

Nos 9,10,11 Chalcot Square London, NW1 8YB

Full Planning Application For
Proposed Front Gardens Refurbishment

Design, Heritage & Access statement

22/03/2022

Introduction

This statement is prepared by Chassay+Last Architects in support of an application for a development relating to Grade II Listed buildings in a Conservation Area. This statement should be read in conjunction with the Arboricultural Statement prepared by Landmark Trees.

The proposed development involves provision for safe and accessible approach to the entrance of the lower ground floor maisonette at No 10A Chalcot Square, together with general refurbishment of the front garden at no 10, and reinstatement of the street frontage at nos 9, 10 & 11 Chalcot Square.


The lower ground floor maisonette at No 10A Chalcot Square has been occupied by the Applicant for 48 years. He falls into the category of 'older and disabled' as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), being 73 years old and with substantial long-term walking impairment.

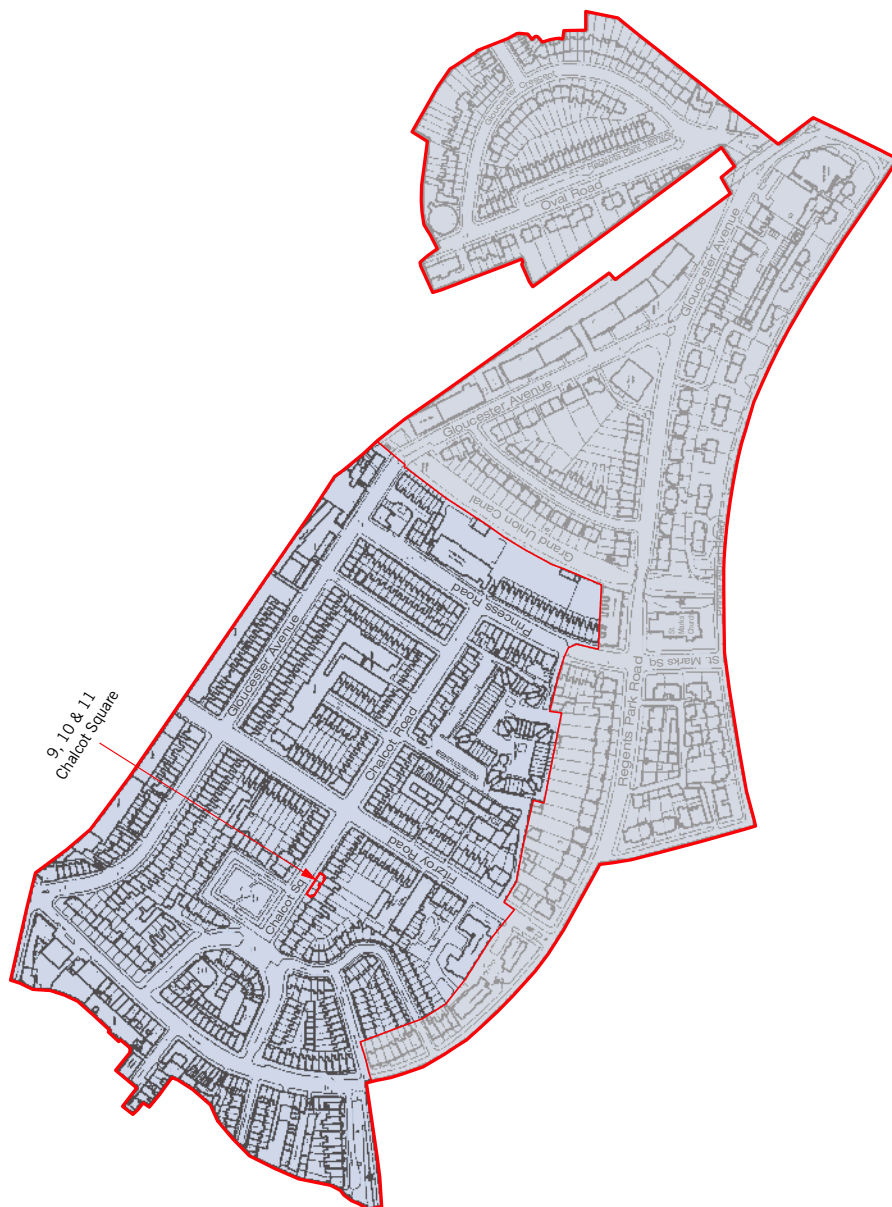
He wishes to remain in the house and maintain independence for many years to come and seeks permission for this proposal to allow him to do so.

The entrance path from the street to 10A Chalcot Square also functions as its fire escape route and its access for ambulance and fire emergency services. However, an existing adjacent hornbeam tree, which is the subject of a TPO, now seriously encroaches on the route restricting its width, creating a trip hazard; a dangerous situation which will get worse with time.

The document sets out the nature of the existing site, the proposal and design rationale for the approach adopted.



 Property boundary



The Heritage Statement

This statement assesses the historic and architectural significance of the existing front gardens of 9, 10 & 11 Chalcot Square terraces, and any contribution made by its setting as it relates to the new proposal and its affect on the Primrose Hill Conservation Area using relevant planning policy.

The Conservation Area

The application site is within Sub Area 2 of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

Chalcot Square is a prominent feature in Primrose Hill and makes a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Chalcot Square is a mainly grassed area enclosed by black railings with a number mature trees and a playground. The buildings facing onto the square (1 to 33 consecutive) are Grade II Listed buildings (listed in October 1971).

The official entry from English Heritage is listed as "TQ2784SE CHALCOT SQUARE 798-1/63/187 (West side) 14/05/74 Nos.1-11 (Consecutive) and attached railings".

A detailed description of this listing follows overleaf.

Grade II Listing :

Terrace of 11 houses forming west side of Chalcot Square. 1855-60; Nos 8-11, 1849, altered. Stucco with rusticated ground floors, mostly painted. Nos 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 & 10, slate mansard roofs with dormers.

EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, attics and basements; Nos 1, 4, 8 & 11, 4 storeys and basements, slightly projecting. 3 windows each; No.1 with 3-window right hand return (some blind). Prostyle Doric porticoes, Nos 2-6 supporting stucco balconies continued across 1st floor windows. No.1, balustraded balcony. Doorways with cornice-heads, fanlights, side lights and panelled doors (some part glazed). Entrance to No.1 on right hand return. Tripartite sashes to ground floors except No.1 with 3 2-pane sashes. Projecting houses with panelled pilasters at angles rising from 1st floor level to support the main entablature with modillion cornice below attic storey (No.4, entablature missing). Upper floors, lugged architrave sashes with margin glazing; 1st floors joined by continuous cornice with keystones above windows and console-brackets between and pediments over central windows (projecting houses, segmental). 2nd floors with keystones; projecting houses large central keystones projecting into the architrave above. Segmental arched, architraved sashes to attic storeys with pilasters trips at angles and parapets. Nos 5, 6 & 7 with cornices and blocking course, others, cut back cornices and parapets.

INTERIORS: not inspected.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas.

The Context

The development of Primrose Hill east of Regent's Park Road consists of formal terrace compositions organised along relatively straight, wide principal roads which include Chalcot Road, Gloucester Avenue, Fitzroy Road and Princess Road.

Long views toward the north end of Chalcot Road were designed to terminate at the junction between Sharpleshall Street and Berkley Road, where a pedestrianised open area sits in front of a backdrop of late Victorian buildings. Despite the open space as the focal point, Chalcot Square was unusually offset at the north end of Chalcot Road due to a pre-existing layout.

Nos 9, 10 & 11 Chalcot Square and their front gardens are located on the south side of the square which is also a continuation of Chalcot Road.

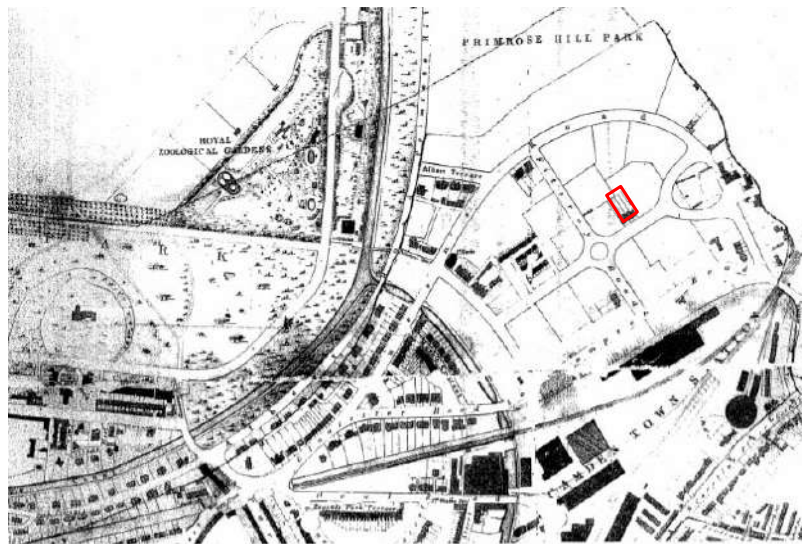
The 3 storey mid 19th century terrace houses and associated cast iron railings are Listed Grade II. The buildings are grand in character with stucco facades, rusticated ground storeys, and painted in distinctive pastel colours.

The block of four houses Nos 8 – 11 Chalcot Square are of particular interest as they were built some 10 years before any other houses in the vicinity and appear on the 1849 Parish Map (refer to maps below). The form of the roofs and the decoration of the chimney corbelling are different from the other houses (1-7) on the south side of Chalcot Square.

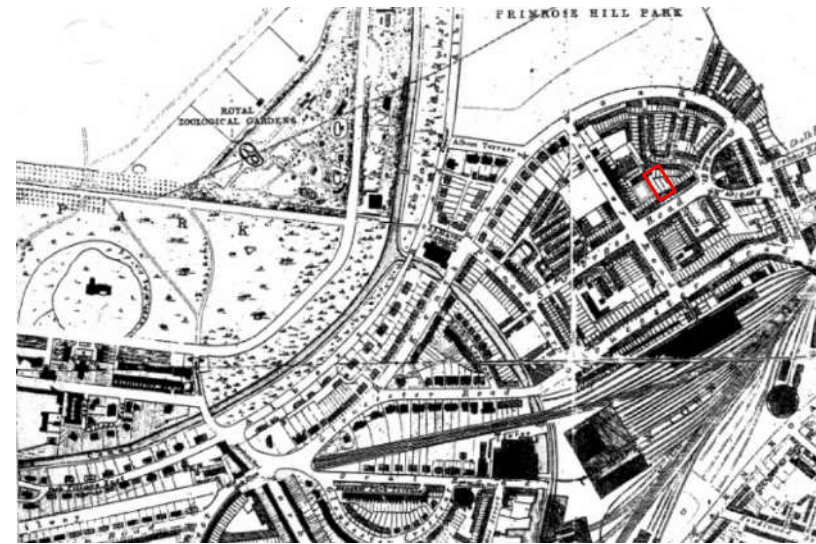
The junction of this terrace block with the later houses is marked at one end by an unusual double gate-post between nos 7 & 8 Chalcot Square & at the other end by a gate-post

and capped boundary wall built into the party wall between No 11 Chalcot Square and No 31 Chalcot Road. (See photos on page 9)

In respect to significant views and tree placement, it is noted in the Primrose Hill Conservation Area Appraisal that principal streets such as Chalcot Road have a distinctive lack of trees in order to facilitate “long formal views of distant trees and open spaces...”, as shown in the clear unobstructed view on Chalcot Road to the cluster of trees beyond the north end.



Map 1849



Map 1880

The Existing

Street Frontage Boundary Treatment

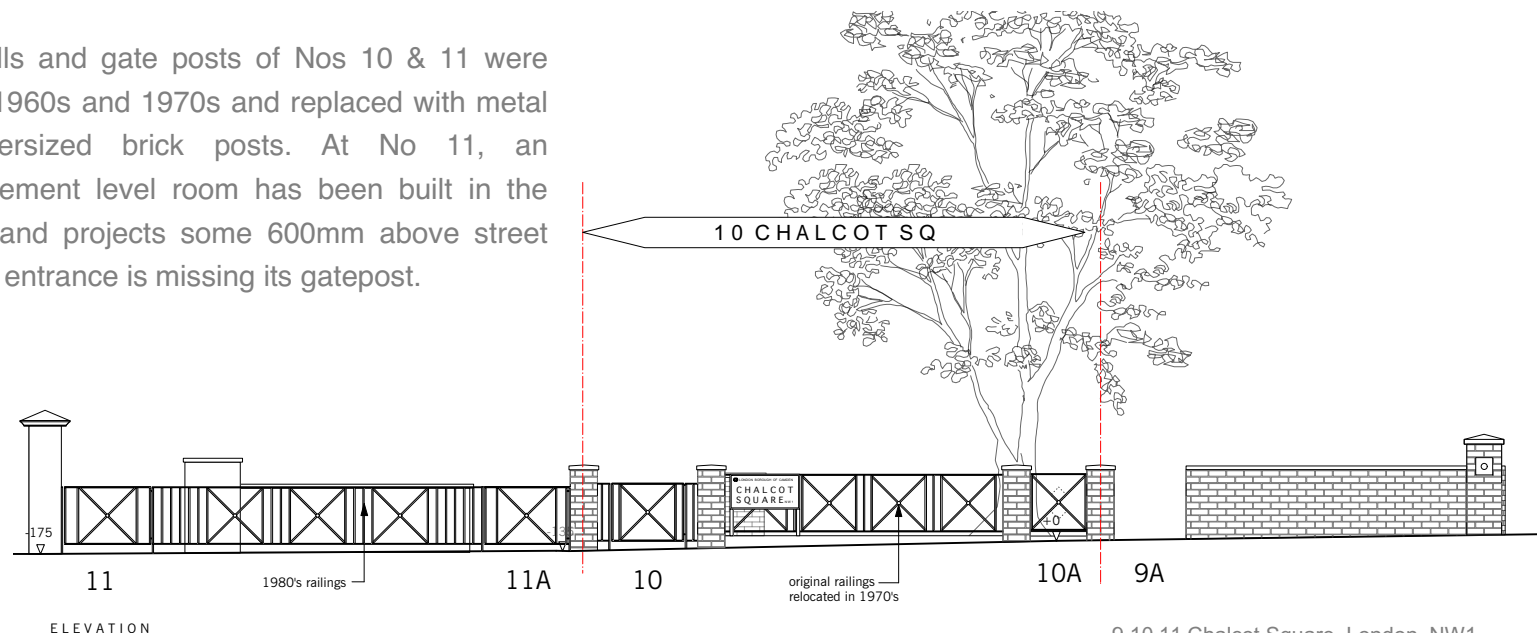
The front gardens of nos 1 to 11 on the south side of Chalcot Square are enclosed by low brick boundary walls and metal railings, flanked by brick piers. The lack of uniform appearance to the boundary treatments are a result of piecemeal alterations to the garden walls, posts, cappings and metal gates over the years.

The front boundary and gardens of Nos 9, 10 & 11 are now in a poor state – particularly Nos 10 & 11. Nos 9a, 10, 11 have been extensively altered with the part removal of the garden walls for metal railings with crossed balusters.

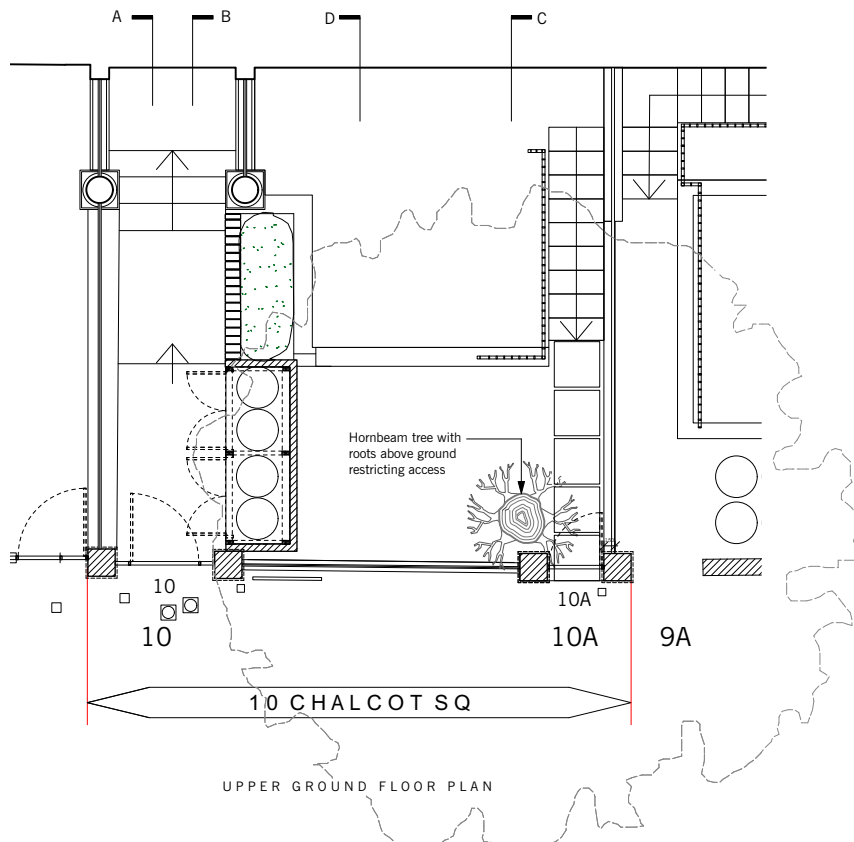
The front brick walls and gate posts of Nos 10 & 11 were demolished in the 1960s and 1970s and replaced with metal railings and undersized brick posts. At No 11, an unsympathetic basement level room has been built in the front garden area and projects some 600mm above street level. At No 9A, the entrance is missing its gatepost.

It appears the front garden of no 9 retains a surviving set of gate posts for the period. These posts are considerably larger and taller in comparison to nos 9a, 10 & 11 and include stone cappings with square plaques to the outer face onto which exterior bell pulls were likely attached during the late 19th century. (See photos on pages 9 & 10)

Typically, bell pulls were elaborate circular dishes with central pull knobs inset into stone blocks. The bells were hooked to a wire, using a non-electrical bell system.



The Front Garden Of No. 10 & 10A



The front garden is divided between no 10 which provides access to the 3 flats occupying the upper floors and no 10A providing access to the lower ground floor maisonette.

The pathway to no. 10 is sloping and has uneven steps. It has a brick and concrete binstore, which does not provide adequate storage for refuse and recycling.

In the front garden of 10A a Hornbeam tree is located closely behind the existing brick gate post. This tree is subject to a Tree Protection Order (TPO).

Currently the roots of the hornbeam tree have emerged above ground level which has resulted in uneven lifting of the paving slabs. The tree roots are slowly destabilising and displacing the gate post and obstructing safe access into the garden. In addition, there is evidence of the roots contributing to the structural instability of the retaining wall at lower ground level.

Fig.1
Gatepost and boundary wall of No 11
Chalcot Square showing capping detail



Fig.2
No 11A Chalcot Square



Fig.4
No 10 Chalcot Square



Fig.3
No 11 Chalcot Square



Fig.5
View of No 10A & hornbeam tree
behind, pushing gatepost forward



Fig.8
Uneven paving at No 10A gateposts
hornbeam tree behind



Fig.9
Double gatepost between No 7 and
No 8 Chalcot Square with original
inset stone for bell-pull and gate nib.

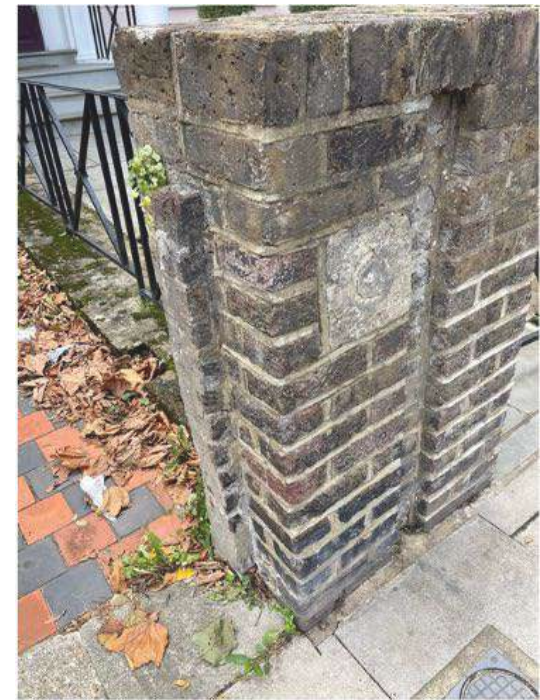




Fig.11 Streetview

The Proposal

The proposal aims to achieve 2 key goals:

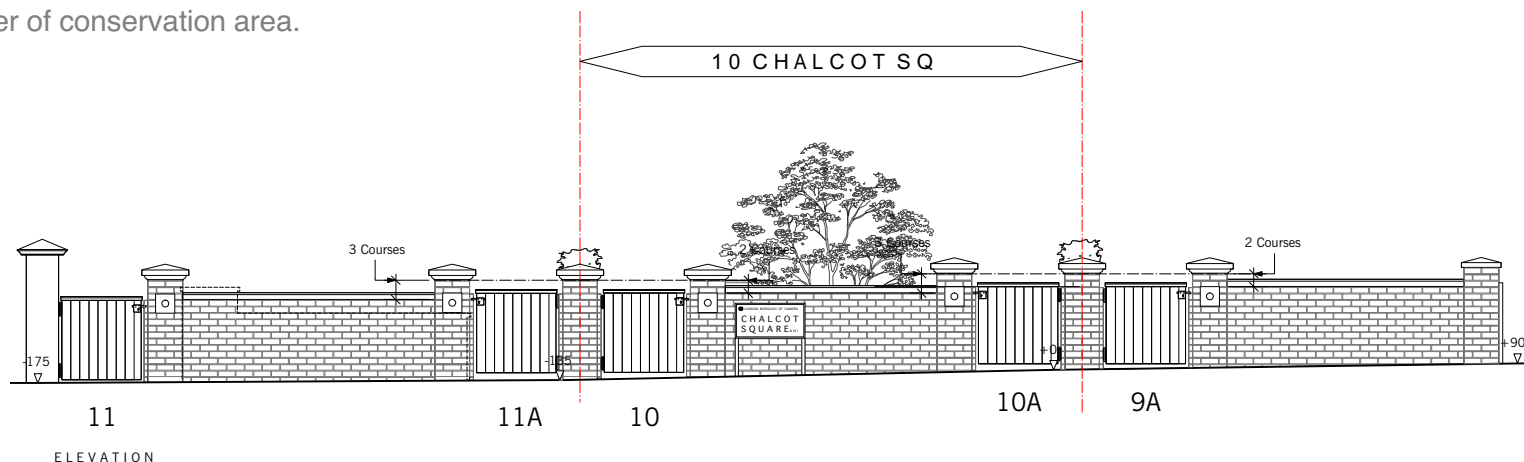
- 1) To improve the accessibility arrangements to/from the basement flat at 10A which is currently not fit for purpose
- 2) To reinstate the front garden boundaries as closely to its original state, such that the overall character and appearance of the conservation area is enhanced and preserved

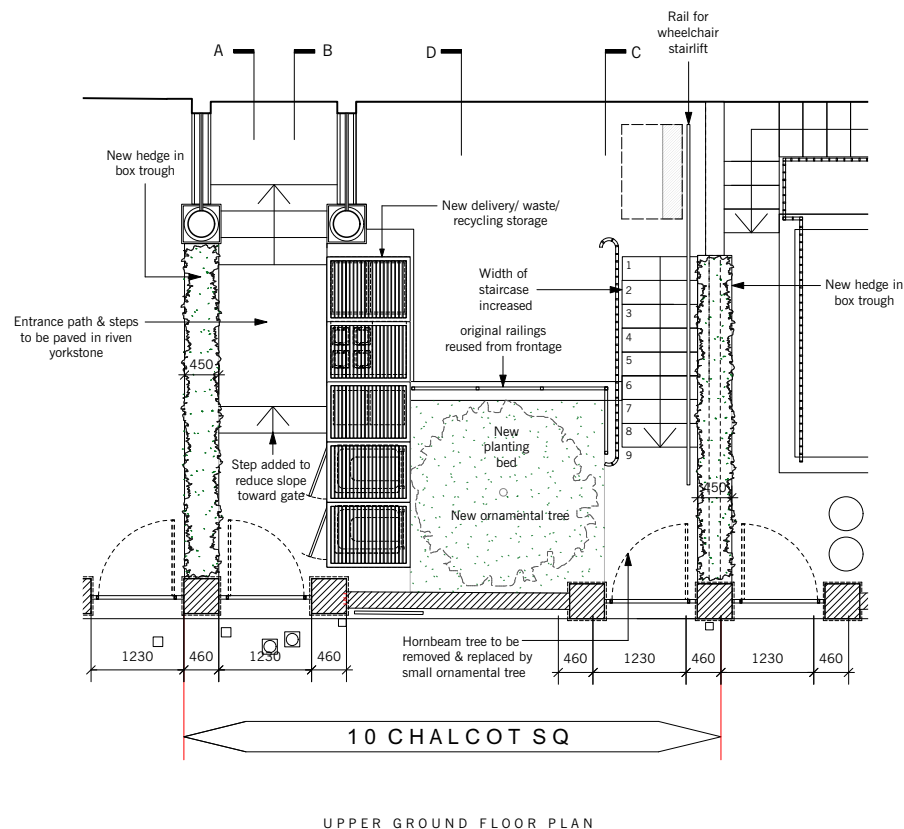
It is proposed the details of the original gate posts and front garden wall at no 9 will be replicated at nos 9a, 10 & 11 to create uniformity along the south side of Chalcot Square such that it would significantly enhance the appearance and character of conservation area.

The proposed refurbishment of the front garden boundary will involve the following :

a) New Gate Posts & Front Walls to Nos 9A, 10, 11

- Front garden gate posts and walls to be rebuilt in reclaimed London stock brick
- Front garden gate posts to be 2 brick widths and align with the height of Nos 8 & 9 with proposed new stone cappings
- New timber boarded gates and brick gate posts with insets to be reinstated in keeping with the historic forms of the properties and is characteristic of the wider group of Listed Buildings on the south-west side.





UPPER GROUND FLOOR PLAN

b) *Alterations, Repairs to Metal Railings & Retaining Wall*

- 1980's metal railings on the side boundaries of Nos 9/10 & 10/11 to be replaced by hedges in box planters
- Steps to lower ground paved area of No 10A rebuilt to ambulant accessible standards
- Retaining walls enclosing lower ground courtyard of No 10A to be repaired/ reconstructed as necessary and finished in painted render
- Incorporating storage for cycle on lower ground courtyard of No 10A
- Replace bin storage with new slatted timber and render enclosure to rationalise waste/recycling, meters and delivery for Nos 10 & 10A

c) *Removal of hornbeam tree, levelling of thresholds & new planting*

- Reduce raised level of front garden to allow for level access at gate opening
- Provide new planting bed area with new ornamental tree in the garden of No 10A

c) *Removal of the hornbeam tree, levelling of thresholds & new planting*

During the course of the design process, we have rigorously explored options to retain the hornbeam tree in the garden of no 10, including meeting on site with the arboriculturalists and with Albert Grant, Principal Building Control Officer, about the access arrangements.

Unfortunately, the proposed felling of the hornbeam is required due to its proximity to the existing gate opening and the significant surfacing and encroachment of the roots, making it difficult to align and rebuild the garden wall without extensive structural support and underpinning. The tree roots further impinge on the gate, reducing the clear opening width to 560mm.

In addition, the proposal to remove the step and level the gate threshold is not possible without removing the tree.

It is also the aim of the proposal to safeguard the structural stability of the lower ground retaining wall at no 10 as there is evidence of the tree roots causing increased pressure on the wall and is resulting in cracking.

d) *Arboricultural Report*

The proposal to remove the hornbeam tree at No 10A Chalcot Square will be dealt with in the Arboricultural Report by Landmark Trees.

A summary of the report's conclusions is as follows:

"The report has assessed the impacts of the development proposals and concludes there is no alternative to the removal of the subject tree. The impact of this removal is assessed as being moderate over the short term and replacement species are proposed as mitigation.

In conclusion, the proposal, through following the recommendations, will comply with both the London Plan and local planning policy and is therefore acceptable".

With the proposal to introduce additional replacement plant species, these improvements will balance the loss of the existing tree and will provide a substantial improvement in amenity over the long term when the new trees and planting have matured.

In addition, the removal of the tree will drastically improve much needed safe egress and access to no 10a.

Accessibility Statement

The occupant is classed as 'older' and 'disabled' in planning terms and wishes to continue living in his home with an independent life for many years.

Camden CPG *Access for All* states "The Council expects all development of buildings and places including ... alterations ... to be inclusively designed and useable by all".

The design meets that requirement by creating a safe and accessible approach and entrance in accordance with *Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document M 2015 edition Access to and use of buildings* (AD-M) as follows:

- Entire entrance route including steps and final exit (gate) has minimum clear width of 900 mm to meet AD-M(1) 'Visitable dwellings';
- Street entrance lowered by 150 mm to the public pavement level as needed to provide step-free access.
- Otherwise it will never be possible to provide step-free access as a ramp could not be put in the public footpath.

- Steps, landings and turning space compatible with fitting chair or wheelchair platform lift to meet AD-M(2) 'Accessible and adaptable dwellings'.
- Basement paved area raised to be level with the threshold of front entrance door so that the entire entrance storey including doors to garden, WC and shower is step-free in accordance with AD-M(2).

Relevant Policy

- *National Planning Policy Framework*
Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document M
Access to and use of buildings - In relation to achieving
- 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'
 - AD-M(1) 'Visitable dwellings'
 - AD-M(2) 'Accessible and adaptable dwellings'
- Camden CPG 'Access for All'

PHCAAC Pre-App Advice

The Primrose Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee reviewed the scheme on 3 November 2021.

The Advisory Committee noted the front gardens and front walls of nos 1 to 11 distinguish the south-west side from the other three sides of Chalcot Square, "which have no front gardens, but areas with railings".

The Committee welcomed the reinstatement of the street frontage to nos 9, 10 & 11, concluding it would be compatible with the character of the larger group of Listed Buildings on the south-west side of the Square and consistent with historic arrangements as indicated in the existing boundary walls.

Furthermore, The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposed front boundary treatment as a significant enhancement of the conservation area, and noted the proposal to no 10a would improve accessibility, consistent with the objectives of 'Lifetime' homes.

It was understood the enhancement of the front boundary wall and improved accessibility would necessitate the loss of the hornbeam tree located in the front garden of no 10.

In conclusion, "in the context of the significant enhancement of the conservation area proposed, and on the understanding that consent for the removal of the tree would be conditional on the completion of the proposed front boundary walls, piers and gates to nos 9, 10, and 11 Chalcot Square, on the planting in the front garden of an agreed variety of deciduous tree, extra heavy stand size, and on the provision of an agreed variety of deciduous street in the footway on a location to be agreed, the Advisory Committee would not object to the loss of the hornbeam".

A copy of the pre-app advice from PHCAAC is appended to this document.

Summary

In conclusion, the front gardens of 9, 10 & 11 have undergone gradual changes that have undermined the overall character of the conservation area. The proposals seek to reinstate the garden boundary wall to closely match the original design, thus restoring uniformity to the front gardens on the west-south side of Chalcot Square.

The proposals are designed to provide safe and accessible access for the occupant of 10A Chalcot Square by ensuring appropriate level thresholds and clear openings to the gate entrance at street level and into the lower ground floor flat entrance with a new ambulant staircase that is compatible with the installation of a stairlift.

The proposals to achieve a safe and accessible entrance into no 10A will necessitate the felling of the hornbeam tree that is severely obstructing access. However, the opportunity for replacing the tree in a more appropriate location with additional biodiverse planting will mitigate and improve both the appearance and accessibility of the front gardens.

The proposed front boundary treatment would be a significant enhancement to the character and appearance of Chalcot Square and the conservation area as a whole.

Appendix

- PRE-APP ADVICE from Primrose Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee

PRE-APP ADVICE from Primrose Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee
12A Manley Street, London NW1 8LT

3 November 2021

For attention of Malcolm Last and Jill Facer
Chassay + Last Architects

Nos 9, 10 and 11 Chalcot Square, NW1 8YB

1. The Committee reviewed this scheme at its meeting on 3 November 2021 and agreed the following advice.
2. The Committee noted that the three houses, nos 9, 10, and 11 are Listed and form a part of Chalcot Square, which is one of the major townscape features of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The three houses form – with nos 12, 13 and 14 opposite – the widening from Chalcot Road as it opens into the full Square. The three houses are also part of the south-west side of the Square – nos 1 to 11 – which have front gardens generally contained by low brick front boundary walls. These front gardens and front walls distinguish this side of the Square from the other three sides of the square, which have no front gardens, but areas with railings. The distinction is significant in the character and the appearance of the Square as a whole.
3. The proposal is for the replacement of the current mix of brick piers and railings by a coherent scheme of low brick walls with brick piers – the walls capped by plain stone copings and the gate piers topped by pyramidal capstones with simple mouldings. Gates would be low, in timber. The proposals would also include a new recycling bin and service store in the front garden of no.10 replacing the existing with a minimal height structure better respecting the adjacent front boundary wall and porch to the ground floor front door. The height of the proposed walls would step down to follow the slope in the street.
4. The proposed front boundary walls and piers, with timber gates, would be consistent with the front boundary walls characteristic of the larger group of Listed Buildings on the south-west side of the Square and would store elements which appear to be broadly consistent with the historic forms evidenced in the existing boundary walls.
5. The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposed front boundary treatment as a significant enhancement of the conservation area.
6. The Advisory Committee also noted that the proposal for no. 10 would seek to improve accessibility to the lower-ground-floor accommodation consistent with the objectives of 'Lifetime' homes.
7. The enhancement to the front boundary walls and the improved accessibility would imply the loss of the tree would need to be replaced for the current proposals to be carried out. We understand that the applicant would agree to replace the hornbeam with a new garden tree, and possibly, additionally a new street tree. The Committee noted that a new street tree should enhance the planting in the Square – which contrasts with the character of Chalcot Road – be aligned with the main rectangle of Chalcot Square itself.
8. In the context of the significant enhancement of the conservation area proposed, and on the understanding that consent for the removal of the tree would be conditional on the

completion of the proposed front boundary walls, piers and gates to nos 9, 10, and 11 Chalcot Square, on the planting in the front garden of an agreed variety of deciduous tree, extra heavy stand size, and on the provision of an agreed variety of deciduous street in the footway on a location to be agreed, the Advisory Committee would not object to the loss of the hornbeam.

9. The advisory Committee would be happy to discuss details and tree varieties in due course.

Richard Simpson FSA
Chair