

34 Abbey Gardens NW8

HERITAGE STATEMENT

January 2021

Miriam Holland

Historic Research and Heritage Consultancy

07814 700355 - miriam@miriamholland.com

34 Abbey Gardens, NW8 – Heritage Statement

All Rights reserved

Copyright © Miriam Holland

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means (including without limitation by photocopying or placing on a website) without the prior permission in writing of Miriam Holland, except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Applications for permission to reproduce any part of this work should be sent to miriam@miriamholland.com

I INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Reasons for the Study	4
1.2 Approach and Methodology	4
1.3 Existing Information and Resources	5
2 UNDERSTANDING	6
2.1 Location	6
2.2 Heritage Context	7
2.3 Planning Policy and Guidance	11
3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT	13
3.1 History	13
3.2 Architectural Development and Description of 34 Abbey Gardens	16
4 SITE IMAGES	21
5 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	32
5.1 Introduction to Significance	32
5.2 Assessment of Significance	34
6 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	36
6.1 Summary of Proposals	36
6.2 Criteria for Assessment	38
6.3 Heritage Impact Assessment	40
7 CONCLUSION	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	45
APPENDIX A: PLANNING LEGISLATION	46
APPENDIX B: AERIAL IMAGES	54

I INTRODUCTION

I.1 Reasons for the Study

This document is a heritage statement and impact assessment for 34 Abbey Gardens, London NW8. No.34 is listed at Grade II and is situated within the St John's Wood Conservation Area, and is also subject to an Article 4 Direction controlling any development affecting the external appearance of the building. Two separate pre-application processes have informed the development of this set of proposals, and details of how their advice has been acted upon can be seen within the Heritage Impact Assessment in section 6.3, and in the associated Design & Access Statement.

This report has been produced to inform the development of proposals for the site, and to provide an objective assessment of the heritage impact of the proposed works. A detailed summary of the works can be found in section 6, but the following highlights the most significant of these:

- A lower ground floor extension and reinstatement of the lost closet wing to ground floor level.
- Careful restoration and refurbishment of historic plasterwork, joinery and windows throughout the property.
- Minor changes to layout at lower ground and second floor level.

This report has been produced by Miriam Holland BA (Hons) MA - an independent Heritage Consultant and Historic Researcher.

I.2 Approach and Methodology

A Heritage Statement is a document which provides an assessment of the impact of a set of proposals on the heritage interest and values of a building or site. A detailed account of the site's history and development is produced, which is then used to establish a robust assessment of its significance. This type of document is essential to the effective management of change to and around heritage assets, as well as in enhancing the significance and special character of a place.

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) defines conservation as the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset. Proposed change should sustain, and where possible enhance, its significance.

This report will incorporate a description of the site, 34 Abbey Gardens, and an assessment of its heritage context. The specific planning policy and heritage guidance which should be taken into consideration will be outlined, and a full history and development of the site will be produced. The site will be put into context, thus informing the statement of significance. The report will conclude with an assessment of the impact of the proposed works on the historic and architectural interest of the site and its surroundings.

1.3 Existing Information and Resources

Extensive primary and secondary research was undertaken to provide the baseline information for this report. A number of different archives were consulted, along with published sources and online databases, which are referenced throughout this document.

The site was first visited on 16th June 2020.

Archives consulted in the development of this document include:

- The National Archives
- Metropolitan Archives
- RIBA Library
- Westminster Archives
- City of Westminster Planning Department

2 UNDERSTANDING

2.1 Location

Grade II listed No.34 is located on the northern side of Abbey Gardens, and towards its western end. The building is within a terrace and is listed as a group encompassing Nos. 8 to 48 (even). Its front elevation looks out onto the matching terrace of 9 to 41 (odd) Abbey Gardens, which is also listed at Grade II.

The rear of the property is not easily glimpsed from street level due to surrounding buildings and trees.

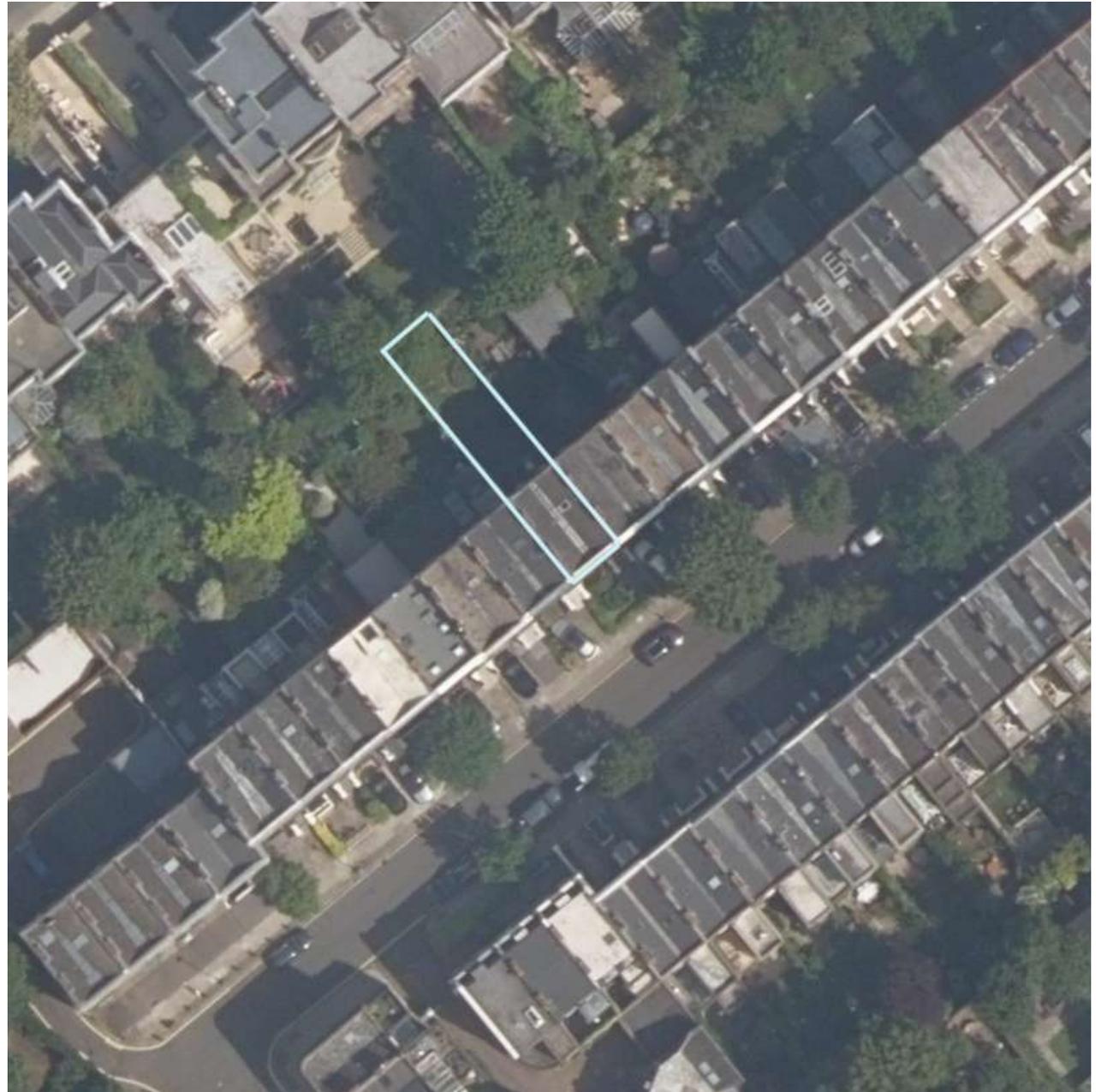


Fig. 1. Site location

2.2 Heritage Context

2.2.1 Listed Buildings

34 Abbey Gardens is listed at Grade II. Due to their special historical or architectural interest, listed buildings are protected under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. Statutory listing is now a preservation order and does not prevent change, however, Alterations to listed buildings require listed building consent, which allows local authorities to make decisions that have been informed by careful research and a thorough understanding of the building or site's significance.

National and local planning policies also recognise that changes to other buildings or sites in the vicinity of a listed building can affect its special interest. There are a number of listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of 34 Abbey Gardens. These include:

- 8-48 Abbey Gardens (Grade II) (of which our site forms part)
- 9-41 Abbey Gardens (Grade II)
- 2-6 Abbey Gardens (Grade II)
- 50-56 Abbey Gardens (Grade II)
- 61 and 63 Marlborough Place (Grade II)
- 65 and 67 Marlborough Place (Grade II)
- 57 and 59 Marlborough Place (Grade II)

The locations of the closest of these heritage assets can be seen on the following page.

The listing text¹ for 8-48 Abbey Gardens reads as follows:

TQ 2683 SW CITY OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY GARDENS
NW8 11/54
Nos 8 to 48 (even) 9.1.70 GV II
Terrace of houses. Circa 1850. Stucco brick, stucco dressings.
Roof not visible. 3 storeys and basement. Each house 2 windows
wide. Balanced composition; centre and end pairs of houses
break forward slightly. Channelling to ground floor. Slightly
projecting Ionic porches to right of each house. Panelled doors.
First floor continuous bombé balcony. Square-headed windows;
architraved above ground floor, corniced to first floor with
pediments to centre and end houses. Sashes, margin glazing.
Console cornice above second floor. Parapet. 1 of 2 matching
terraces lining Abbey Gardens.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1066527>

2.2.2 Heritage Assets Map



Fig. 2. Location of nearby heritage assets marked with blue triangles - our site marked in red.

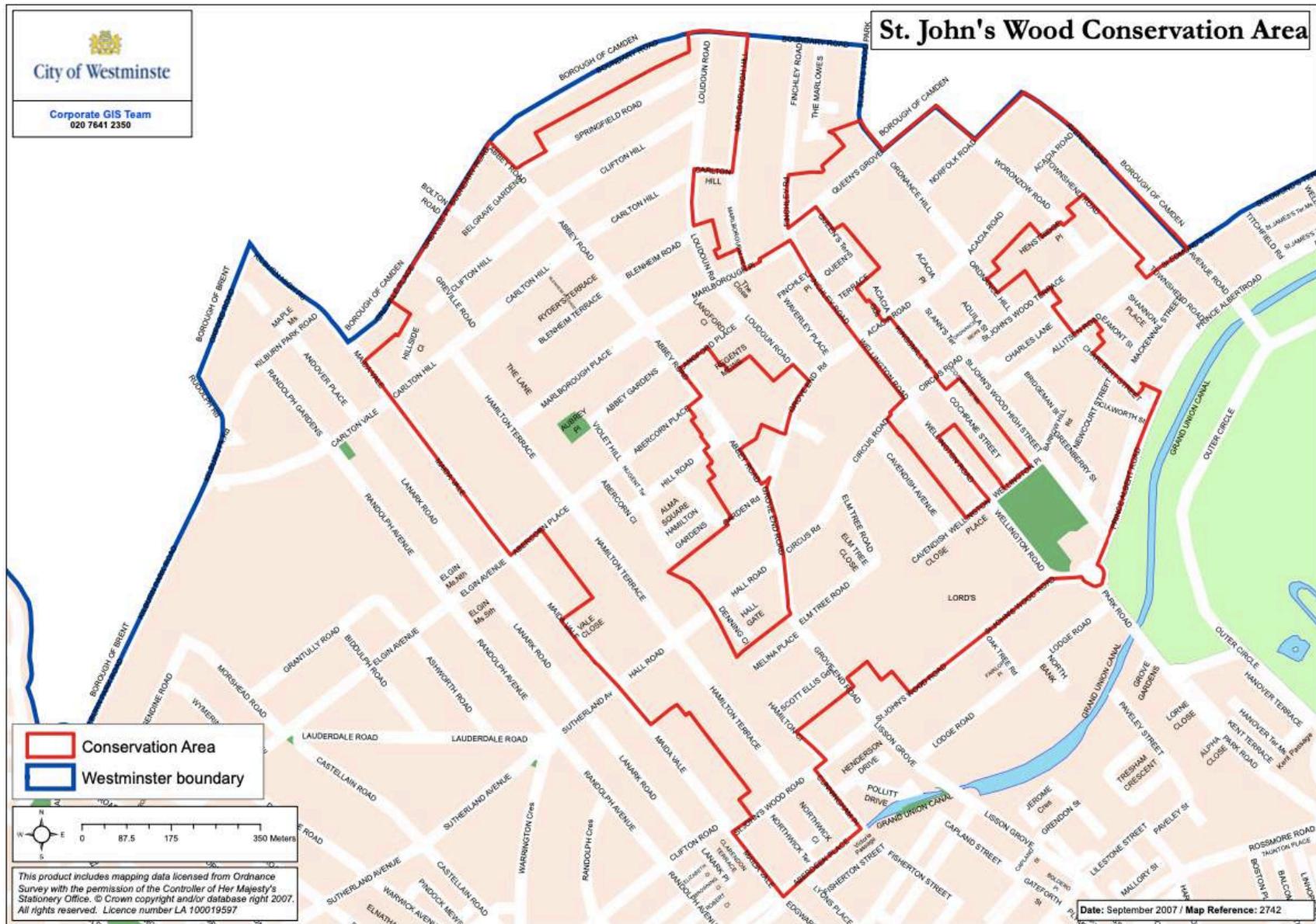
2.2.3 Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are protected under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. The Act requires authorities to designate and form policies to protect areas of special architectural and historic merit.

The site lies within the St John's Wood Conservation Area, which was first designated in 1967, and was extended in 1979 and 2007. It is covered by the St John's Wood Conservation Area Audit, which was adopted in 2008, and provides an appraisal of the historic context and key features of the Conservation Area.

The character of the Conservation Area is primarily defined by a low density streetscape with wide, tree-lined streets. There is a picturesque mixture of detached and semi-detached villas, along with smaller pockets of terraced housing - as seen in Abbey Gardens. These terraced streets are generally tightly planned and have a greater sense of enclosure due to being narrower - although Abbey Gardens is on a particularly grand scale for the area.

2.2.4 Conservation Area Map



2.3 Planning Policy and Guidance

2.3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (updated February 2019) is the overarching planning policy document for England and provides guidance on how to implement legislation covering the historic environment - the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.

Section 16 of the NPPF - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - covers the government's policies for the protection of heritage. The policies advise a holistic approach to planning and development, where all significant elements which make up the historic environment are termed 'heritage assets'. These consist of designated heritage assets (such as listed buildings or Conservation Areas), non-designated heritage assets (such as locally listed buildings), or any other features which are considered to be of heritage value. The policies within this document emphasise the need for assessing the significance of heritage assets and their setting in order to fully understand the historic environment and inform suitable proposals for change to significant buildings.

The NPPF defines conservation as the 'process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains, and where appropriate, enhances its significance.' Therefore a key aim of the NPPF is to encourage the identification of the significance of heritage assets in advance of proposed works (paragraphs 184-202) The paragraphs pertinent to 34 Abbey Gardens are reproduced in Appendix A for reference.

2.3.2 Regional Planning Policy

The London Plan is the overall strategic plan for London. It sets out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the Capital to 2031.² The local plans for London Boroughs need to be in general conformity with the London Plan, and its policies help guide planning decisions by councils and the Mayor.

The Plan was revised in 2011, with alterations in 2013, 2015, and 2016, and there is a new draft London Plan currently under consultation.

Key policies to be considered in relation to our site include:

- Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets and Archaeology
- Policy 7.9 Heritage-led Regeneration

The full text is reproduced for reference in Appendix A.

² The London Plan, <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan/london-plan-2016-pdf> (accessed 20 August 2020)

2.3.3 Local Planning Policy

Westminster Council Legislation

Westminster's City Plan 2019-2040 has been submitted to the Secretary of State and is undergoing 'Examination in Public'. Until its adoption, Westminster's City Plan (2016) is the key document for determining planning applications in Westminster. The main policies covered within local legislation and guidance which apply to changes made to heritage assets include the following:

Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies (2016)
S25 Heritage
S26 Views

Unitary Development Plan (2007) Saved Policies
DES9 Conservation Areas
DES10 Listed Buildings
DES15 Metropolitan and local views

Full details can be found within Appendix A.

2.3.4 Heritage Guidance

Guidance documents published by Historic England have been consulted in the preparation of this report. These include:

- *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008)³

This document sets out a method for thinking systematically and consistently about the way heritage values can be ascribed to a place (for more information see section 5)

- *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017)⁴

This advice note (which supersedes *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2011)) offers good practice advice on the setting of heritage assets within the context of the NPPF and revised local policies.

³ Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008), <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/> (accessed 20th August 2020)

⁴ Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017) <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/> (accessed 20th August 2020)

3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 History

3.3.1 Early History

The area of St John's Wood historically formed part of the Great Forest of Middlesex. Named for its medieval landowners, the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, the area became Crown Land following the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century.

The land remained under the ownership of the Crown until the early 18th century, when much of it was sold - Henry Samuel Eyre acquired a 500-acre portion of the estate in 1732, which included the land on which Abbey Gardens now sits.

The area would remain agrarian in character for some years after coming under the ownership of the Eyre family, and it was not until 1802 that architect John Shaw was employed to draw up plans for the area. Col. Eyre began the first of several attempts to promote the construction of a public road through his estate in 1819, and eventually succeeded in the Finchley Road Act of 1826. By 1828 Abbey Road had also been laid out, and building began to spread slowly northwards throughout the late 1820s and 30s.



Fig. 3. Greenwood's Map, 1828

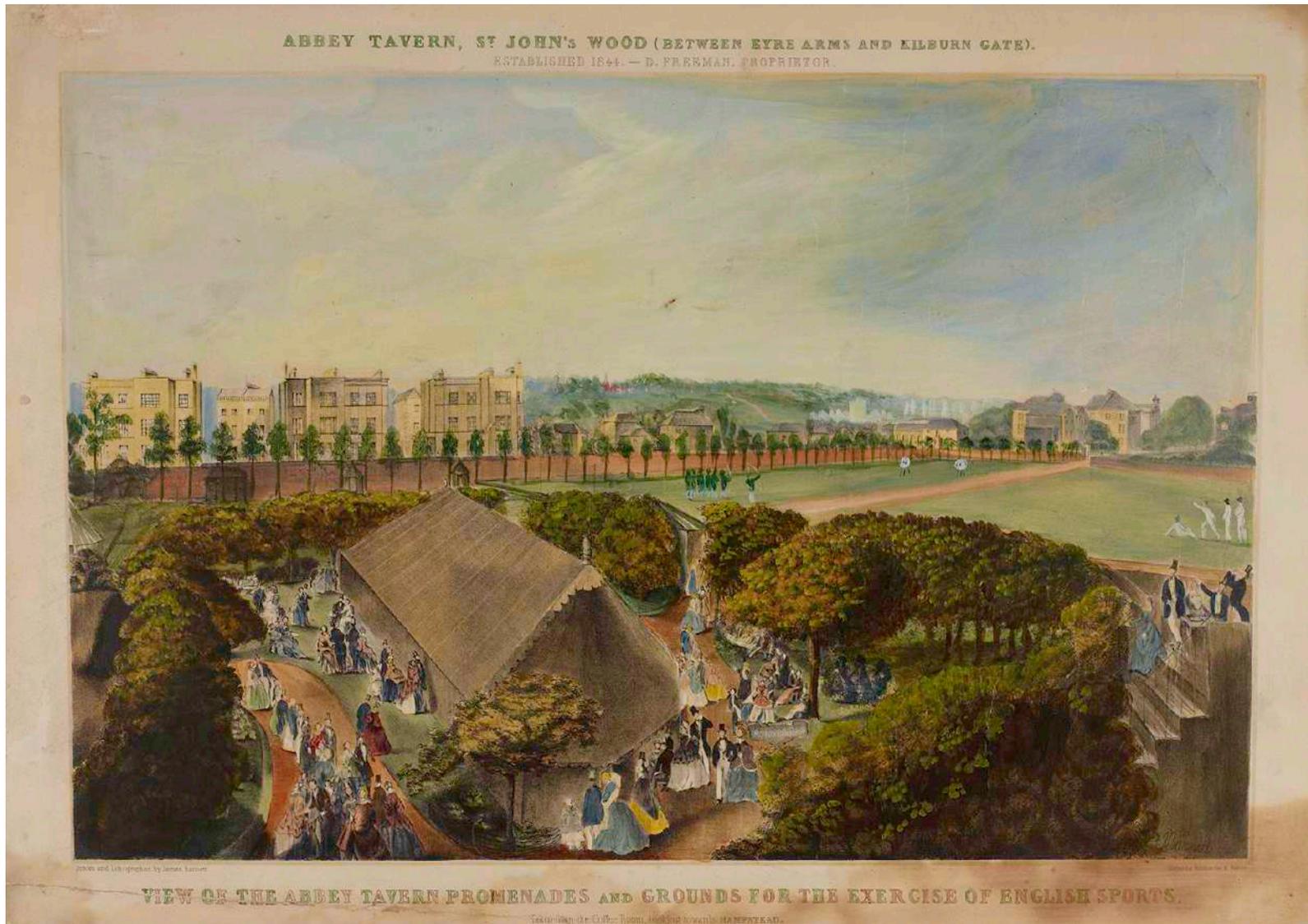


Fig. 4. View of the Abbey Tavern Promenades and Grounds for the Exercise of English Sports, James Barnett, c.1850.

Greenwood's Map of 1828 (Fig. 3) shows the area around present-day Abbey Gardens, prior to its being laid out. Abbey Road can be seen running north-south, while the blue arrow indicates the location of Abbey Gardens. Although some development, primarily of single detached buildings, has taken place, the area is still largely open fields.

Abbey Gardens was in fact constructed on the site of the Violet Hill Archery Grounds. Archery had been a popular sport in the area since the 18th century, and this site was furnished with both a pavilion and the Abbey Tavern (now Violet Hill Studios) to serve its patrons. An undated painting by James Barnett (Fig. 4), erroneously dated c.1870 in some secondary sources but more likely painted c.1850, shows the

Violet Hill Archery Grounds in use, prior to the construction of Abbey Gardens. This view looks north-east towards the junction of Abbey Road and Marlborough Place in the distance.

The first map to show Abbey Gardens fully laid out is the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1862-72 (Fig. 5). The list description for the terrace states that it was built c.1850, but the actual date of construction is probably slightly later, as the terrace as a whole was first advertised for rent or sale in early 1860 (see Fig. 6). The OS maps of 1896 (Fig. 7) and beyond show little change in the area and none to No.34 in particular, although by this point the rear closet wings to some properties on the terrace have undergone changes. The historic development of No.34 will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

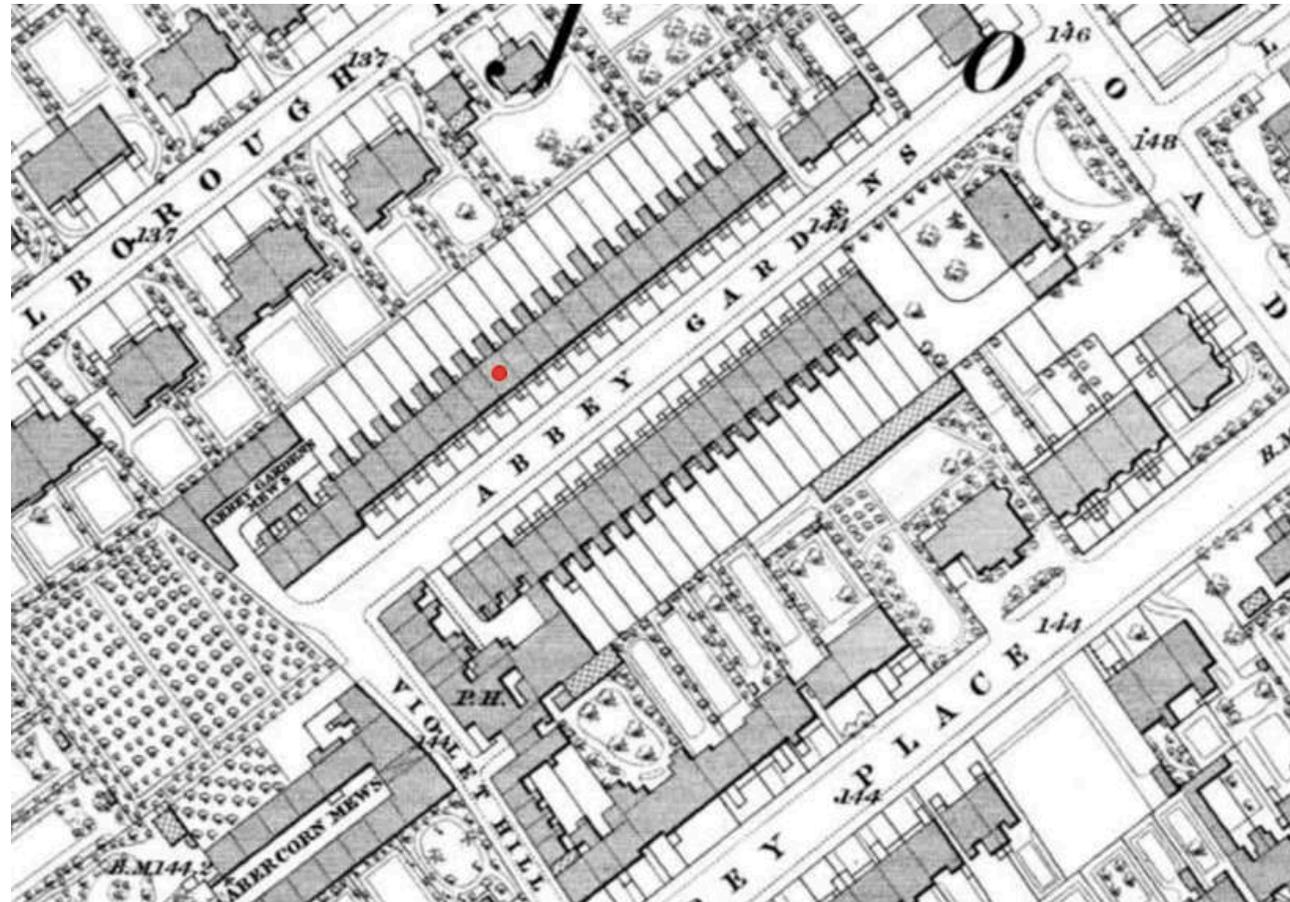


Fig. 5, above. 1st Ed. Ordnance Survey, 1862-72. Location of No.34 marked in red.

Fig. 6, left. First advertisement for the let or sale of Abbey Gardens shortly after construction. From the Marylebone Mercury, 3rd March 1860.

ABBAY GARDENS, ST. JOHN'S WOOD.—These desirable houses, containing nine rooms with back and front gardens, tastefully finished, and ready for immediate occupation, or for investment, to be let or sold, on long leases. Rent £50 per annum. Apply on the premises, or at Mr. THOMAS' House and Estate Agency Offices, 1A, Circus-road, St. John's-wood, N.W.

3.2 Architectural Development and Description of 34 Abbey Gardens

Along with the other properties in the terrace, No.34 first became occupied in around 1860 and consisted of nine rooms and a closet wing. The property remained as a single family dwelling until around 1891, when it became a lodging house. In every subsequent census including the 1939 register, No.34 was a multi-occupancy property. This practice appears to have continued well into the later twentieth century. In 1970 an application was put forward to convert the property into self-contained flats - at this time it was still in use as flat lets and bedsitting rooms, which the associated planning documents describe as not being self-contained.

The 1970 application to convert the building into four self-contained flats was never fulfilled and the work did not take place - it was sold just a few months later to a new purchaser who wished to use the property as a single family dwelling. This owner, who would live in the property until it was recently purchased by the current owners, carried out some minor alterations in the 1970s and very little since.

Few early plans of the property were uncovered in the course of this research, apart from two simple drainage plans - one lower ground floor plan dated to 1930 (Fig. 7) and one first floor plan dated to 1932 (Fig. 8). The following description of the architectural development of the property is based on these and other documentary sources uncovered throughout the course of this research, along with an analysis of the building's fabric.

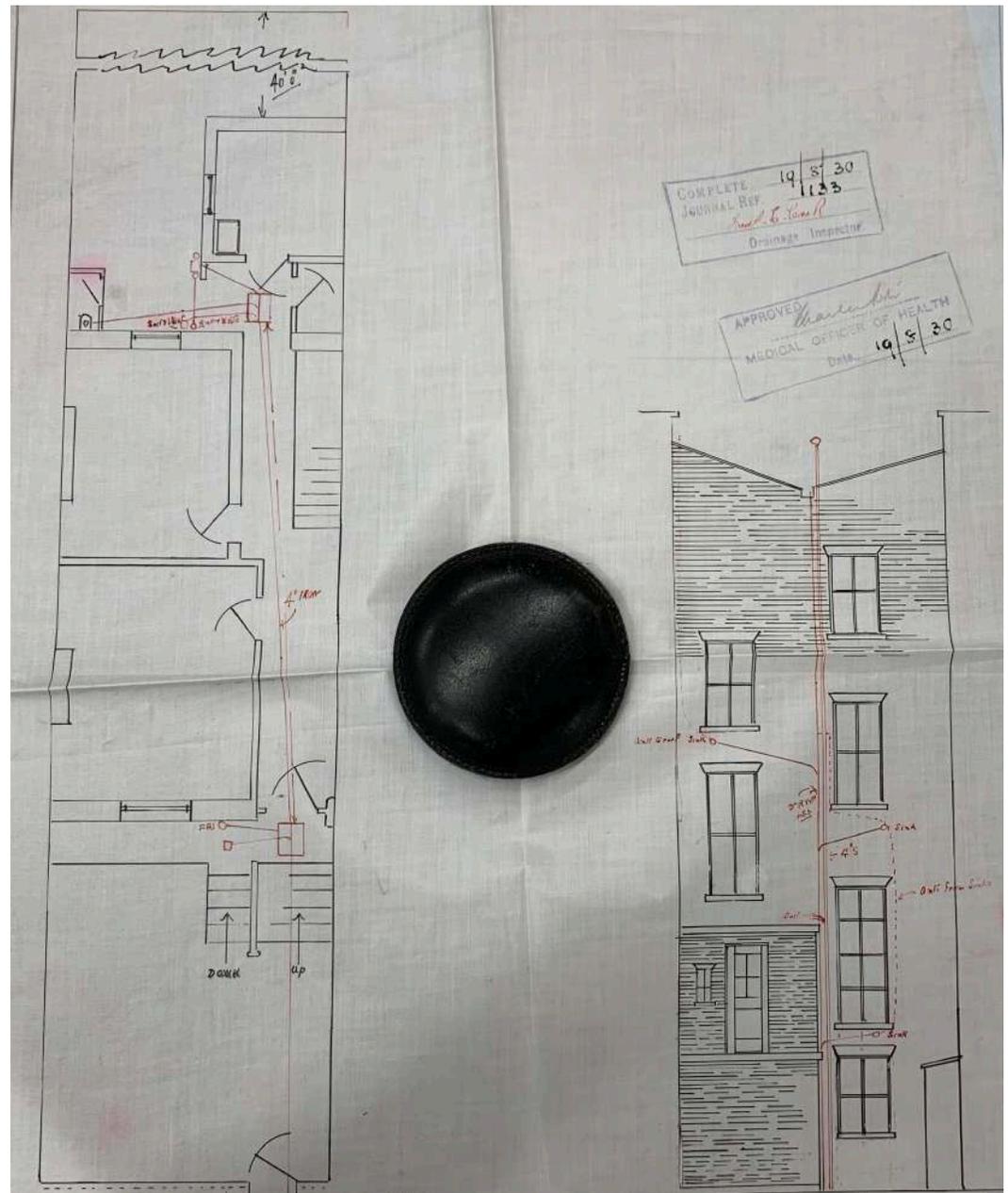


Fig. 7. Lower ground floor drainage plan, 1930

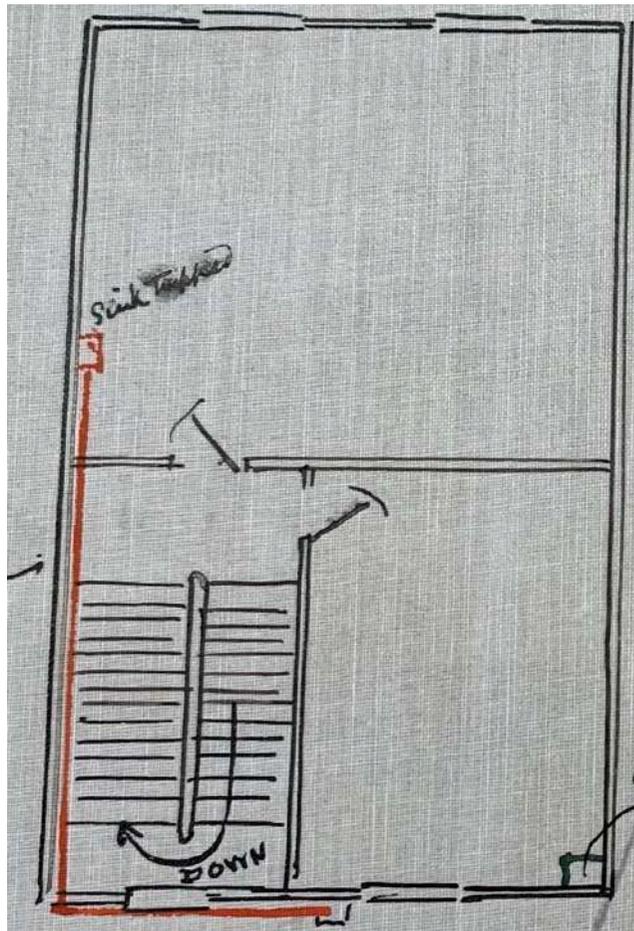


Fig. 8. First floor drainage plan, 1932

3.2.1 Front Elevation

The front elevation is three storeys over a mostly sunken lower ground floor level, with a front entrance sitting behind an Ionic porch. Ground floor is channelled stucco and at first floor level there is a continuous bombe balcony and windows are square-headed. The front elevation has remained largely unchanged and retains its historic appearance, apart from the front door which had to be replaced after the previous door was irretrievably damaged when entry was forced into the property. The lower ground floor door is also a modern addition - probably mid-20th century - and is unsuitable and of no value.

3.2.2 Rear Elevation

The rear elevation of No.34 has undergone a greater number of alterations throughout its existence. The most significant of these was the demolition of the rear closet wing, which occurred in around 1971. Figs. 9 and 10 show the rear elevation in the same year, prior to closet wing's demolition, compared to today. The entirety of the rear wing and the lean-to were demolished, and replaced with a small brick-built shelter with metal stair. The lower ground floor window and doorway were inserted in the positions of earlier openings, and at ground floor level a new external door was inserted in place of an earlier internal opening. Windows to the upper floors appear to be unchanged.

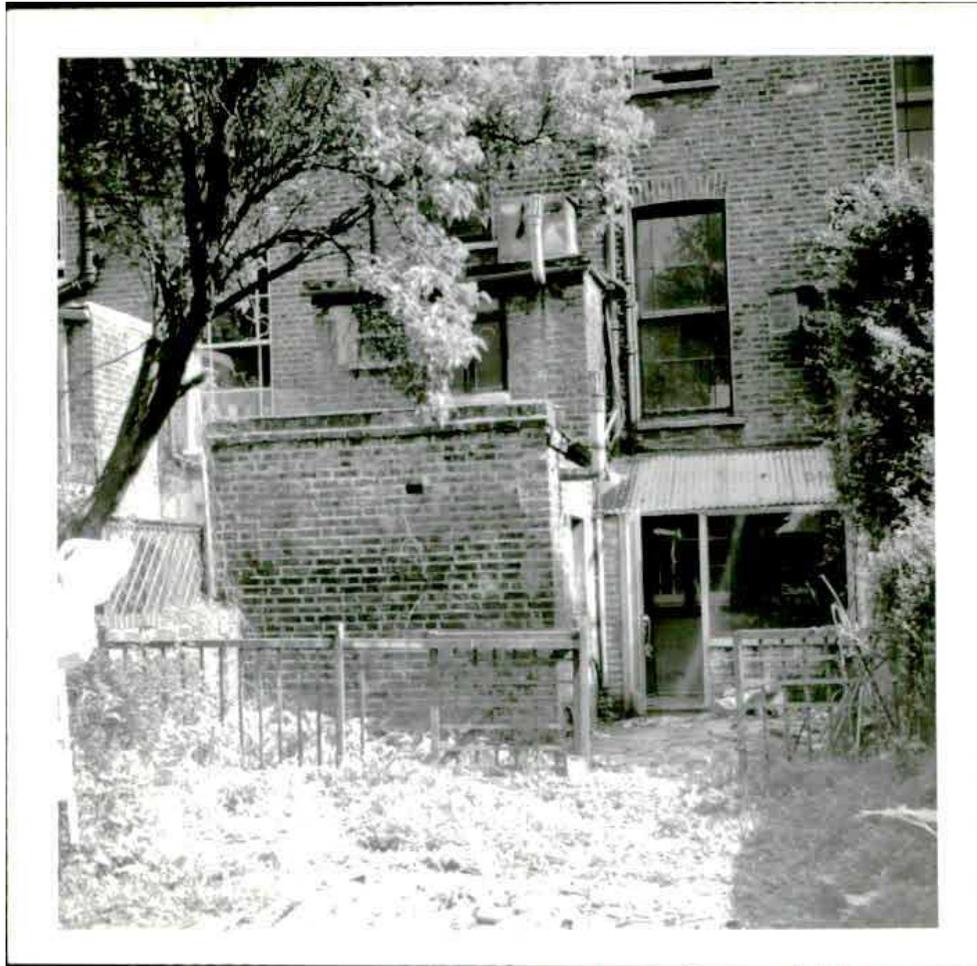


Fig. 9. Rear elevation, 1971



Fig. 10. Rear elevation, 2020

3.2.3 Lower Ground Floor

As mentioned above, the earliest available plan of the lower ground floor is a drainage plan dated 1938 (see Fig. 7). Significant changes have taken place to this floor within the twentieth century. At some point in the early/mid 20th century, the staircase connecting the lower ground floor to the ground floor was removed in order to create a self-contained flat. A lobby and bathroom were installed in place of the staircase, and the rear room was turned into a kitchen. The rooms within the closet wing were also removed when the closet wing was demolished in 1971 (see section 3.2.2).

Within the front room is what appears to be an early C20 timber fire surround, over which a modern electric heater has been fitted. The entire lower ground floor space is in very poor condition, was significantly modernised (but not to a high specification) in the mid 20th century and has clearly remained uninhabited for many years. Apart from the early 20th century fireplace, door and simple coving in the front room, the space is devoid of any features of note.

3.2.4 Ground Floor

The ground floor retains a far greater degree of historic fabric than the lower ground. As discussed in section 3.2.1, the front door has been lost, but windows appear historic and retain their shutters in working order. The opening between front and rear rooms is also historic (but not necessarily first-phase), and ornate coving and ceiling roses within front & rear rooms and in the hallway are also historic. Doors and marble fire surrounds are historic, but their inserts have been removed and boarded. A presumably c.1970 kitchen has been installed in the rear room but this does not appear to have impacted upon historic fabric to any significant degree.

The most invasive change on this floor was the removal of the staircase to lower ground level - a single WC has been installed beneath the stair in its place. Door to the rear is modern and of low quality, and the closet wing extension has of course been lost. Flooring throughout hallway and front and rear rooms is 20th century timber placed upon historic boards. Poorly-made modern shutters have been fitted over the historic window on the ground to first floor landing, along with poor quality perspex sheeting acting as secondary glazing. Staircase, balustrades and handrail are all historic.

3.2.5 First Floor

The only historic plan of the first floor is the 1932 drainage plan (Fig. 8), and the only discernible change in layout has been the insertion of double doors between front and rear rooms, of the same style and scale as those on the floor below. Historic planning documents accessed via Westminster City Council reveal that this occurred in c.1977. Otherwise, like the ground floor, this floor retains much of its historic character. Historic windows and plasterwork is retained, along with marble fire surrounds in front and rear rooms. That at the front also retains its insert, while at the rear this has been boarded and is presumed removed. Windows to both front and rear have been fitted with poorly-made modern shutters. Flooring is 20th century timber placed upon historic boards, and the window on the first to second floor landing has once again been fitted with poorly-made modern shutters and perspex sheeting.

3.2.6 Second Floor

The rooms to the second floor appear to retain their historic layout, although the rear room has been fitted with a mid-20th century bathroom suite. Being the upper floor, decorative features are minimal and coving is far simpler - but is historic and has been retained in front & rear bedrooms, along with the landing. Windows to front and rear rooms appear historic, but have been fitted with poorly-made modern shutters. The front room retains its historic marble fire surround with insert, but none remains in the rear room. Flooring in the front room and landing, as on the ground and first floor, is 20th century timber on historic boards, and linoleum in the rear room. There is a modern loft access hatch on the

landing, and another in the bathroom which appears to give access to a water tank above.

4 SITE IMAGES



Fig. 11. Front elevation



Fig. 12. Rear elevation



Fig. 13 (above). Lower-ground floor, front room. Early 20th century timber fire surround in situ.

Fig. 14 (right). Lower ground floor, rear room. 20th century fitted kitchen to right, modern double doors to garden ahead.

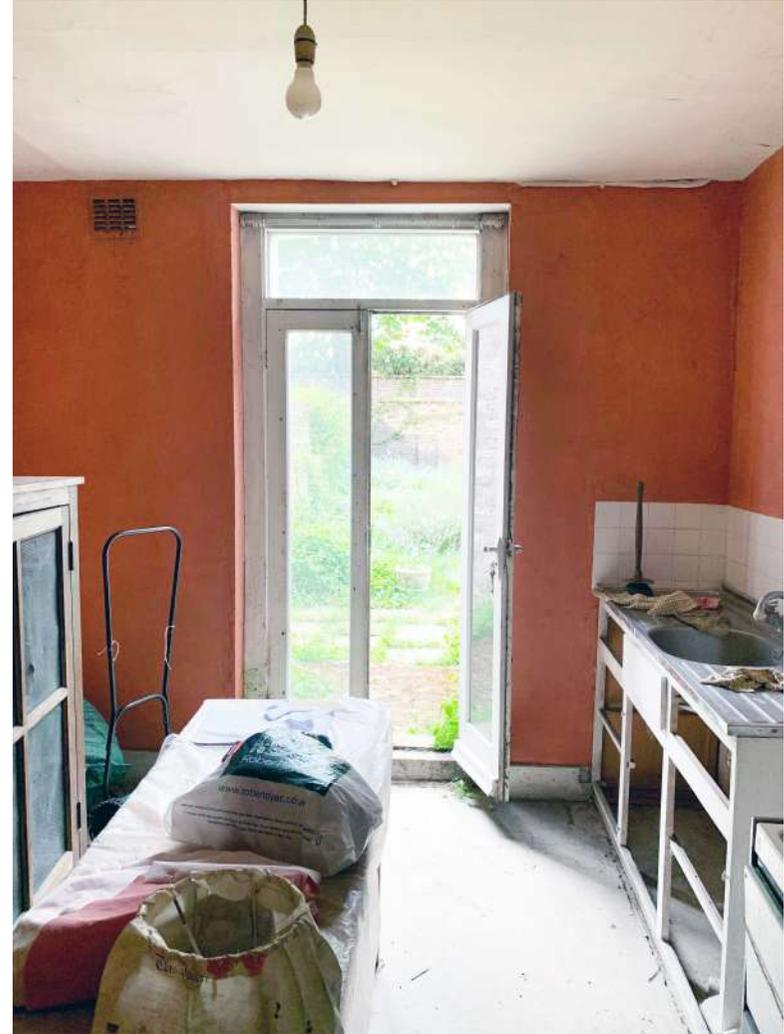




Fig. 15. Lower ground floor bathroom, in a space which was once occupied by the staircase to the ground floor.



Fig. 16. Lower ground floor hallway looking towards front door situated beneath front exterior steps.



Fig. 17. Ground floor hallway, looking towards the rear of the property. Front room door immediately to the left.

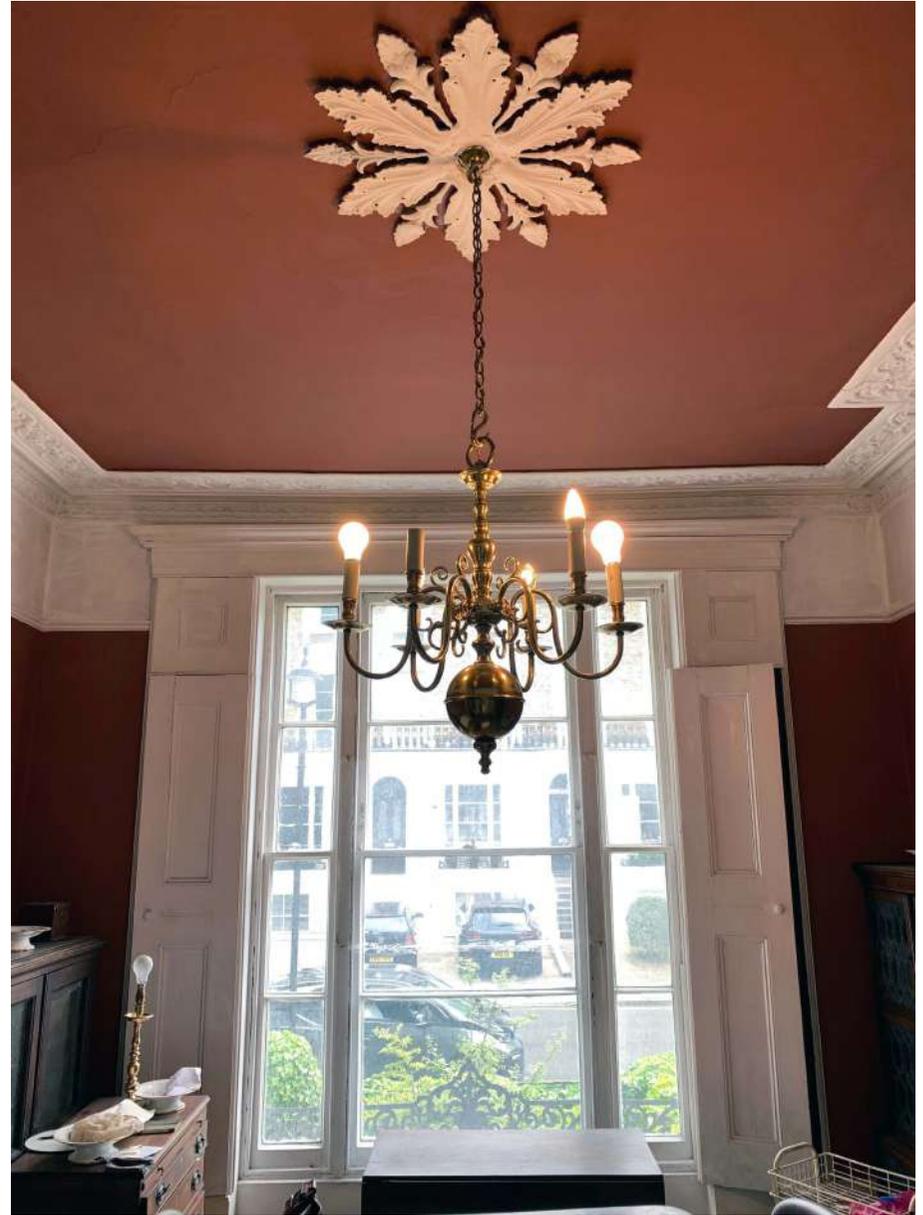


Fig. 18. Ground floor front room ceiling.

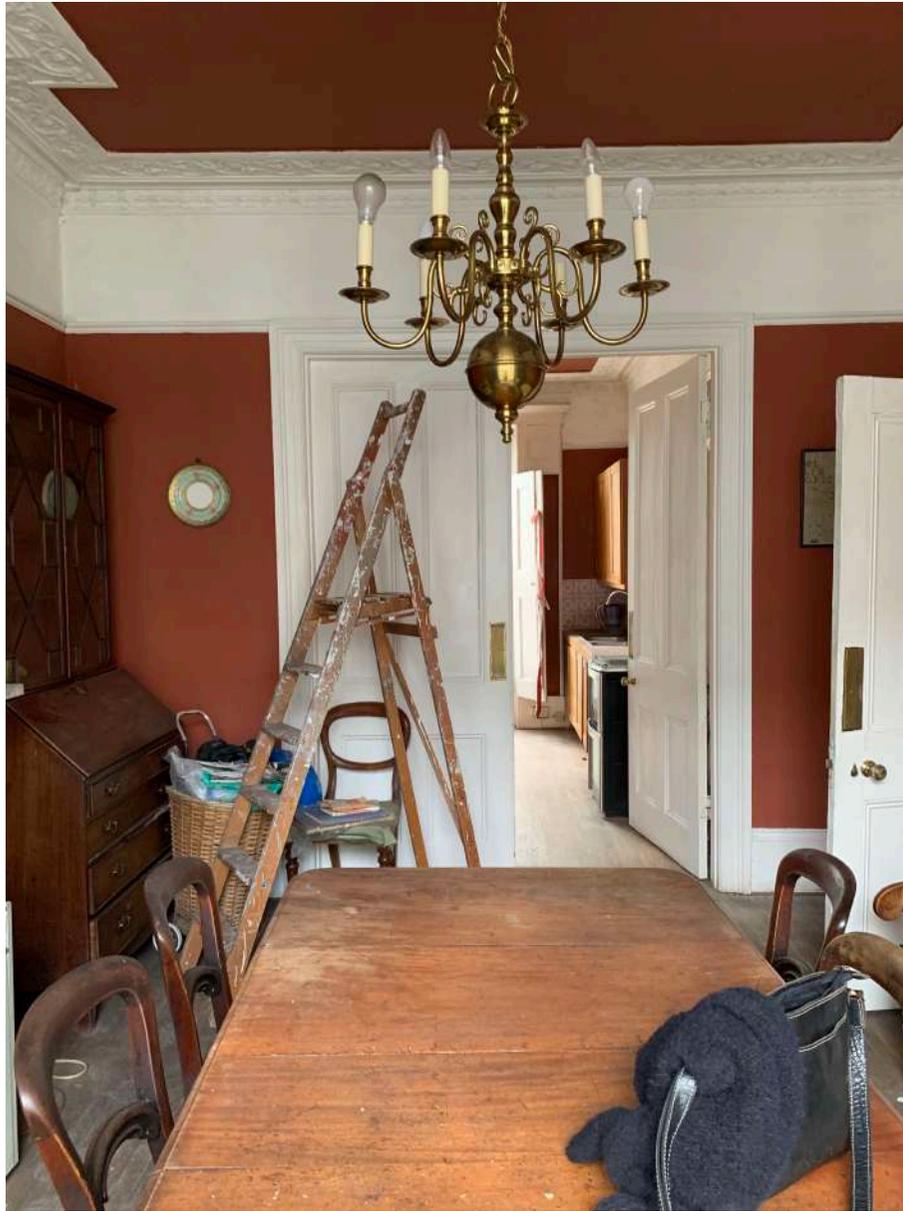


Fig. 19. Ground floor front room, looking towards the rear.

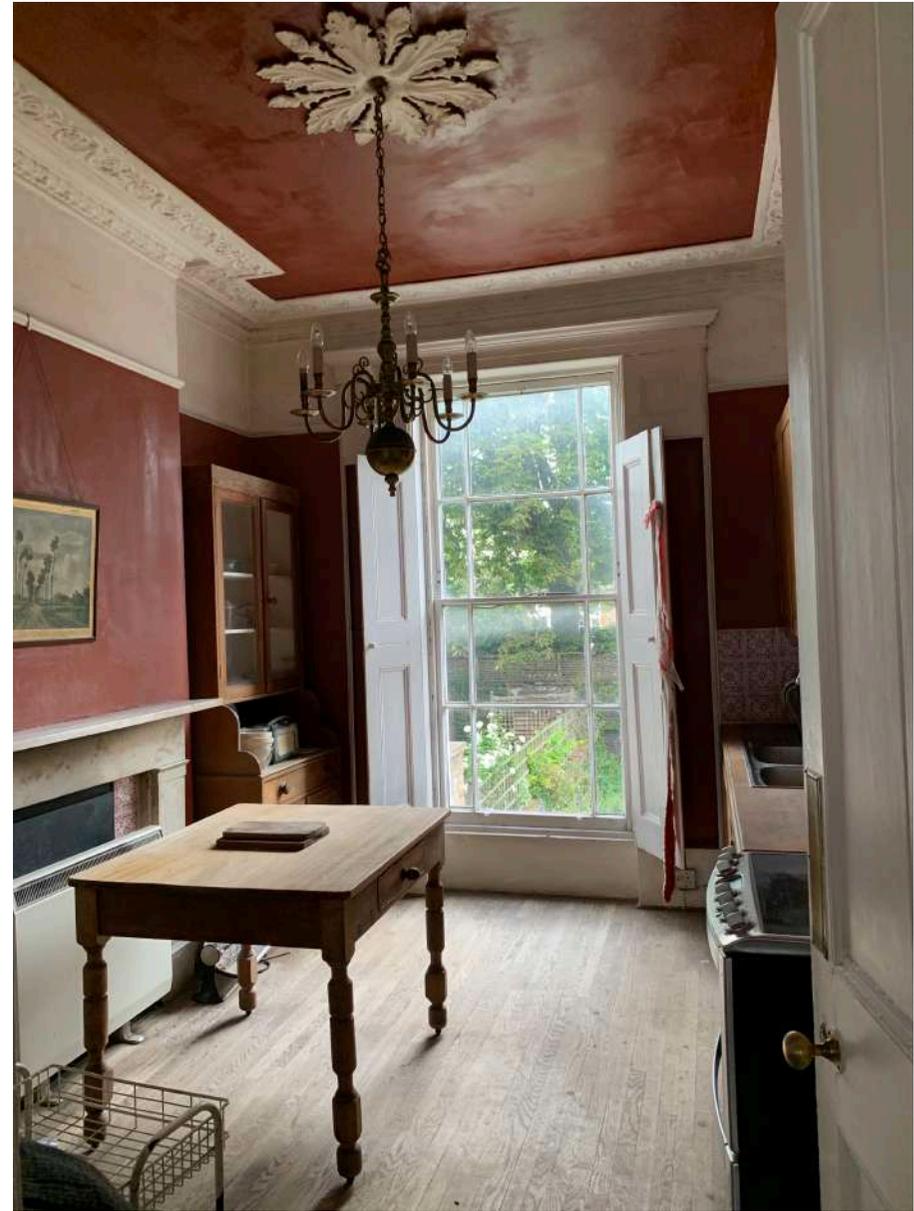


Fig. 20. Ground floor rear room - fitted kitchen to the right of the image.



Fig 21 (above). Ground floor front room.



Fig 22 (right). Ground floor rear hallway, looking towards back door and under-stair WC. Historic stair to lower ground floor would have originally been located approximately in the position of the WC.



Fig. 23 (left). View from staircase into ground floor hallway.

Fig. 24 (above). First floor front room.



Fig. 25 (left). First floor front room.

Fig. 26 (below). First floor rear room, looking through double doors into front room. Historic planning documents reveal that these double doors were fitted in 1977 and their design was based on the historic doors between front and rear rooms on the ground floor (there had previously been no opening between front and rear rooms at first floor level - please see section 3.2.5).





Fig. 27 (left). First floor front room looking through modern double doors into rear room.

Fig. 28 (below). Rear room



Fig. 29 (below). Second floor front room.

Fig. 30 (right). Second floor landing.





Fig. 31 (left). Second floor front room.

Fig. 32 (below). Second floor rear room.



5 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Introduction to Significance

“People may value a place for many reasons beyond utility or personal association: for its distinctive architecture or landscape, the story it can tell us about its past, its connection with notable people or events, its landform, flora and fauna, because they find it beautiful or inspiring, or for its role as a focus of a community.”⁵

In *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance* (2008), Historic England describe four key aspects which contribute to the significance of a historic building or landscape:

- **Evidential Value**

“The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.”

- **Historic Value**

“The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.”

- **Aesthetic Value**

“The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.”

- **Communal Value**

“The meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective memory.”

These four themes will be used to assess the significance of 34 Abbey Gardens, in order to help draw objective conclusions about its significance, and to avoid the subjective attribution of significance without a clear framework.

Significance will be assessed using the following criteria:

- **High significance** is attributable to a feature, building or space which forms an essential piece of the cultural or historic value of the building or its wider setting. Aspects deemed to be highly significant may be important at a national or international level, and they form an essential piece of the history and meaning of a place. Conserving highly significant features or buildings is a priority, and it should be demonstrated that any proposed alterations will enhance, reinforce or reveal their significance as a result.
- **Medium significance** is attributable to a feature, building or space which has some cultural importance and makes a modest contribution to the overall value of a place or its wider setting. A feature or building attributed medium significance forms an important part of the historic and cultural value of the site and its wider setting. Efforts should be made to conserve or enhance these features, but a greater degree of flexibility is possible than with features of high value.
- **Low significance** is attributable to a feature, building or space which makes a slight (yet noteworthy) contribution to the cultural or historic value of the place or its wider setting. An aspect of low significance does add to the overall heritage values of a place, but it may have been compromised by interventions and loss. There is a greater capacity for

⁵ Historic England, *Conservation Principles* (2008)

change and enhancement than for items of medium or high value, although a designation of low value does not mean that a feature is expendable.

- **Neutral significance** is attributable to a feature, building or space which has little or no historic or cultural value, but which does not actively detract from the historic fabric or its wider setting.
- **Intrusive** denotes a feature, building or space which actively detracts from the wider significance of the building's fabric or its wider setting.

Features, buildings or spaces identified as being of high and medium significance will provide less opportunity for change. When discussing proposals affecting significant areas, any proposals for alteration must be carefully considered and robustly justified.

Features or buildings with low or neutral significance, conversely, will provide greater opportunity for change. Once again, the impact of these changes must be robustly justified and their impact on the wider historic setting should be considered. Efforts should be made to improve areas which have been identified as being intrusive.

5.2 Assessment of Significance

5.2.1 Evidential Value

“The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity”

Abbey Gardens is an important - but not key - terrace within the development of the Eyre Estate in St John’s Wood. The development of the estate is relatively well-documented, meaning the potential for No.34 to contribute new information to the understanding of the area is low.

Near-original floorplans and decorative features are known to survive in higher status spaces such as the ground and first floor living areas, which offer some potential to add to our understanding of middle-class terraced housing in this period. Consequently these spaces are of **medium to high significance**, and intrusive alterations which diminish their evidential potential should be avoided.

Lower status areas and spaces which have undergone a greater degree of change - such as the lower ground floor and the lower portion of the rear elevation - can be considered to have **low or neutral evidential value**.

There is some potential for existing earlier fabric to be preserved under later decorative schemes. Any stripping out or opening up works may reveal new evidence of change over time or concealed earlier fabric.

5.2.2 Historic Value

“The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.”

The front elevation has not undergone a significant degree of change since its construction, and so has retained its historic authenticity and meaning. The alterations made to the rear elevation within the 20th century have been more invasive, however, and the loss of the original closet wing has diminished the original intentions and historic value of this facade.

The higher status spaces within the property, with their near-original floorplans and decorative elements, retain a high degree of historical significance. Less historically significant areas of the property are those which have been heavily altered in many phases well into the 20th century and are therefore not fully recognisable as historic spaces - primarily the lower ground floor.

The primary spaces within the property (in particular the ground and first floors) can be deemed to be of **high historic value**, while secondary spaces such as the second floor can be deemed to be of **medium historic value**. Secondary spaces such as the lower ground floor which have undergone a great degree of change can be deemed **neutral**.

5.2.3 Aesthetic Value

“The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.”

34 Abbey Gardens is a good example of mid-Victorian architecture and the terrace as a whole is an aesthetically coherent and attractive part of the wider St John’s Wood Conservation Area. The front elevation is considered to be of **high aesthetic significance**.

The much-altered rear elevation is largely shielded from view by other buildings. The later interventions at the rear - the removal of the original closet wing and changes to fenestration - detract from the overall aesthetic quality of this elevation. Consequently the aesthetic value of its lower portion is deemed to be **neutral with intrusive elements** such as the lower ground floor fenestration. The aesthetic value of the top half of this elevation which has remained largely unchanged (but is still diminished by the alterations at lower ground and ground floor level) can be deemed **low**.

The aesthetic value of the primary internal spaces at ground and first floor level can be deemed **high**. The second floor is much plainer but retains much of its aesthetic integrity - its **aesthetic value can be deemed low to medium**. The aesthetic value of the much-altered lower ground floor which is in very poor condition can be considered **neutral with intrusive elements**.

5.2.4 Communal Value

“The meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.”

No.34 was built as a private residence and has remained in use as such for all of its existence. Therefore, the communal value of the site itself is **low**.

People who live or work in the area of No.34 may value the appearance of terraces such as Abbey Gardens for their contribution to the streetscape and to the wider St John’s Wood Conservation Area. The communal value of the contribution of the main facade to the surrounding area is deemed **medium**.

6 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Summary of Proposals

The following is a comprehensive list of the works proposed at 34 Abbey Gardens, with rooms described as per their current function or location:

Rear Elevation:

- Demolish existing modern terrace and metal stair, and replace with a more aesthetically appropriate closet wing addition from lower ground to ground floor level, and a lightweight glazed infill extension as lower ground floor level (with green roof).

Front elevation:

- Replacement of modern front door with more appropriate example.
- Front garden to be hard paved to provide one off-street car parking space.
- Reconstruct lightwell to provide natural light to lower ground floor.

Throughout:

- Historic timber sash windows refurbished and restored

Lower Ground Floor:

- Existing modern window to rear blocked up
- Section of wall and modern double doors to rear removed to allow access to proposed extension.
- Section of wall removed between front and rear rooms - on the same scale and position as that on the ground floor.
- Introduction of clerestory window in wall between corridor and front room.
- Remove 20th century fire surround in front room.
- Non-historic hallway door replaced with historically appropriate version
- Create small opening in ceiling for dumbwaiter lift into rear room above at ground floor level
- Existing kitchen fittings removed
- Staircase reinstated in historic position
- New exterior door fitted below the front steps, replacing the existing modern door

Ground Floor:

- Careful restoration and refurbishment throughout - historic fire surrounds, plasterwork and internal doors are all being retained and restored.
- Intrusive kitchen in rear room removed.
- Existing modern WC on half landing removed so the original staircase to the lower ground floor can be reinstated.
- Replace existing modern rear door with new historically appropriate door providing access to new closet wing.

First Floor:

- Careful restoration and refurbishment - historic fire surround to front room, plasterwork and internal doors all being retained and restored.
- Historic door from landing into rear room being retained but blocked internally.
- Historic fire surround to rear room retained but carefully blocked.
- Existing half-landing window between ground and first floor removed and re-used in closet wing extension. Original window opening to be converted into double glazed doors in appropriate style for access into new closet wing dressing room.
- Existing modern double opening narrowed into single opening.
- New bathroom fitted in rear room.

Second Floor:

- Front and rear historic windows retained and refurbished
- Fireplace to front room retained and carefully boxed in.
- Existing wall and door between front and rear rooms removed
- Existing 20th century bathroom removed
- Two partition walls and associated joinery added to create bathroom between front and rear rooms

Roof:

- Two conservation style roof lights hidden in butterfly roof

6.2 Criteria for Assessment

The following section assesses the impact of the proposed works on the heritage significance of 34 Abbey Gardens. This assessment is based directly on the proposals summarised above, and has been carried out in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The judgements contained here are based upon historic research into the site and its surroundings, as well as information obtained during a visual inspection of the site and its locality. In order to fully understand the impacts of the proposed works, we have used criteria based on that recommended by ICOMOS. This is a clear way of understanding and illustrating not just the impact of change, but how levels of impact vary according to the varying degrees of heritage significance within a single site.

The significance of an element is combined with a rating of the overall level of change proposed, in order to give an assessment of overall impact. This impact will range from ‘beneficial’ to ‘adverse’. The results of the assessment - the **Effect of Overall Change** - are described using the following criteria:

- **Very Large** - impacts considered to cause a very substantial and fundamental change in the special interest and heritage values of the asset
- **Large** - impacts considered to cause a substantial change in the special interest and heritage values of the asset
- **Moderate** - impacts considered to cause an appreciable difference to the special interest and values of the asset.
- **Slight** - impacts considered to make a small difference to the special interest and heritage value of the asset. A minor impact may be

defined as involving receptors of low significance exposed to higher levels of change.



LEVEL OF CHANGE	
Level of Change	Description
Major Change	Results in substantial visual or physical change to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset.
Moderate Change	Results in a significant visual or physical change to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset.
Minor Change	Results in some visual or physical change to the form, appearance or context of the heritage asset.
Negligible Change	Results in negligible visual or physical change to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset.
No Change	No visual or physical change to the heritage asset.

Heritage Value	Level of Change				
	No Change	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
	Effect of Overall Change				
Very High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate / Large	Large / Very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate / Large	Large / Very Large	Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral / Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate / Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral / Slight	Neutral / Slight	Slight	Slight / Moderate
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral / Slight	Neutral / Slight	Slight

6.3 Heritage Impact Assessment

6.3.1 Rear Elevation

The largest and most significant proposal being put forward is concentrated on the rear elevation. As discussed in section 3.2.2 and elsewhere, the existing rear elevation has been blighted by the loss of its original closet wing. Its demolition in the early 1970s left the rear elevation unbalanced in comparison to its neighbours throughout the terrace, and removed an important aspect of the building's architectural legibility as a mid-Victorian middle-class terraced property.

Recommendations given in response to the two previous pre-application submissions have been acted upon and the new proposals reflect this.

The removal of the existing intrusive modern shallow undercroft, metal stair and low-quality modern external doors at lower ground and ground floor levels remain a clear heritage gain. The earlier pre-app recommendations advised that the depth of the rear extension put forward in the previous scheme was too great, and this has been addressed - the depth of the lower ground floor closet wing and infill extension has been reduced to that of its neighbouring property. The second pre-app also advised that the infill extension be designed as a more lightweight addition, to distinguish it from a more solid closet wing addition - this is as opposed to a broad singular full-width extension at lower ground floor level. The proposals to the rear elevation have been redesigned accordingly - the closet wing addition will now read as a solid separate entity from lower ground to first floor level, while the glazing in the lower ground floor infill has been increased to lessen its weight and visual impact. The lower ground floor level window within the closet wing extension will conform to the size and scale of historic windows

elsewhere in the rear elevation. The two elements will be read as distinct entities, and reflect a known solid closet wing/glazed infill typology.

The infill addition will also be largely hidden from view by neighbours along the terrace, due to its low height (please see Design & Access Statement for visuals), and will be given a living green roof to add visual interest to the otherwise empty expanse of its flat roof. Internally, the distinction between the extension and the existing rear room has been emphasised internally by reducing the width of the opening between this rear room and the extension.

As images within the Design & Access Statement and in Appendix B here illustrate, the typical closet wing height along this side of Abbey Gardens is up to ground floor level. The current absence of any closet wing to the rear of No.34 creates a lack of uniformity along the terrace, and the construction of a closet wing up to ground floor level will reinstate a sense of shared scale, verticality and uniformity with neighbouring buildings which has been lacking for a number of years. The closet wing's lower ground floor fenestration will carefully match that already existing on the rear elevation in form, scale and materials, and at ground floor level the window will be re-used from its earlier position on this back wall.

This proposal conforms to UDP Policy DES 5 and enhances the appearance of an elevation which has been marred by poorly-executed and low-quality 20th century alterations. Adverse impacts upon historic fabric will be kept to a bare minimum, and a careful restoration and renovation of the facade's existing historic windows will also be carried out. The loss of very small areas of partially historic fabric at lower ground floor level in order to create an opening between the rear room and proposed extension can be considered a **neutral/slight adverse impact** upon the fabric of the building.

The overall impact of the reinstatement of the closet wing, removal of intrusive 20th century elements, construction of a lower ground floor extension and a careful restoration of the rear elevation as a whole can be considered to have a **moderate beneficial impact**.

6.3.2 Front Elevation

The existing front door is a last-minute replacement which had to be fitted after the previous door was broken down by police. This existing door is of poor quality, is ill-fitting and of inappropriate materials. The proposed door will be of high quality, of an appropriate historic style and aesthetically indiscernible from that of its neighbouring property. All windows to the front elevation will also be carefully refurbished and restored. These changes are deemed to have a **moderate/large beneficial impact**.

The existing front garden will be turned to hard paving to provide parking space for one car. This will result in the loss of the front wall. This will result in a **slight adverse impact**, but is a change seen in almost every other property in Abbey Gardens. The reconstruction of the light well is not a significant alteration, and following advice given in the second pre-app has been slightly adjusted to better conform with those seen in neighbouring properties (please see Design & Access Statement for detailed images). This change will not make an appreciable difference to the aesthetics of the front of the property. As such, it is deemed to be a **neutral/slight adverse impact**.

6.3.3 Lower Ground Floor

Some works to the lower ground floor (creating a larger opening between the rear ground floor room and the proposed extension) were discussed in section 6.3.1. Other proposals relating to this floor include the reinstatement of a stair between the ground and lower ground floor level. As discussed in section 3.2.3, the lower ground floor was converted into a self-contained flat at some point in the early/mid 20th century. This involved the entire removal of its only staircase providing access to the rest of the property. At the same time changes in layout occurred towards the rear portion of the floor and a bathroom was installed in place of the pre-existing staircase. A kitchen was also fitted in the neighbouring rear room.

This floor has remained uninhabited for many years - most likely since the previous owner purchased the property in 1971 and returned it to its original use as a single family dwelling. It is consequently in a very poor condition and in dire need of refurbishment. The reinstatement of a staircase in its historic position is a clear heritage gain, which can be considered to have a **moderate beneficial impact** upon the property and its circulation and plan form.

The previous scheme put forward in the first pre-app proposed the creation of an open plan room on this floor, and the insertion of a WC in the position of the main corridor. The first pre-app advice stated that these alterations were inappropriate for the space due to the erosion of remaining historic plan form. The recommendations put forward in the pre-app advice have again been acted upon and the new scheme rectifies these issues. There is no longer a proposal to position a WC in place of the main corridor - this will now be discreetly located beneath the new stair at the rear of the property.

The previous scheme sought to replace the existing wall between front room and corridor with a glazed wall, and the second pre-app advised that this proposal would visually dominate the space to a degree that its inclusion should be reconsidered. This advice has been followed, and it is now proposed to insert panelled double doors in place of the existing non-historic single doorway between front room and narrow corridor. This would enable the retention of a distinction between the historic spaces, while also providing a greater ease of access into the front room.

It is also proposed to remove the existing early 20th century fireplace within the front room, which is of inappropriate style and scale for a hierarchically subservient floor, and the intrusive mid 20th century fitted kitchen in the rear room. A dumbwaiter serving the ground floor dining room from the lower ground floor kitchen will also be installed.

Following advice given in the second pre-app, more wall nibs and down stands have been added to further emphasise the distinction between historic spaces. The proposals which make changes to the plan form of this floor alone are therefore deemed to have a **neutral/slight adverse impact** due to minor alterations to this plan form and slight impacts upon the historic fabric of the walls and ceiling (for the dumbwaiter). These impacts are however strongly mitigated by the greater beneficial impacts of refurbishing and bringing back into use a quite heavily compromised floor which has remained entirely uninhabitable for many years. Overall, these plans will have a **slight/moderate beneficial impact** upon the lower ground floor.

6.3.4 Ground Floor

Although neglected and in need of thoughtful restoration, the ground floor has retained its historic and aesthetic integrity to a far greater degree than the lower ground floor. Proposals on this floor are minor and respect the significance of its relatively intact survival. These proposals include a careful restoration and refurbishment throughout - historic fire surrounds, skirting, joinery, plasterwork and internal doors will all be retained. The intrusive mid-20th century kitchen in the rear room will be removed along with the large heaters in front of each fireplace, and the existing modern rear door will be replaced with a historically appropriate internal door providing access to the new closet wing. The intrusive 20th century WC beneath the main staircase will also be removed, and replaced with a staircase to the lower ground floor in its historic position - appropriately styled to be subservient to the main staircase above. Altogether, these proposals can be deemed to have a **moderate/large beneficial impact**.

6.3.5 First Floor

A light touch has again been adopted at first floor level, which also retains a good deal of historic and aesthetic integrity. The only known historic change to its plan form was the insertion of double doors between front and rear rooms in c.1977 - see section 3.2.5 and Fig. 26 for more information. Like the ground floor, decorative features such as plasterwork, skirting and fire surrounds are still in situ, although poor quality modern shutters have been fixed to both front and rear windows. The historic fire surround to the front room, all plasterwork and historic joinery will be sensitively restored and refurbished, while the historic fire surround in the rear room will be retained, boxed in and protected to allow for the installation of a bathroom. The intrusive modern shutters to front and rear windows will be removed, and the modern double doors between front and rear rooms will also be removed. This opening will be

narrowed into a more appropriate single doorway - regaining some of the floor's lost cellular plan form. The historic door from the rear room onto the landing will be retained in situ but carefully blocked internally, again to allow the installation of a bathroom in the rear room. Lightweight removable partitions will be installed within the rear room to create a small division within this room between closet and bathroom area.

Adverse impacts upon historic fabric and plan form due to these changes will be very minor and easily reversible at any future point, and their impact can be deemed neutral/slight adverse. These impacts are mitigated by the greater beneficial impacts resulting from the removal of intrusive elements such as the poor-quality modern shutters, and the careful restoration of the floor's historic plasterwork and joinery. Overall, these proposals can be deemed to have a slight beneficial impact.

On the half landing, the existing historic window with its inappropriate modern shutters and perspex secondary glazing will be removed. The window will be restored and re-used in the proposed closet wing - in place of the historic window will be a pair of glazed double doors of appropriate historic style, providing access into the new closet wing. As historic window fabric is being retained (although relocated) and intrusive elements such as the shutters and secondary glazing are being removed, these proposals are deemed to have a **neutral/slight beneficial impact** on the historic and aesthetic integrity of the space, and a **neutral/slight adverse impact** on the historic fabric of the rear wall.

6.3.6 Second Floor

Proposals relating to the second floor are again designed to respect the historic and aesthetic integrity of the space, which has undergone few changes since its initial construction. The front and rear historic windows

are to be retained and refurbished, and their intrusive modern shutters and perspex secondary glazing removed. The historic fireplace to the front room will be retained and carefully boxed in, and the 20th century bathroom in the rear room will be removed. These changes will have a **neutral/slight beneficial impact** upon the historic and aesthetic integrity of the space.

The largest change on this floor is the proposed removal of the wall between front and rear rooms, and the insertion of two partition walls to create a bathroom between the existing front and rear rooms. Although an alteration to the original plan form which does result in the loss of some historic fabric, this proposal does not diminish the cellular character of the floor. The two existing historic doors which are removed during this work will be restored and re-used in their new positions. These changes will have a **slight adverse impact** upon the historic fabric and plan form of the space.

6.3.7 Roof

It is proposed to install two conservation roof lights within the valley of the butterfly roof. These will not be visible from the ground, and will result in only minor impacts to the historic fabric of the roof. This change can be deemed to have a **neutral/slight adverse impact** on the historic fabric of the roof.

7 CONCLUSION

The first and second pre-application process allowed the client and their architect to take stock and thoroughly assess the heritage issues and impacts of their initial scheme. The suggestions and recommendations given during both pre-apps on the first two sets of proposals for the site have informed the careful and thoughtful development of the current scheme. The reinstatement of the rear closet wing will be a significant heritage gain, and the lower-ground floor portion of the closet wing extension and glazed infill has been redesigned. The aesthetic distinction between the proposed heavier closet wing and the lightweight glazed infill at lower ground floor level is now much stronger.

Internally, the most invasive alterations are confined to areas of least significance - for example, the lower ground floor. A hierarchically subservient space generally, its very poor condition and history of unsuitable interventions means there is far more flexibility in this area than on other floors of the property. Even so, the current scheme respects the integrity of its historic plan form and the circulation space of the lower ground floor. Significant spaces and features within the property, primarily at ground and first floor level, are being carefully restored and refurbished - and where appropriate, retained and protected by boxing in.

The proposed development would result in impacts ranging from neutral to minor/slight adverse as a result of the loss of historic fabric and alterations to historic plan form, but these impacts are primarily found within floor levels of lesser importance. There are also many areas of neutral/slight beneficial to moderate/large beneficial impacts - these are

largely confined to more significant areas of the site, and include enhancements by the repair or restoration of historic fabric, and the reinstatement of lost historic features and circulation spaces such as the ground to lower ground floor staircase. Overall, the proposed works are considered to comfortably cause “less than substantial”⁶ harm, and this very low level of harm is balanced out by the many proposed heritage gains. As such, the proposed works are considered to preserve the special interest of the listed building itself and the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, in accordance with Section 16(c) and 66(1) of the *Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. It is considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will also be preserved or enhanced by these proposals, and they are also considered to comply with NPPF paragraphs 193-200 and relevant local planning policies.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/16-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment#para193>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVES

Westminster Archives

The National Archives

Metropolitan Archives

Westminster Planning Department

British Library

The British Newspaper Archive

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Conservation Principles. Policies and Guidance, Historic England (2008)

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic England (2017)

The London Plan (2011)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

Unitary Development Plan (2007)

Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies (2016)

APPENDIX A: PLANNING LEGISLATION

National Planning Policy Framework

16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

184. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value⁶¹. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

185. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

186. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

187. Local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to:

- a) assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and
- b) predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future.

188. Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.

Proposals affecting heritage assets

189. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record

should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

190. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

191. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Considering potential impacts

193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

194. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

195. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the

substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

196. Where a development proposal will lead to 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

197. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

198. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

199. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible⁶⁴. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

200. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

201. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

202. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

The London Plan

POLICY 7.8 HERITAGE ASSETS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Strategic

- A. London's heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.
- B. Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present the site's archaeology.

Planning decisions

- C. Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.
- D. Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.
- E. New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources, landscapes and significant memorials. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site. Where the archaeological asset or memorial cannot be preserved or managed on-site, provision must be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset.

LDF preparation

- F. Boroughs should, in LDF policies, seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London's environmental quality, cultural identity and economy as part of managing London's ability to accommodate change and regeneration.
- G. Boroughs, in consultation with English Heritage, Natural England and other relevant statutory organisations, should include appropriate policies in their LDFs for identifying, protecting, enhancing and improving access to the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings where appropriate, and to archaeological assets, memorials and historic and natural landscape character within their area.

POLICY 7.9 HERITAGE-LED REGENERATION

Strategic

- H. Regeneration schemes should identify and make use of heritage assets and reinforce the qualities that make them significant so they can help stimulate environmental, economic and community regeneration. This includes buildings, landscape features, views, Blue Ribbon Network and public realm.

Planning decisions

- I. The significance of heritage assets should be assessed when development is proposed and schemes designed so that the heritage significance is recognised both in their own right and as catalysts for

regeneration. Wherever possible heritage assets (including buildings at risk) should be repaired, restored and put to a suitable and viable use that is consistent with their conservation and the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality.

LDF Preparation

- J. Boroughs should support the principles of heritage-led regeneration in LDF policies

Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies

POLICY S25 HERITAGE

Recognising Westminster's wider historic environment, its extensive heritage assets will be conserved, including its listed buildings, conservation areas, Westminster's World Heritage Site, its historic parks including five Royal Parks, squares, gardens and other open spaces, their settings, and its archaeological heritage. Historic and other important buildings should be upgraded sensitively, to improve their environmental performance and make them easily accessible.

Reasoned Justification

The intrinsic value of Westminster's high quality and significant historic environment is one of its greatest assets. To compete effectively with other major, world-class cities the built environment must be respected and refurbished sensitively in a manner appropriate to its significance. Any

change should not detract from the existing qualities of the environment, which makes the city such an attractive and valued location for residents, businesses and visitors.

Unitary Development Plan (2007) Saved Policies

POLICY DES 9: CONSERVATION AREAS

(A) Applications for outline planning permission in conservation areas
In the case of outline planning applications within designated conservation areas it may be necessary to require additional details to be produced in order that the physical impact of the proposed development may be fully assessed.

(B) Planning applications involving demolition in conservation areas

1) Buildings identified as of local architectural, historical or topographical interest in adopted conservation area audits will enjoy a general presumption against demolition

2) Development proposals within conservation areas, involving the demolition of unlisted buildings, may be permitted

a) If the building makes either a negative or insignificant contribution to the character or appearance of the area, and/or

b) If the design quality of the proposed development is considered to result in an enhancement of the conservation area's overall character or appearance, having regard to issues of economic viability, including the viability of retaining and repairing the existing building

3) In any such case, there should also be firm and appropriately detailed proposals for the future viable redevelopment of the application site that have been approved and their implementation assured by planning condition or agreement.

(C) Planning application for alteration or extension of unlisted buildings

Planning permission will be granted for proposals which

1) Serve to reinstate missing traditional features, such as doors, windows, shopfronts, front porches and other decorative features

2) Use traditional and, where appropriate, reclaimed or recycled building materials

3) Use prevalent facing, roofing and paving materials, having regard to the content of relevant conservation area audits or other adopted supplementary guidance

4) In locally appropriate situations, use modern or other atypical facing materials or detailing or innovative forms of building design and construction

(D) Conservation area audits

The existence, character and contribution to the local scene of buildings or features of architectural, historical or topographical interest, recognised as such in supplementary planning guidance, such as conservation area audits, will be of relevance to the application of policies DES 4 to DES 7, and DES 10.

(E) Changes of use within conservation areas

Permission will only be granted for development, involving a material change of use, which would serve either to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, bearing in mind the detailed viability of the development.

(F) Setting of conservation areas

Development will not be permitted which, although not wholly or partly located within a designated conservation area, might nevertheless have a visibly adverse effect upon the area's recognised special character or appearance, including intrusiveness with respect to any recognised and recorded familiar local views into, out of, within or across the area.

(G) Restrictions on permitted development in conservation areas

1) In order to give additional protection to the character and appearance of conservation areas, directions may be made under article 4(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Types of generally permitted development to which such directions may apply will include:

a) painting, cladding or rendering of building facades

b) insertion or replacement of doors and windows

c) removal or replacement of boundary walls and fences

d) alteration of roof profiles and replacement of roofing materials.

2) Such added powers of planning control may be applied to designated conservation areas the subject of adopted conservation area audits or to buildings or groups of buildings therein identified as being of architectural, historical or topographical interest.

3) The existence of such directions will be taken into account in the authorisation of development that may itself be made subject to the removal of permitted development rights, in appropriate individual cases.

POLICY DES 10: LISTED BUILDINGS

(A) Applications for planning permission

Applications for development involving the extension or alteration of listed buildings will where relevant need to include full details of means of access, siting, design and external appearance of the proposed development in order to demonstrate that it would respect the listed building's character and appearance and serve to preserve, restore or complement its features of special architectural or historic interest.

(B) Demolition of listed buildings

Development involving the total demolition of a listed building (or any building listed by virtue of being within its curtilage) will only be permitted if, where relevant, the following criteria are met:

a) it is not possible to continue to use the listed building for its existing, previous or original purpose or function, and

b) every effort has been made to continue the present use or to find another economically viable use and obtain planning permission, with or without physical alteration, and

c) the historic character or appearance of the main building would be restored or improved by the demolition of curtilage building(s), or

d) substantial benefits to the community would derive from the nature, form and function of the proposed development, and (in all cases)

e) demolition would not result in the creation of a long-term cleared site to the detriment of adjacent listed buildings

2) If development is authorised in conformity with any of the above criteria, it may be made subject to a condition, agreement or undertaking that any consequential demolition shall not be carried out until all the relevant details of the proposed development have been approved and a contract has been entered into for its subsequent execution.

(C) Changes of use of listed buildings

Development involving the change of use of a listed building (and any works of alteration associated with it, including external illumination) may be permitted where it would contribute economically towards the restoration, retention or maintenance of the listed building (or group of buildings) without such development adversely affecting the special architectural or historic interest of the building (or its setting) or its spatial or structural integrity.

(D) Setting of listed buildings

Planning permission will not be granted where it would adversely affect:

- a) the immediate or wider setting of a listed building, or b) recognised and recorded views of a listed building or a group of listed buildings, or
- c) the spatial integrity or historic unity of the curtilage of a listed building.

(E) Theft or removal of architectural items of interest

In order to reduce the risk of theft or removal of architectural items of interest or value from historic buildings during the course of development, the City Council may require additional security arrangements to be made while buildings are empty or during the course of building works.

POLICY DES 15: METROPOLITAN AND LOCAL VIEWS

Permission will not be granted for developments which would have an adverse effect upon important views of

- (A) listed buildings
- (B) landmark buildings
- (C) important groups of buildings
- (D) monuments and statues
- (E) parks, squares and gardens
- (F) the Grand Union and Regent's Canals (G) the River Thames.

APPENDIX B: AERIAL IMAGES

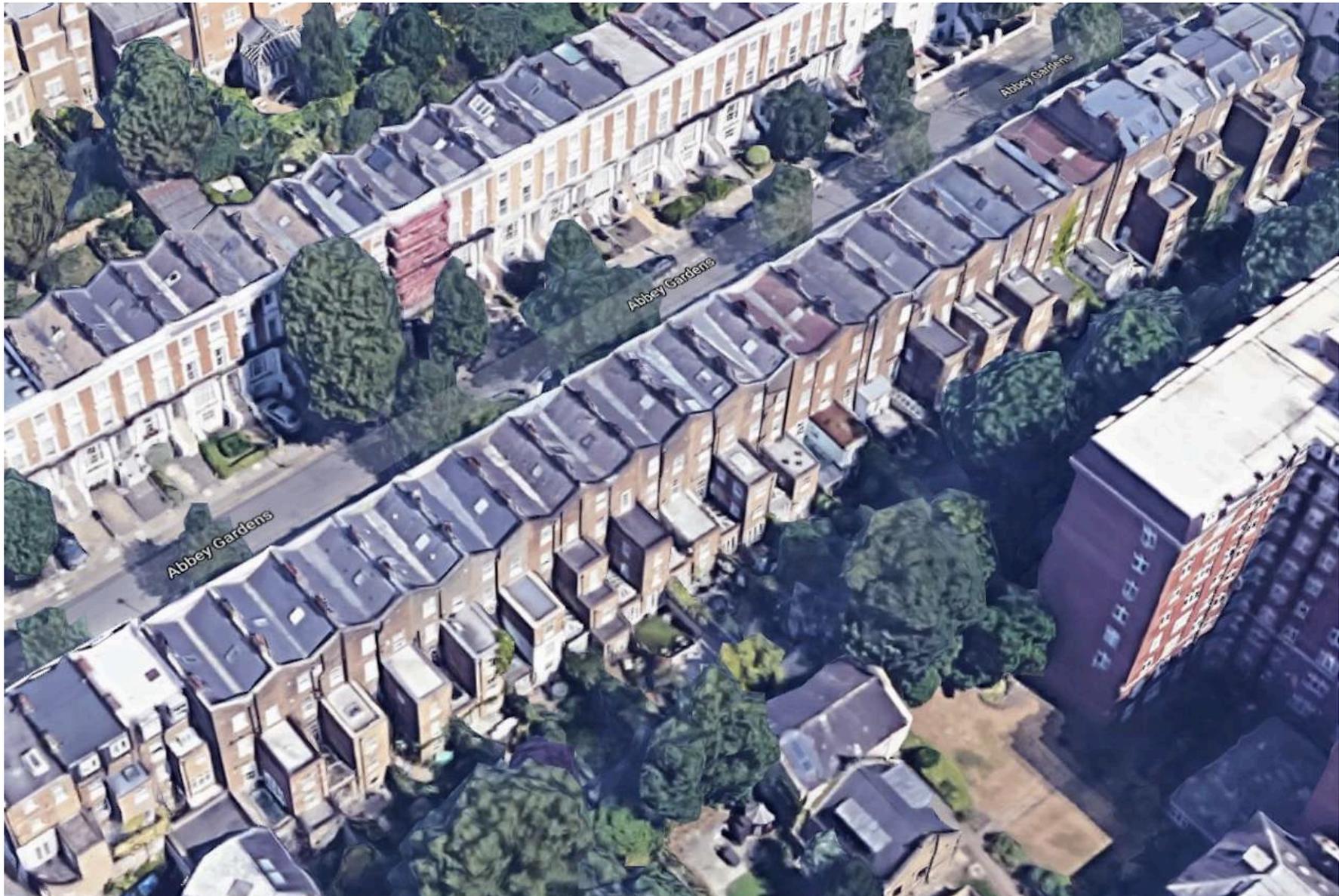


Fig. 33. View onto rear elevations, Abbey Gardens (south-eastern side). Numerous two-storey closet wing extensions and full-width brick built lower ground extensions can be seen.



Fig. 34. View onto rear elevations, Abbey Gardens (north-western side). Further examples of two-storey closet wing and full-width lower ground floor extensions