house in the rear (see relevant planning history above).



5.0 Heritage Assessment

- 5.1 20 Downshire Hill constitutes a historic asset in that it is unique in the way it is wedged as a former coach house within a more imposing terrace. Listed on 14th May 1974 (LNS no. 477091), the property lies at the heart of the Willoughby Road/Downshire Hill sub-area of the Hampstead Conservation Area.
- 5.2 The key characteristics are the white stucco front, the shallow pitched slate roof which runs side to side and the balanced proportions of the symmetrically arranged sash windows.
- 5.3 The neo-classical portico which was added in the late 1920's / early 30's is incongruent with the main building in its detailing and additive nature. It could be said that the portico does little – if anything at all – to contribute to the historic or architectural significance of the building.
- 5.4 Although the actual fabric of the portico has questionable historic value, it is a handsome feature and as such part of the established character of the house and street scene. However incongruent, it also serves a purpose as an entrance vestibule from a practical and thermal point of view.
- 5.5 The fact that the portico is subsiding and tilting away from the house has an adverse effect not only on the portico itself but also on the house. Replacing the portico like-for-like would ensure the whole of the historic asset to be retained for posterity.

6.0 Proposal and Method Statement

- 6.1 The portico is proposed to be dismantled and rebuilt 'like for like'
- 6.2 Prior to dismantling the portico, key elements such as the mock Corinthian capitals and pedestals of the pilasters will be carefully removed and/or casts taken; along with a detailed survey drawing of all dimensions to enable a true replica of the existing to be built.
- 6.3 New foundations will be cast into hand-dug trenches as per structural engineer's details to the required depth (approximately 1m).
- 6.4 Rainwater drainage is to be re-run to allow the portico roof to fall away from the main house.
- 6.5 The new portico will then be built with single skin blockwork, tied to the main façade, with insulated lining internally and re-application of timber panelling and plaster cornice. Externally the blockwork will be rendered with the stucco elements applied prior to decoration in the existing colour scheme. The cold flat roof is to be constructed with a liquid applied membrane with lead coping over the parapet upstand dressed onto the overhang, and lead flashing carefully cut into the main façade which will be made good in the area of the current temporary remedial works.



7.0 Justification Statement

- 7.1 The fundamental problem is that continuous movement is caused either by ground conditions or the influence of the Magnolia tree, or a combination of both. Furthermore the portico does not appear to be tied to the main façade allowing it to move and tilt away from the house.
- 7.2 Ongoing remedial works are only able to provide temporary solutions. Not only are they unsightly, they also, crucially, do not address the actual issue. The problem has now advanced to a stage where, besides discomfort and significant heat loss, it is beginning to adversely affect the building fabric.
- 7.3 It is suspected that the Magnolia tree plays a role in the subsidence problems. Tree felling has been considered but it is intended to mitigate its impact first by pruning it back, under a separate application.
- 7.4 Trial holes at the corner of the porch indicate very shallow foundations on made ground which lead to the conclusion that the only viable long-term solution is to provide sound foundations for the portico down to the natural bearing clay. Whilst this could in theory be carried out through underpinning, in practice it is virtually impossible to do so due to the small scale and footprint of the portico. The temporary works required would extensively damage the portico and risk having an adverse effect on the main building, as they would like have to make use of the front façade to provide support.
- 7.5 Careful dismantling and rebuilding of the porch as described in the method statement would have the following benefits:
- 7.5.1 Less impact on the asset through reduced risk of damage as no temporary works would be required
 - 7.5.2 Less impact on traffic and neighbours due to shortened construction time
 - 7.5.3 Better thermal performance and reduction of heat loss through insulated construction
 - 7.5.4 Provide a permanently sound solution that is weather and water proof.



8.0 Summary and Conclusion

- 8.1 There is a clear necessity to carry out remedial works to the listed property in relation to the portico which is subsiding and progressively tilting away from the main house.
- 8.2 The portico itself is a 20th century addition to the original early 19th century coach house and so intrinsically has limited heritage value.
- 8.3 The movement and diverging settlement causes harm to the owner-occupier as well as to the listed fabric itself.
- 8.4 Underpinning with the portico in situ is a disproportionately difficult and costly operation and risks causing damage to the property.
- 8.5 A sensitive and careful dismantling of the portico and rebuilding of it like-for-like is therefore the best solution in conservation terms, and so this proposal is compliant with current guidance and policy, and in the spirit of conservation.