

HERITAGE STATEMENT

RELATING TO

WATES- CAPITAL WORKS PLANNING

AT

8 ROCHESTER ROAD
CAMDEN
LONDON NW1 9JH

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B9825 – COBDEN BUILDINGS

HERITAGE STATEMENT

1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Potter Raper, in support of an application for conservation area consent in connection with the replacement of a windows and doors at 8 Rochester Road in Camden, London (figure 1). The proposed works form part of a comprehensive programme of works that are being carried out on the freeholder's housing stock.

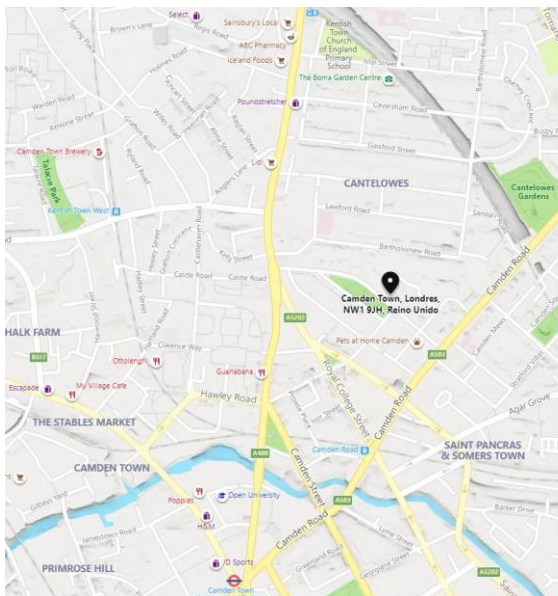


Figure 1: Ordnance Survey Map of Camden. The location of the application Site is indicated by the black arrow. (Source: Bing Maps)

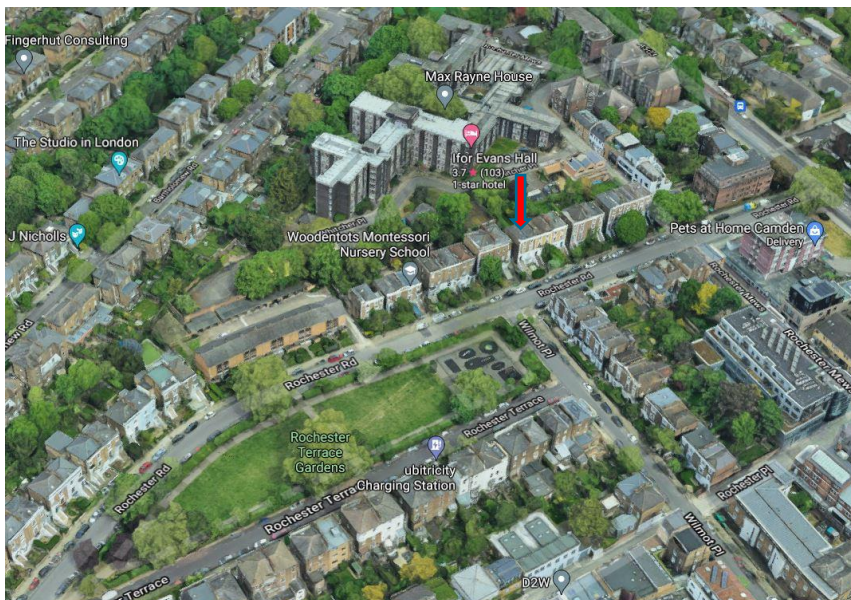


Figure 2: Bird's eye view of the Application Site (arrow in red) viewed from the north. (Source: Bing Maps)

The Site lies within the Rochester Conservation Area (Camden).

The Site occupies a prominent position around the mid-point of Rochester Road which runs north to south along the western boundary of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area lies to the east of Kentish Town Road. The topography of the area is generally flat, with the highest spot height recorded at 32 metres above ordnance datum.

Designation Date: Rochester Conservation Area was designated by the London Borough of Camden on 12 December 2001 and this Conservation Area Statement was agreed at the same time. The designation and the Statement were agreed after public consultation.

The building is of four storeys, is characterised by painted stucco to the lower and upper ground floor. All other walls on the building are finished in fair-faced brickwork, constructed in Flemish bond. On all elevations the wall rises up to the finished height to form a parapet wall for the pitched roof covering.



Figure 3: The Site viewed from Rochester Road. (Source: Google Maps)

This Heritage Statement has been developed to provide sufficient information to allow the council to gain an informed understanding of the building, in order to gauge the suitability of the proposals. It is considered that the special interest and significance of the building would not be harmed and that the alterations proposed would further reveal and reinforce the significance of this building.

2.0 Architectural and Historical Appraisal

2.1 Historical Development of Local Area

(Based on the conservation area appraisal)

Kentish Town used to be the principal settlement in the parish of St Pancras, which stretched from what is now Tottenham Court Road in the south to Highgate, and from York Way to Regent's Park. St Pancras Old Church in St Pancras Way is one of the oldest churches in London. It is thought to have been built on the site of an even older building. A settlement was probably already established in the vicinity of the church by AD400. However, the River Fleet, which flows down from the heights of Hampstead and Highgate frequently flooded the land around the church, and the inhabitants gradually moved to dryer ground further upstream. A chapel of ease was founded in Kentish Town probably by the 13th century and certainly by 1297. The site is uncertain. Another chapel on the west side of the road (now Nos.207-209 Kentish Town Road) replaced it. The 3rd Kentish Town chapel was built on its present site in Highgate Road in the 18th century.

Kentish Town village did not develop as a compact cluster but as individual buildings strung out along the road to Highgate, which followed the course of the river. It probably took this form because of the various inns established to serve the many travellers passing through on their way between London and The North, and stretched from where the former Castle pub now stands on Kentish Town Road, to Swain's Lane. Although the land around was good, Kentish Town was not just a farming community. William Bruges, the first Garter King of Arms, had a magnificent house at the south end of the village in the early 15th century and other well-to-do Londoners followed. Gradually, the village established a reputation as a convenient and healthy retreat from the increasing congestion of the City.



Figure 4: Rochester Road at 1894(Camden Council Online)



Figure 5: Rochester Road Area 1894 (Camden Council Online)

As London expanded westwards in the 18th century, Kentish Town also changed and grew. More houses were built, but still on the main road, rather than in the fields behind. The farms concentrated increasingly on the production of milk for sale in the City, and hay to feed the growing number of horses. Inns began developing extensive pleasure grounds as Londoners visited the area on day-trips to the country. The most important of these in the mid-18th century was The Castle, whose gardens now lie beneath Kelly Street, Castlehaven Road and Clarence Way. Later, the Assembly House surpassed it (formerly called the Black Bull and briefly The Flask) which boasted two acres of garden, paddocks and a Bowling Green. Pollution of the Fleet River became an increasing problem in the 18th century. Ponds first started being created around 1589. A century later, in 1692/3, the ponds were leased to the Hampstead Water Company who then built a number of additional ponds over the next 100 years. This reduced the flow in the river, whilst effluent from the new houses increased. Lower down, towards Holborn and Clerkenwell, it became known as the Town Ditch. The river was gradually culverted over. It remained comparatively clean in Kentish Town until the end of the 18th century but was still capable of flooding and by the 1850s it had been culverted as far north as Holmes Road. The northern section remained open until 1872 when, prompted by a particularly bad outbreak of cholera in 1866, the Metropolitan Board of Works encased it.

In 1791, Lord Camden obtained an Act of Parliament that enabled him to develop land along the east side of Camden High Street, which he sold on leases of 40 years rather than the 99 that was customary in better areas south of the New Road (today's Marylebone and Euston Roads). The grid of streets between Albert Street was laid out and rapidly filled with cheap houses. The development soon linked up with the southern end of Kentish Town; Jeffrey's Street and the nearby terraces were all built around 1800. Further north, Mansfield Place (now Holmes Road) and Spring Place were built out into the fields during the same period. By the early 1820s, houses had been built in Gloucester Place (the western end of Leighton Road) and there were a few villas along the recently opened Fortess Road, but otherwise, Kentish Town retained its essentially linear pattern.

Within a period of 25 years, from the mid 1840s to 1870, Kentish Town was transformed. Initial development was caused particularly by the sale of Lord Southampton's land in 1840 and subsequent construction of the streets between Kentish Town and Haverstock Hill. The fields on either side were filled with houses and the railways carved their several paths through the area. This is the period during which the Conservation Area was built. The 1849 Parish map shows the streets of the Conservation Area laid out with Wilmot Place houses already constructed as well as some on Rochester Road. The 1860 map shows the completion of Rochester Road and Rochester Terrace. Rochester Terrace properties had gardens that extended to Rochester Place. By 1890 the railways affected the development of the area. First came the North London Line, built on a massive brick viaduct above the southern end of Kentish Town in 1850. The branch that cuts through west Kentish Town up to Gospel Oak and Hampstead Heath followed in 1860, by which time the streets south of Prince of Wales Road and Rochester Road had been largely built-up.

In the latter half of the 19th century, as Kentish Town became fully urbanised, schools, public baths and churches were erected; sanitation and street lighting were improved; all the old inns were rebuilt and new pubs were built in the new streets. Horse-drawn trams were introduced in the 1870s, replaced by electric trams around 1908, and the Northern Line

was opened in 1907. Kentish Town Road became an important shopping centre. Most of the older houses along the road were converted or rebuilt as shops.

3.0 Assessment of Significance

3.1 Site Assessment

Location and Setting

Rochester Road and Rochester Terrace are laid out in a loose west/south-east alignment, stretching in a gentle curve from Kentish Town Road in the west to Camden Road in the east. Rochester Terrace Gardens are sandwiched between Rochester Road and Rochester Terrace, forming an enclave of open space and a green lung in the dense urban environment of Kentish Town

Architectural Interest and External Features

Throughout the Conservation Area the contribution of the streetscape is significant and a feeling of elegance is captured through the architecture, the open expanse of Rochester Terrace Gardens, the relatively low height of buildings and the gaps between buildings giving glimpses to the rear back gardens. In nearly every view, large mature trees have a presence.

The main impression of Rochester Conservation Area is its unity. The original composition of Rochester Conservation Area, in terms of street pattern and building form is still intact, although incremental changes to individual architectural features have occurred over the years. These changes have not greatly affected the overall integrity or strong cohesive identity of the Conservation Area. Within this context there is a pleasing variety of detail as well as design.

The gardens have been refenced with iron railings, painted black. They contain an abundance of vegetation and are lined with a variety of mature tree species. The boundary of the extensive gardens and playground is tapered to the west and is similar in shape to the blade of a knife, naturally following the undulations of land contours, which form Rochester Road to the north. The gardens are intrinsic to the Conservation Area, providing an interesting focus and communal area for residents, while softening the surrounding urban environment. Wilmot Place closes Rochester Terrace Gardens to the south east and has been laid out in a north/south-west direction, stretching from Rochester Road in the north to St Pancras Way in the south. Rochester Place lies to the south-west of Rochester Terrace in the form of a mews.

Rochester Road, Rochester Terrace, Rochester Place and Wilmot Place were laid out in the 1840s. The 1841 census shows that the earliest house building began in Wilmot Place in 1846, followed by the development of housing in Rochester Road in 1848, and then in Rochester Terrace in the 1850's. The three streets comprise a mixture of two or three storey semi-detached villas, or terraces. Some have half basements and elevated ground floors.

Nos. 1-10 contain two pairs of semi-detached villas and two terraces containing three villas in each terrace. The properties are similar in style to each other and have elevated ground floors. Some have projecting facades and chamfered quoins. Other details include; decorative ironwork on ground and upper floor windows (Nos.1-3, 6-8, 9&10) tripartite windows on ground floor level (Nos.1-3), hooded cornices (Nos. 1-3, Nos.6-8) and console supports (Nos. 1-3, No.8). Nos 9&10, however, have undergone considerable alterations.

4.0 Proposals and Assessment of Impact

The external windows and doors are proposed for replacement. It is being proposed that all windows on the front, side and rear elevation of the building are to be replaced with Timber double glazed units, finished in white to match the existing windows. The windows are to remain in the same style and fenestration so where a sash window is currently installed, it will be replaced with a sash window and where a fixed window currently is, it will be replaced with a sash window. All new windows will match the existing fenestration and design as closely as possible.

It is being proposed that all doors on the building are to be replaced with new Timber doors. The new entrance doors will be 4 panel with glass panel at the top to match the existing.

It is being proposed that all windows on the front, side and rear elevation of the building are to be replaced with double glazed timber units, finished in white to match the existing windows. The windows are to remain in the same style and fenestration so where a sash window is currently installed.

All proposed front sash windows will be slimline option to accommodate the conservation team's requirements, instead all rear timber sash windows will be double glazing standard sash box.

The depth of each front elevation sash is proposed as 14mm, side and rear should be 24mm to account for the proposed glazing thickness. The proposed depth of the sash encasements in total is 150mm, and the width of these is variable depending on the existing opening size and will be designed to match the existing.

5.0 Conclusion

Based on the above assessment it is considered that the proposals will not harm the significance of No. 8 Rochester Road and its installation will preserve the building's special architectural and historic interest. The proposals would give rise to modest economic and heritage benefits by making the property fit for purpose and improving its capacity to sustain a beneficial use. The consolidation and, where possible, restoration of the historic fabric is also an integral part of the proposal.

The justification for the proposal presented in this Heritage Statement is refers to enhancing the significance of heritage assets by putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation and the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality.