

Heritage Statement

12 Leigh Street
London
WC1H 9EW

Revision 1

Our Ref: 1911
Date: Feb 2022



RTPI
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RIBA 
Chartered Practice



Institution of Civil Engineers

arb
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Registration
Board

ARB
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IHBC
INSTITUTE OF HISTORIC
BUILDING CONSERVATION

AABC
Association of Architects Associated in Building Conservation

FORM Design Group
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for the Listed Building Consent for partial replacement and refurbishment of three windows at 12 Leigh Street, a Grade II Listed Building, located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, London.
- 1.2 The document is set out in accordance with Government guidance, and examines the significance of the listed building and its setting, and appraise the impact of the proposed development. From this, it explains why the development is being put forward in its current form and concludes as to why the development is acceptable in both planning and design terms.
- 1.3 It should be read in conjunction with the other submitted documents and plans in order to gain a full and more detailed understanding of the proposal.



2.0 Policy Context

- 2.1 The current policy regime identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applications should consider the potential impact of development on Heritage Assets. This term includes both designated heritage assets, which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings, conservation areas, and registered parks and gardens), as well as undesignated heritage assets.
- 2.2 The primary legislation relating to historic buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires Councils to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses (sections 16 & 66)

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. When determining Planning Applications the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the approach of presumption in favour of sustainable development; except where this conflicts with other policies combined within the NPPF, inclusive of those covering the protection of designated heritage assets, as set out in paragraph 14 of the NPPF.
- 2.4 Section 12, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment', Paragraphs 126-141, relate to developments that have an effect upon the historic environment. These paragraphs provide the guidance to which local authorities need to refer when setting out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their local plans.
- 2.5 This should be a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and should include heritage assets which are most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. It is also noted that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 2.6 When determining planning applications, the NPPF advises local authorities to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- 2.7 In order to determine applications for development, Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that LPA's should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution made by their setting. Adding that the level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance.
- 2.8 According to Paragraph 185, plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.
- 2.9 Paragraphs 193 to 202 consider the impact of a proposed development upon the significance of a heritage asset. The NPPF emphasises that when a new development is proposed, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that the more important the asset, the greater this weight should be. It is noted within this paragraph that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or by development within its setting.
- 2.10 Paragraph 195 advises that where a development will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including maximisation of urban land within sustainable locations.

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008)

- 2.11 Conservation Principles outlines English Heritage's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in English Heritage's own advice and guidance through the planning process, the document is commended to local authorities to ensure that

all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.

- 2.12 This document emphasises the importance of understanding significance as a means to properly assess the effects of change to heritage assets. The guidance describes a range of heritage values which enable the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main 'heritage values' being: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. The Principles emphasise that 'considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places...it is the means by which each generation aspires to enrich the historic environment' (paragraph 25).

[The London Plan \(Revision 2015\)](#)

- 2.13 Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets - This policy seeks to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and requires that new development should "con-serve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets" and be "sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail".

[Camden's Planning Guidance: Home Improvements \(January 2021\)](#)

- 2.14 In Policy 1.1 Contextual, the Council advise that "The texture, colour, pattern and finish of materials (detailing) should relate well to the existing character and appearance of both the existing home and the wider area, particularly in Conservation Areas and listed buildings."
- 2.15 Policy 3.1 Windows and doors is clear in saying that a like-for-like replacement means that certain elements of the window or door, such as shape, dimensions, materials, pattern, size of glazing bars and opening method, are to be retained.
- 2.16 It further continues stating that the Council encourages the restoration of the original features and the changing of glazing from single to double glazing. However, if the building is in a Conservation Area, it should be considered the use of Historic Glass, and the use of secondary glazing if the building is listed.
- 2.17 Policy 3.2 Walls advises that surface finishes, both inside and outside of the building and surrounding area should respect and be sensitive to the physical and natural features, including the building's detailing. It also encourages the following considerations:
- "Repair brickwork and stonework, in materials and techniques sympathetic to the site context, whether using new or matching materials.
 - Consider the choice of mortar colour, grain and texture, bonding and pointing profile, while also satisfying the need for durable and sustainable materials, and the requirements for future maintenance.
 - Use lime based materials as they are sustainable and natural, help the building resist against moulds, absorb carbon and require less energy to produce than cement, relatively easy to remove from bricks which increases the possibility of re-using the bricks."
- 2.18 In regards to the exterior wall finish of a building, the policy outlines that it is an important aspect of its architecture and should be preserved as the "consistency of original elevation finishes can contribute positively to the character and appearance of a group of buildings and wider areas.". Therefore, where original masonry is exposed on exterior walls, it should not be painted, rendered or over-clad.

3.0 Heritage Asset

- 3.1 No.12 is a Grade II listed building and Historic England have listed it in 1974 as part of a group of buildings on the South side of Leigh Street. The building is described within the Statutory list as follows:

NUMBERS 12-19 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 12-19, LEIGH STREET

8 terraced houses with later shops. 1810-13. By James Burton. Built by T Jennings. Darkened stock brick with some later patching. 4 storeys and cellars. 2 windows each. Nos 12, 13 & 19, early C19 wooden projecting shopfronts with entablatures and large window panes; (...) Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows, 1st floor Nos 12-14 with cast-iron balconies. (...) Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: -1952: 88).

- 3.2 The property is a typical Georgian mid-terrace four-storey residential building with a shopfront that was converted into flats sometime in the past. Each flat occupies one storey with a communal staircase to the right-hand side of the building.

4.0 Assessment of Significance

- 4.1 At the heart of the process of identifying and protecting heritage is the concept of significance. This is defined in national planning policy as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest".
- 4.2 As the present application seeks consent to refurbish and partially replace three sash windows on the rear elevation of a listed building, an assessment of the significance of the fabric is required in light of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Understanding the significance of the affected architectural elements and the reason for the proposed work, will then allow to determine the extent of the impact of the proposal on the historic fabric.
- 4.3 It is evident that the existing windows have some evidential value as they really yield some information about the past. During repairing work, newspapers dated from 10th of February 1999 were found over the heads of every single window. As a practice commonly used by window installers to date the windows, this demonstrates that these windows were introduced only 22 years ago. Despite being modern replicas, they seemed to have been crafted to carefully replicate their predecessors.
- 4.4 Continuously, their historic value is also considerable as they hypothetically reproduce the design of much older windows, that themselves do correspond to the actual period of the building. As the design of the glazing bars is often a great way to date a window and, in this case, if the existing windows actually replicate the Ovolo and Fillet profile of the previous one, then they illustrated the craftsmanship and architectural taste of the early 19th century.
- 4.5 In terms of aesthetic value, the existing windows are also relevant as they recreated the historic appearance that contributed positively to the building's visual interest, while forming an integral part of the design of the building.
- 4.6 Overall, these windows contribute positively to the significance of the rear elevation, as to the whole significance of this early 19th century Georgian building, by truthfully recreating the original windows.



5.01 Back elevation in need of maintenance



5.02 First floor flat's rear window with damaged sill



5.03 Condition of first floor flat's rear window



5.04 Water ingress around the staircase's window



5.05 Existing second floor rear window for reference



5.06 Reusable sashes removed for inspection



5.07 Hardware/fittings in good condition throughout



5.08 Ovolo and Fillet glazing bar detail

5.0 Proposal

- 5.1 Unfortunately, like with any historic property, the most vulnerable external features on the elevations - windows and doors - are the ones more prone to decay under constant weather exposure. Especially, those facing the prevailing winds.
- 5.2 After many years of exposure, three of the rear windows of this property - two to the communal staircase (first floor and second floor) and one to the first floor flat - revealed some degree of decay on the sash box frames and immediately adjacent masonry. Their gradually defective condition allow for water to ingress into some of the flats and communal areas, as well as general appearance of damp. Draft and cold are also felt as a result of this situation.
- 5.3 Following a detailed appraisal, it was determined that the level of decay is too advanced to be repaired and any localised intervention/replacement of the box frames is insufficient to extend the life of the windows. A more intrusive intervention is required. It is then proposed to replace the box frames per complete.
- 5.4 Conversely, the existing sashes are in good condition with the single glass panes and the glazing bars intact. They are just in need of a paint refurbishment and localised infill repairs, before being reinstated.
- 5.5 The masonry will be made good and re-pointed on the outside and re-plastered on the inside to match the existing in style and mix. Any decayed brickwork will be dealt by carefully removing and reversed to hide the decay. In some situations coloured mortar can be used to patch and build up decayed bricks. Alternatively, salvage bricks can be used as suitable replacement, as long as they match in colour and size and preferably retain an identical patina as the existing.

6.0 Impact Assessment

- 6.1 In terms of the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the listed building, the historic structure suffers no significant loss under this application as only three sash box frames will be replaced. The affected areas are of low architectural merit and the loss of the previous non-original frames is considered not harmful to the architectural and historical character of the building.
- 6.2 Overall, the proposed intervention retains the significant architectural features of the existing, while upgrading the living conditions of the building. The result will bring a sympathetic and suitable improvement that does not detract from the historic property, but instead, increase its performance with view to its preservation and enhancement for future generations.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The existing windows are still in generally fair condition with great potential to be adequately repaired and enhanced to their former glory. The defects are essentially on the box frames, internal plaster and external rendered reveals and brickwork of three of the rear windows.
- 7.2 The proposed replaced box frames and refurbished sashes will have neutral impact on the overall significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area, since the affected area is hardly noticeable on the rear elevation of the property, only visible to the residents.
- 7.3 The present application intends to prevent further damage to the fabric, improve the windows' performance, extend the building's life and preserve its significance. All in accordance with the Historic England's, SPAB's and The Georgian Group's guidelines and recommendations.
- 7.4 The works will result in no detrimental harm to the heritage asset, being considered as positive in the preservation of its character and appearance.
- 7.5 For the above reasons, it is suggested that the proposed application should receive listed building consent, subject to appropriate conditions, as it will be policy-compliant with section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF; sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; policy 7.8 of The London Plan; and policies 1.1, 3.1 and 3.2 of Camden's Planning Guidance: Home Improvements (January 2021).