



**Design and Heritage Statement:
Repointing & Redecoration of Window
Reveals and Cills:
17 John Street, London WC1N 2DE**
revision c: 17-05-21

Client: Mr and Mrs Graham
Date: 15th May 2021
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1.0 Introduction

Mr and Mrs Graham have appointed Paul Latham, AABC to advise on remedial work following commencement of repointing and refacing of existing cills and stuccoed window reveals to the front elevation of 17 John Street, London WC1N 2DE in advance of Listed Building Consent. This heritage statement describes the current condition of the front elevation brickwork and fenestration, sets out limited remedial work required and a proposal to repoint and decorate window reveals and cills using appropriate conservation techniques and materials to an historic building of this period.

This Report has been prepared by Paul Latham, AABC for the owners, Mr and Mrs Graham. A high level inspection was undertaken on 15th May from scaffolding.

The recommendations made are in accordance with Historic England Guidance “Repointing Brick and Stone Walls: Guidelines for Best Practice” (2017) and English Heritage Practical Building Conservation Guide “Mortars, Renders and Plasters” (2008)

2.0 Significance

17 John Street is Listed Grade 2:

(East side) Nos. 10-20 (Consecutive) and attached railings - John Street - Grade II

EH list entry: (798-1) 1379156

Date of Listing: 24/10/1951

GV II

Listing NGR: TQ3083982094

Details: “No. 17: similar doorway to No. 12 with patterned radial fanlight. INTERIOR: noted to retain stairs with square balusters. Marble fireplace, with contemporary iron centre, ground floor rear room. Marble fireplace with sculptured leafwork, 1st floor front room. Contemporary china bell pulls and door plates.”

17 John Street is a 5-storey Grade II listed town house. It is one of 11 terraced houses built between 1799 and 1824 on the east side of John Street. Simple squared balusters and a reeded marble fireplace in the ground floor suggest the house may well be of Regency date. The terrace consists primarily of houses with a rusticated stucco to ground and lower ground, and multi coloured stock brick with yellow stock brick patching in Flemish bond to the upper storeys (street elevation). The house has a lower ground floor with a lightwell to the front and an ‘M’ shaped pitched roof.



Figure 1: Horwoods Map, 1799

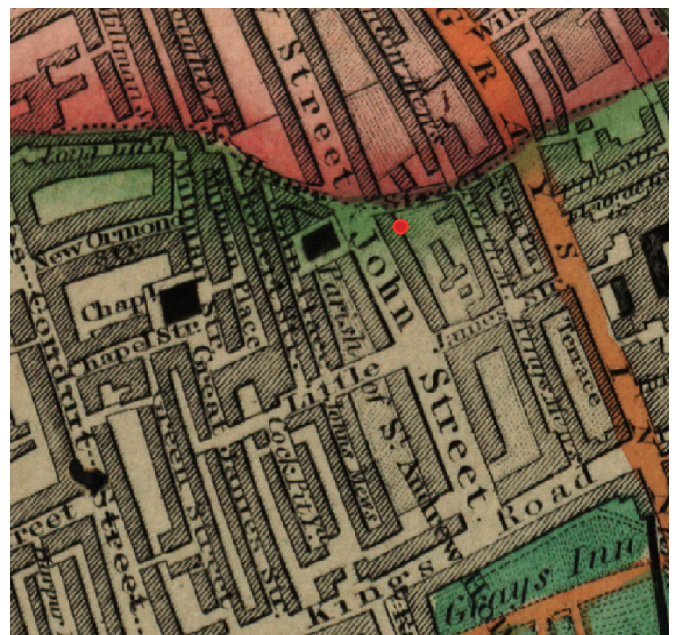


Figure 2: Greenwoods Map, 1824-28

The house has a **group value** as one of 11 late Georgian town houses which has retained many original features and fittings. It holds a significant **associational value**. British History online lists the following historical connections to the property:

“No. 17.—The original numbering of John Street was very irregular, and, until 1907, this house was numbered 11. The architect, Owen Jones, who was appointed superintendent of the works of the Great Exhibition of 1851, and who was responsible for much of the interior decoration of the Crystal Palace, had rooms here in 1841. Six years later William Pare, a disciple of Robert Owen, and one of the founders of the Co-operative Movement, occupied chambers here. John Scott Russell, civil engineer, was here for a short time in 1847, when he was appointed secretary of the Society of Arts. In more recent times Captain Bruce Bairnsfather, the creator of “Old Bill,” Granville Barker and Cedric Hardwicke have had chambers here.”

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol18/pt2/pp111-115>

3.0 Partially Commenced Work

The following work has commenced in advance of Listed Building Consent:

Removal of hard cement mortar to the 1st-3rd floors.

We understand the previous mortar was a hard cement mix as is much of the John Street. This suggests that all trace of the original mortar profile had been lost. The removal of this pointing has been done using a mixture of hand tools and power tools. Despite this, I could not see any significant damage to brick arrises in the process. The use of power tools is only supported if the mortar removed is hard cement-based, and then only using a thin diamond-disc cutter used to very carefully make an initial breach. Given the shallow depth of the mortar removed it appears to me power tools were not justified due to the risk of ‘skidding’ and breakages to brick edges. The depth of removal is inadequate, *figure 3*. A depth of twice the joint height or 20mm minimum is recommended.



Figure 3: Typical detail of mortar removal



Figure 4: Repointing to upper lift

Repointing commenced to the upper storey:

The repointing which has been undertaken uses a flush joint, overlapping the brick edges. This is not appropriate in historic work as the joint should be slightly recessed to the brick face. The mix is too lime rich, possibly made with silver, sand, lacking coarser aggregates giving a homogeneous bleached appearance. There is some lime staining to brick edges and shrinkage cracks, suggesting the mix was too wet. The work has not been undertaken well or by suitably skilled craftsmen. *figure 4*. None of the brick arches have been pointed as the owners stopped the work realising the need for specialist advice and Consent.

Redecoration of window reveals and cills:

The builders had been asked by the client to decorate window reveals and cills as the paint was badly flaking and live. However they have applied a slurry of a cementitious compound buttered over in an attempt to achieve a smooth surface. This does not appear to be breathable and should not have been applied to lime stuccoed reveals and stone cills, *Figures 5*.



Figure 5: Cementitious coating of cills/reveals at 2nd floor;
Brick pointing has not proceeded to lower floors.



Figure 6: Preceding lime mortar sample visible

4.0 Proposed Remedial Work

Carefully remove all pointing to a minimum depth 20mm using only hand tools (eg; quirks, masonry chisels) and clean the joints with a stiff bristle brush followed by flushing with clean water (avoid over-wetting). Pointing in brick arches where unsound should be raked out to the required depth using a hacksaw blade. On no account use power tools.

Undertake samples to remove the cementitious slurry applied to window reveals and cills. If it chips away easily, carefully remove it entirely using hand tools only. If the cementitious slurry has bonded strongly to original lime stucco reveals and cills causing damage in removal do not proceed. Although apparently non-porous the slurry is applied to what was almost certainly multiple layers of modern impervious 'plastic' paint and so its retention will not alter the breathability of building fabric providing it is sound and not likely to flake off, hence the need to sample attempted complete removal first.

5.0 Repointing and redecoration proposals

Repointing:

- a) Repointing should be carried out by an experienced contractor
- b) Mortar Mix: A "Type A2" mortar mix is appropriate to a sheltered central London location comprising one part Non-hydraulic lime to three parts clean well graded sand with 5% sharp screeding sand added for texture. The sand colour used in the mix determines the overall colour of lime mortar. Evidence from site suggests the preceding pointing had a warm slightly pink appearance, *Figure 6*. Ty-Mawr supply a range of premixed mortars to which 5% grit sand can be added. Samples applied to the wall may need approval by the Conservation Officer following Listed Building Approval. A mortar sample box is available to assist selection:

<https://www.lime.org.uk/ty-mawr-mortar-samples.html> Telephone: 01874 611350

- c) The mortar should be packed firmly into the joint using a pointing iron after all the loose material has been flushed out and the joint wetted first to reduce suction. The inside surfaces of the joint need to be damp but not wet. Joints need to be thoroughly filled from the back and compacted to avoid voids.

- d) The joint should be filled slightly proud of the intended finished level to allow for slight shrinkage and compaction of the mortar as it firms up. Any mortar that is smeared on the masonry should be sponged off with clean water before it has dried.
- e) The joint should be finished by hitting the mortar with a bristle churn brush with a firm pushing action at the end of each days lift when a partial set is achieved. This gives a natural weathered appearance by exposing some of the aggregate in the mortar.
- f) Gauged brick arches should be pointed by first applying adhesive tape over the joint, then cutting across each joint the cut edges of which should be pressed back into the joint. The joint should be pointed in well matured lime putty also available from Ty Mawr using a fine pointing iron. The tape removed and any lime staining cleaned.

Redecorations of window reveals and cills

- a) Following removal of the cementitious slurry (or retention if proved to be sound), remove any loose or flaking paint. Fill using a good quality filler such as Toupret exterior filler. Sand down using Grit 40-120 sandpaper to smooth.
- b) Apply a primer, undercoat and two coats of off-white exterior paint selected from a good historic colour range such as Little Greene Telephone 0845 8805855. A good paint specification from Little Greene would be as follows: One coat ASP Intelligent Primer Undercoat; 2 coats Water-based Intelligent Exterior Eggshell.

6.0 Impact

The impact of these proposals will be removal of inappropriate pointing and its replacement using correct conservation techniques and materials. Sample removal of an inappropriate cementitious slurry from window cills and reveals will ensure following decorative finishes have a sound key and are able to perform their task of protecting the building from the weather.

7.0 Justification

The justification is the need to maintain an historic building.

APPENDIX A

1989

Date of planning application: October 1989
Reference: 9401144

Development description: Internal alterations to the basement ground floor and floors 1 to 3, including the creation of openings between front and rear rooms at ground and first floor levels.

1994

Date of planning application: July 1994
Reference: 9401144

Development description: Change of use from offices (B1) and works of conversion to form a single family dwelling house.

2001

Date of planning application: July 1994
Reference: LSX0104255

Development description: Internal alterations at third floor level including removal of cross wall to move bathroom from rear of property to central location opposite staircase (creating an additional bedroom).

2005

Date of planning application: December 2005
Reference: 2005/4850/L and 2005/4845/P

Unimplemented

2009

Date of planning application: September 2009
Reference: 2009/4262/L and 2009/3934/P

Development description: Installation of glass panelling to roof of basement at rear following the removal of existing glass lantern skylight.

2015

Date of planning application: May 2015
Reference: 2015/2806/L and 2015/2561/P

Development description: Installation of 1 x rooflight and internal alterations at ground and lower ground floor levels including installation of kitchen in front reception room at ground floor, and re-instatement of historic door to rear reception room (ground floor) from hall.

2017

Date of application: May 2017
Reference: 2017/3179/L and 2017/2552/P

Erection of rear single storey extension to existing closet wing at ground floor level with terrace above; relocation of existing AC units on rear elevation to roof level and external cabinet.

2017

Date of application: September 2017
Reference: 2017/4985/L and 2017/4848/P

Variation of condition 3 (approved plans) of planning permission 2017/2552/P dated 24/08/2017 (erection of rear single storey extension to existing closet wing at ground floor level with terrace above) namely to increase the size of the rear extension and infilling of closet wing window at first floor level

2019

Dates of application: January-February 2019
Reference: 2018/3558/L and 2018/5869/P

Details of plumbing and stone basement surface materials (condition 4(a & c) in relation to 2017/3179/L (erection of rear single storey extension to existing closet wing at ground floor level with terrace above; relocation of existing AC units on rear elevation to roof level and external cabinet; and internal alterations on all levels)

2019

Dates of application: April 2019
Reference: 2019/1365/L

Discharge of condition 2 (approved drawings) of listed building consent ref 2017/4985/L (for the erection of rear single storey extension to existing closet wing at ground floor level with terrace above (as an amendment to Listed Building Consent ref. 2017/3179/L dated 24/08/2017))

APPENDIX B



Figure 8: Front Elevation - Extract from Planning Application 2015/2561/P