

# 51 Doughty Street, WC1N

## Heritage Statement

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# Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Quinn Architects to accompany the application for Listed Building Consent at 51 Doughty Street (2021/1546/L).

This purpose of this document is to provide a brief background to;

- Assess the history of the building and the context of its listing
- Review the changes that have been made to the house in the past
- Outline and explain the proposed changes
- Evaluate the effect of the proposals on the building's heritage

## Overview and Listing

51 Doughty Street was built as a single family home around 1820, as part of a terrace of 22 homes built by Built by J Wigg, G Slaton and J Wilson. It is a good example of high quality Georgian residential architecture of the period, distinguished by multi-coloured stock brick, tuck pointing, timber sash windows and their uniform public appearance to the street.

At the rear, the houses originally had gardens at the ground floor level with basement vaults extending beneath. Finishes to the rear were a similar multi-coloured stock brick, albeit with a standard flush pointing. A distinguishing feature is the small metalwork railing in front of the first floor rear sash window.

The house was listed along with the rest of the terrace in 1974. In reference to number 51, the listing makes specific reference to the stuccoed surround around the front door. Internally some of the original detailing and layout remain in the main house, along with the original sash windows on the exterior. To the rear, substantial changes have been made over the years altering the garden and basement.

## History of Alterations

The house was converted into offices and a caretakers flat in 1974 (29770) and the subsequently extended and altered in 1981 (33096R3).

These works made limited alterations to the internal layout of the main house and made more significant alterations and additions to the basement and rear facade. The rear outrigger was extended and installed with new windows to the side and rear, and a rear 'L' shaped extension formed at ground floor enclosing a courtyard and lightwell. A wired glass roof was installed at ground floor level over the basement lightwell.

In 1997 the property reverted back to residential use and consent was granted for various internal alterations including further work to the basement at the rear (PS9704296).

Further applications were made in the period between 2004-2014, again seeking consent for minor internal alterations to the main house and more substantial changes to the rear. As a result of these, the basement courtyard, ground floor courtyard and ground floor rear extension were rebuilt. The roof of the ground floor extension was made into a terrace, and the ground floor courtyard had a walk on roof light installed in it. New glazed timber doors and windows were installed at basement and ground floor level serving both courtyards.

## Proposed Works

The current proposals seek to remove some of the basement extension previously built, add in a simple metal external stair and renew the lead flashings over various ledges around the courtyard. This is explained in more detail in the submitted design and access statement.

The proposals seek to improve on various issues generated by the previous adaptations. The walk on rooflight is an incongruous design feature in the context of the house and limits the use of the ground floor courtyard. The small basement courtyard receives too little light due to its size, and is similarly difficult to use. There are also water ingress issues as a result of the aging rooflight and flashings.

The applicants would like to remove the roof light and extension at basement level back to the line of the original basement perimeter wall. This would form a larger useable courtyard at basement level. A black painted metal stair would link the resulting small ground floor terrace and basement courtyard. The existing white painted doors and windows around the courtyards would be re-used and installed in new positions.

## Effect on Heritage

As described above, the rear of the property has already been substantially altered in the past, particularly at ground and basement levels. The fabric proposed for demolition and removal is not original, so there is no loss of physical heritage.

In terms of design, the rear additions previously built are sympathetic in their appearance and materials, and work well with the existing house. The courtyards however provide little light to the basement, or amenity to the ground floor. The walk-on roof light in particular stands out in contrast to the heritage of the building.

The proposals are therefore intended as a modest reversal of previous development, removing the basement extension back to the original line of the basement wall. The proposed black painted metal stair and railing are appropriate choices, matching the same material language as metalwork on the front of the properties. Likewise, new stone flooring finishes externally will be sympathetic to the character and age of the property.

We believe that these modest proposed works will not lead to significant harm to either the listed building or conservation area. Indeed, removal of failing fabric will protect the home from continuing water damage, and the design will remove the large rooflight and glass balustrade that stand in contrast to the Listed building adjacent.

