

The Heritage Practice

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Heritage Appraisal
111 Frognal London, NW3 6XR

June 2021

The following comments have been prepared by The Heritage Practice in support of the retrospective application for cellar repairs to 111 Frognal London, NW3 6XR (hereby known as the site).

The statement below should be read in conjunction with our Initial Heritage Assessment (IHA) dated March 2021 (appendix A). The works to the Cellar are discussed in Section 3.

Remedial works to the existing cellar were carried out and completed in the third quarter of 2018. The works to the cellar included:

1. Replacement of the pre-existing timber suspended floor with new beam and block ground floor finished with screed;
2. Removal of back filled earth from the cellar;
3. New reinforced concrete lined walls cast directly against the brickwork cellar walls;
4. Installation of a physical damp proof membrane with associated sump and pump;
5. Timber stud and plasterboard lining to the inner walls of the cellar;
6. New reinforced concrete floor to the cellar;
7. Doorway opening in internal cellar wall dividing north and south cellar rooms;

The 'as-built' works constitute alterations and not demolition of the listed building.

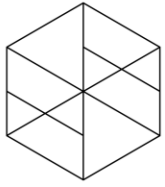
These works have been completed and are referred to as 'as-built.' The works did not benefit from listed building consent. Each element of the work and its impact is set out below:

Heritage Impact Assessment

Our assessment of the works, as set out in our IHA, considered each of the 7 elements of the works as listed above.

All but 1 of the 7 elements were identified as works which would result in preservation or enhancement to the grade II* listed building. This includes:

1. The reinstated the original ground level to the stable block and reinstated a solid floor, creating a more authentic character or at least an appearance more redolent of its original use;
2. Reinstating the northern cellar space by removing the rubble enhances our understanding of the space which was previously filled with rubble and therefore could not contribute to the architectural character of the building;
3. The 'as-built' concrete walls have been erected inside of the existing walls allowing no loss of historic fabric and to provide support as necessary to prevent inward movement of the cellar walls. The walls allow the removal of the backfill rubble to be removed thereby enhancing the space and building as a whole;



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4. Installation of Newton 500 physical membrane and cavity drain system at the site. This ensures no moisture is trapped inside of the walls or lining and allows the walls to continue to 'breathe' as expected;
5. This was lined with stud and plasterboard, with a lime plaster finish. This is a typical finish detail for subterranean spaces and causes no harm to the listed building;
6. The installation of solid concrete floors to a basement or cellar in listed buildings is extremely common, where no historic floor finishes survive, and causes no harm to the special interest of the listed building;
7. Equally the creation of an opening in the internal cellar wall, allowing the connection between the two spaces, is very unlikely to have caused the LPA concern if applied for as part of a listed building consent application.

Less Than Substantial Harm

Limited harm was found to be caused from casting the concrete retaining wall directly against the retained masonry cellar walls. This results in the works being highly unlikely to be reversible without causing damage to the face of the retained brick walls if removed.

In our view this harm would be at the lower end of less than substantial due to the limited contribution the cellar made to the historic and architectural character of the building.

Heritage Benefits

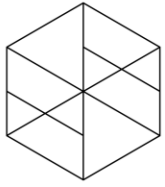
The National Planning Policy Framework requires any less than substantial harm to a designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Heritage benefits are classified as public benefits and can include "reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset"¹

The minor amount of harm outlined above is overwhelmingly outweighed by several heritage benefits to the repair works.

The cellars had fallen into disrepair and the benefits of the cellar works include securing the long term structural integrity of the building. The structural stability of the listed asset is now safe and stable. This is a heritage benefit.

The north cellar walls were previously covered and concealed from view. Neither cellar contributed to the architectural character of the building. Indeed its existence was unknown in recent times. The built works has arguably preserved this status quo whilst securing the structural stability of the building and allowed the reinstatement of the cellar volume, which is a heritage benefit.

¹ Guidance Historic environment Advises on enhancing and conserving the historic environment.
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Published 10 April 2014 Last updated
23 July 2019 Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723 Revision date: 23 07 2019



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The building is listed largely due to it being an original stable block built by Flitcroft in the 18th century and extended with gardeners cottage by G.E Street in the 19th century as part of Frognal Grove. The former ground floor of the stable therefore forms a key element of its significance. The 'as-built' works reinstate the original ground level to the stable block and reinstate a solid floor to a part of the building of high significance. This creates a more authentic character or at least an appearance more redolent of its original use (in conjunction with the works to replace and lower the stable doors and removal of the concrete steps on the front elevation approved as part of the 8 March 2020 scheme). The reinstatement of the original ground floor is thus a significant heritage benefit.

Overall impact of the cellar works

The retrospective repair works have been carried out to prevent the inward movement of the cellar walls and cast directly against the walls. There is an obvious danger to the structural integrity of the walls and damage to the face of the brick from removing the walls. As built they have stabilised the historic fabric from further movement and potential collapse, which has safeguarded the listed asset.

Despite a minor amount of less than substantial harm caused by the concrete retaining walls against the brickwork, this is far outweighed by multiple heritage benefits flowing from the repairs including stabilising the historic house above it, reinstating the original ground floor level and reinstating the north cellar volume.

We would urge officers to grant consent to regularise these necessary repairs which were carried out for practical reasons and with an overall positive impact on the listed asset.