

Heritage Statement
in Support of Applications for 68 Lorrimore Road,
SE17 3LZ



Peter Powlesland
Architect and Historic Buildings Consultant

1. XI . 2023.

**Heritage Statement to accompany applications for
Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent
For
68, Lorrimore Road, SE17 3LZ.**

1 Introduction.

68 Lorrimore Road is one of fourteen houses, numbers 48 to 74, even numbers only, on the north side of Lorrimore Road, all of which are listed grade II and together form an elegant terrace of seven paired 'villas', each villa comprising two houses, with recessed, paired porches between them, the two end houses having a single porch at the extreme ends of the terrace. It is within the Sutherland Square conservation area.

The listing description is included in section 6 of this statement.

The row of houses was, when first built, four houses longer with a further two pairs at the west end of the terrace and was built in an area that previously had many market gardens and even hothouses where the famous Newington Peach was grown.

At first glance the houses all look identical; the roofs and string courses are all aligned horizontally, but in fact the houses at the east end of the row, from 48 to 64, have front doors with a horizontal glazed panel in the upper part of each door while those towards the west, from 66 to 74, all have fanlights over four panel doors. This would suggest that two builders built the terrace and also that the design was made by an architect who laid out the terrace and defined the appearance of the houses. All the ground floor front windows, except for numbers 64 and 66, have a single, round-headed window in the ground floor front room, while the 'villa' comprising 64 and 66, uniquely in this terrace, has a pair of casements, one to each of the two houses, with substantially lower sills than the rest of the houses. This pair of houses, 64 and 66, formed the central 'villa' of the set of nine that comprised the original terrace of eighteen houses numbered from 48 to 82

The listing description dates the houses to 1852 although they look a little earlier to me and I wonder if the date is derived from date stones on other houses in Lorrimore Road, Minerva Terrace, 91 to 95 and Sussex Terrace, 84 to 90 both of which were dated 1852. Lorrimore Road was already in existence by 1850; Rate books show several houses in 1850 and four terraces; by 1864 there were fourteen terraces, including Minerva and Sussex and perhaps the terraces represented various developments by different builders. Subsequently the houses would have been numbered sequentially along the whole street.

Lorrimore was neither a person nor an estate but the name of one of the two commons of Walworth and was a corruption of its earlier name, Latamore (or lower moor); it was about 19 acres in extent and lay roughly due north of Lorrimore Road with Lorrimore Square more or less abutting the previous southern edge of the common, which until 1831, was used for grazing.

It subsequently became Surrey Gardens which were sold in 1856 after which the colossal Royal Surrey Gardens Music Hall was built in the gardens with space for 10,000 visitors inside.

Lorrimore Road, however, pre-dated the sale of the gardens and must have been an elegant and fashionable street in a leafy part of south London, then on the edge of the countryside and close to Surrey Gardens which after 1831 was home to The Royal Surrey Zoological Gardens, a spectacular zoo.

The plans of the houses are rather more elegant than the typical small terrace house of the period by virtue of having the entrance and staircase removed from the main body of the house. This allowed front and rear rooms to be of equal width and size rather than having a smaller rear room to allow for the staircase. The construction, too, is simple, sturdy and logical with a solid brick box for the main house with its own roof and a broad entrance hall containing the staircase under a separate flat roof.

An unusual feature of these houses is that, in the main body of the 'Villas' the central party wall has a chimney stack eight chimneys long but only one wide. Each house has four chimneys but rather than having a stack consisting of four flues from one side abutting four from the other side to give a stack four chimneys long but two chimneys wide, the normal arrangement throughout London and beyond, the chimneys from both sides are in one long line where they emerge from the roof along the ridge. This is very unusual although it would seem to be a local characteristic since other terraces in the immediate area, such as the four Georgian house in St Agnes place at the west end of Lorrimore Road, also display this arrangement. I wonder if the 'single' chimney was part of an attempt to disguise each pair of houses as a single 'villa'.

The whole terrace appears to have been acquired by Southwark Council just after the last war as The Brandon Estate was being planned but fortunately the houses in Lorrimore Road were spared demolition and became council houses.

The local authority was, remarkably, not at all heavy-handed in repairing the houses; in the case of number 68 almost all of the original joinery and plasterwork remains and the only significant loss in the house was the removal of all the fire surrounds. Externally the front railings had been removed, probably in the last war, and I suspect that the current, utterly unsuitable fencing and concrete paving leading to the front doors date from the council's ownership (images 3 and 4). There can be no doubt that these paved areas were previously laid with large York stone flags one of which had a coal hole into a coal cellar below the front paving and accessed from a stair down below the existing internal stair. These cellars appear, in all the houses in the terrace, to have been filled-in which may account for the new floorboards on the ground floor.

It would be of enormous benefit to the conservation area if railings and gates to the original pattern were to be restored. There were railings, set into a stone plinth, dividing the paving in front of the front doors with paired gates, one to each house, which would have enclosed the front gardens and front paths. The front railings along the street would also have been set into a stone plinth. One pre-war photograph would be enough to allow a thoroughly scholarly restoration of this important element in the street; although the two May 1952 photographs in the picture appendix show the stone plinths still in position the railings themselves had by then been removed.

2 Brief description of number 68.

Number 68, like its neighbours from 48 to 74, is a distinguished, charming and elegant little house which clearly had some pretensions towards being rather better than the typical flat-fronted late Regency or early Victorian houses which existed in the neighbourhood when it was built. The paired main bodies of the houses are proportioned to resemble substantial villas and

the recessed porches between them only serve to emphasise this. The double porches themselves may have been derived from the Choragic monument of Thrasyllus, an antique portal, in Athens, most famous for having a single central column in the opening, a notable architectural solecism (images 6 and 7). In any event the terrace was emphatically Greek, not Roman, in the character of its detailed design as is clear from the capitals and the cornice to the porches and the original door mouldings in the original front door to 68.

The suggestion that the Choragic Monument of Thrasyllus may have been the inspiration for the design of the porches is not so fanciful since there are, in neighbouring districts of South London, front porches and porticoes, roughly contemporary with these houses which almost certainly used this model because they include the laurel wreaths above the pilasters, properly speaking, antae, which are such a distinctive feature of the Greek original. See illustrations 5,6 and 7 in the picture appendix.

3 Detailed description of downstairs rooms in main house.

Internally a great deal of the original detail survives. The front door and frame, the hall cornice, two of the three doors and door architraves, and the stairs are all original, including the newels, sticks and handrail. The three doors rather than the normal two, one into each room is curious. The door opening to the front, best, room in the house has a second door on the hall side, rather in the manner of a set in one of the inns of court. The door on the room side of the opening will have been the original door into the room and the other, outward opening, door is also old, but very unlikely to be original.

In the two ground floor rooms in the main house the original cornices survive in both rooms as do the double doors between the rooms although they may not be original; The pair of old double doors has been divided into two leaves to each door to allow them to fold flat against the wall in the rear room. The panel mouldings in these doors appear to be newer

than those in the door to the rear room which are definitely original. The skirtings in these two rooms may be original but I think they are copies of the short length of original skirting in the left-hand cupboard in the back room where the cupboards, but not the shelves above, are old and probably also original.

The old skirting in the cupboard is high (one foot) which would support a date for the house of 1852 by which time dado rails were no longer fashionable.

The floorboards look too clean to be original except under the double doors between front and back rooms where the boards would have been more difficult to remove and were probably kept whilst the rest of the boards were replaced, I suspect when the house first came into council ownership in about 1950.

The window joinery is remarkably complete with original shutters to both front and back rooms and all four of the original one and a quarter inch thick (32 mm) sashes, although some of the glazing bars have been changed or removed. The original bars are perfect examples of early 19th century bars only nine-sixteenths of an inch (14 mm) thick.

4 Detailed description of upstairs rooms in main house.

The two upstairs bedrooms in the main house tell a similar tale. New skirtings throughout although the original skirting survives in the cupboards adjacent to the wall separating the two

rooms. Here, the skirting is without embellishment, just a simple board six inches high and five eighths of an inch (16 mm) thick, old fashioned for the time and most importantly, expressive of the hierarchy in the house with more modest skirtings in the bedrooms than those in the best rooms downstairs.

The doors are probably old and the door to the back room has mouldings only on the stair side not in the bedroom and is, again, a surviving relic expressing the hierarchy within the house.

There were probably no cornices in the bedrooms but recently, in defiance of the hierarchy within the building, modern coving has been installed which seems to me to detract from the elegance and purity of the rooms. In both bedrooms and the bathroom the original window frames, architraves and sashes survive though with some of the bars replaced.

An old, arched opening, adjacent to the front wall itself and now blocked, exists between the front room and the small bathroom. The narrow bathroom door may also be original; the two-panel pattern is normal for narrow doors in late Regency and early Victorian houses even when all the other 'normal' width doors have four panels. The panel mouldings are right for the period and, as with the back bedroom at this level the room side is without mouldings in accordance with the hierarchy in the house.

The front bedroom at this level does have panel mouldings on the room side reflecting the room's hierarchy as the best bedroom.

5 Detailed description of rear wing with added back extension beyond.

This part of the house, but not the added back extension, is almost certainly original. From the 1871 first edition Ordnance survey, image 1 in picture index, it is clear that all the houses in the terrace had matching rear wings which would suggest that they were all built at the same time, almost certainly when the houses were first built some twenty or so years earlier.

The rear windows in the rear rooms of the main house are not centred as they are in the front rooms; they are closer to the party wall so as to allow the rear wing to be wider than would otherwise be possible, the side window in the bedroom matches the other old windows in the house and the side wall is bonded into the back wall, all of which supports this conclusion and would make these extensions early examples, perhaps very early, of the typical late 19th century and Edwardian plan with a lavatory against the back wall of the main house but inside the extension.

This plan did not really exist as a widely used type until mains drainage became widespread, probably, as in Lambeth, in the 1870s.

It is interesting to note that the first edition Ordnance Survey plan of 1871 (image 1) and the second edition of 1894 (image 2) shows outside privies against the rear walls of the buildings from 48 to 64, and it is conceivable that the rear wings were built a few years after the houses, to accommodate the kitchens once mains drainage and piped water became available, but in this case, I doubt it.

The floorboards on the ground floor are old and probably original and the door between the kitchen and the hall is also old but probably not original. Otherwise, the kitchen is of little historical interest although one should note that the chimney is not centred in the room being closer to the garden end of the house than to the rear wall of the main body of the house. I suspect that the kitchen was previously divided such that the kitchen itself had a centred chimney breast with a small lobby with a door in the side wall to the outside yard and privy.

The side wall has two openings into the appalling modern conservatory (image 8) both of which have concrete lintels over them and are thus likely to have been added or amended in the comparatively recent past. The door opening into the previously open space between the kitchen and party wall with number 70 was likely to have been closer to the back wall, in the lobby mentioned above, of the main house than the modern window opening and there was probably a window in the end wall overlooking the garden, but, if this was the original arrangement, it is no longer apparent. The more recent back extension added to the rear wing occasioned the loss of the end window and, probably, the addition of the double doors into the conservatory.

So, it would seem that the ground floor side wall of the rear wing has been much modified and although the position of the wall is clearly evident, it is not clear how much historic fabric remains at this level. At first floor level the window in the side of the rear wing is

original although the architrave around it is not, and in its original position whereas the window in the back wall appears not to be original; other rear wings do not have a window in this position.

The chimney stack in the rear wing, shared with number 66, is not of the very unusual type in the main bodies of the houses but of a conventional pattern, two flues deep by two flues wide.

6 Assessment of the significance of number 68 Lorrimore Road as a Heritage Asset.

The whole of the surviving terrace numbers 48 to 74 are listed grade II, and the listing description is as follows:

SOUTHWARK

TQ3177 LORRIMORE ROAD
636-1/9/495 (North West side)
27/09/72 Nos.48-74 (Even)

II

Terrace of 14 houses, 1852. Yellow stock brick with low pitched, hipped slate roofs with deep eaves soffit and central chimney stack.

Series of linked blocks of 2, each house 2 storeys with 2 bays to main block (1 window to ground floor) and slightly set-back parapeted entrance link block of 1 bay to each house.

Stucco pilasters and entablature to doors (paired in link sections). Sash windows with margin lights in stucco lined reveals, round-arched on ground floor (except Nos 64 & 66, which are flat); with flat, gauged-brick arches on 1st floor.

Stucco string between floors.

INTERIOR: not inspected.

Listing NGR: TQ3202677884

The listing description concentrates on the fronts of the buildings because that is where all the architecture is; the cut and rubbed brick arches to all the windows, the stucco porches or more correctly porticoes-in-antis with their delicate scholarly Greek details and the elegant and very fine window details all of which are good original examples of

the period, including the stucco to the window reveals which is beautifully thin.

The front elevations are very good as has been discussed in the text above and may be built not of London yellow stock bricks but Suffolk Whites or Gaults, both of which are lighter in colour than stocks and were considered a slightly superior brick. By contrast the rear elevations are much more modest and are built of yellow stocks and ordinary brick arches unlike the front windows which are much finer.

The front elevations show evidence of penny struck pointing in places whereas the back elevations are simply jointed.

So, in this case, the significance of the heritage asset lies in the quality and design of the front elevations and in the completeness of the terrace as a whole which makes an important contribution to the Conservation Area. The rear elevations, though much less good than the fronts, do have significance because the typical London terrace at this time would have had a more modest rear elevation as is evident here. The plan form, too, is important with the rear wings all surviving except for the one to number 48.

I would also suggest that the interiors, by virtue of the completeness of the surviving original details and features add considerably to the building's significance as a heritage asset. Whilst the house been amended, there is enough surviving original fabric for the original house to be completely understood.

7 Current proposal

Most of the historic interest of number 68 is in the main body of the house, in its plan and surviving fabric and details and this proposal does not seek to change the main house at all apart from restoring it where necessary. The historic interest in the rear extension lies primarily in the fact that it is there, in its plan. The wall at first floor is old with one original window and the proposal will not affect the first floor at all.

The current proposal seeks to keep the main body of the listed building the 'villa' as it is except at the rear where the existing conservatory is a leaking eyesore (image 8) which needs to be removed. It does not enhance the building at all but detracts from it. One of the problems with it is that it is too narrow, being located between the party wall with number 70 and the side of the rear wing to number 68, which as noted earlier in this document, is unusually wide by virtue of the rear windows to the back rooms in the main body of the house not being centred on the room.

Two of the benefits of this proposal are, firstly, that it is significantly lower than the existing conservatory and small lean-to at the very back of the house, both of which have pitched roofs and, if built, will reveal more of the original house than is currently visible and, secondly, the removal of the part of the side wall to the back extension will greatly improve the plan by generously linking two long narrow spaces, the conservatory and the kitchen, to form a single generous area.

In historic building terms, the single issue to be addressed here is the proposed removal of part of the side wall of the back extension so as to allow a kitchen/dining room in one wide space at the back of the house. As discussed earlier, this side wall has been tampered with and has what appear to be two new openings in it (with concrete lintels over) and it is not clear how much historic fabric remains in the wall. If the old wall existed with its original opening – or openings – with original brick arches over and original joinery, then it would be a different matter.

However, what is clear is that the line of the historic wall is important and the proposal to keep a small piece of wall at each end of the original rear wing with a shallow beam above is a neat and clever way of making clear where the wall was, and indeed where it still is but for the large hole in the middle. This would leave the history of the house clear for all to understand.

There would be no doubt about the location and importance of the rear wing for two reasons. Firstly, it would be visible as an old wall with a piece removed at ground floor and secondly the original rear wing is evident and clearly readable at first floor where the top half of the rear wing survives intact with an original window at first floor level.

As is made clear in the NPPF a balance has to be found between keeping as much historic fabric as we possibly can and allow listed buildings to continue in use and accommodate some changes to allow that to happen. The changes proposed here are all outside the historic building and represent an intelligent and sensitive response to the council's pre-application advice in response to an earlier application, 23 /EQ/0140, in a report issued on 30th August 2023.

The proposal would satisfy the requirements of both section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment' and section P 19 of the Southwark local plan 2022 . The main body of the house will not be affected at all except by the removal of a dreadful conservatory and its replacement by a more elegantly designed extension which will not damage and thus preserve that part of the listed building. The loss of a small amount of the side wall to the rear extension would cause much less than substantial harm to the listed building but would represent a considerable improvement in the viability of the current kitchen.

The use of timber as the structural and facing material for the extension is an interesting and admirable choice since , in environmental terms, it is a very low carbon proposal which refers perhaps to long tradition of weather-boarded timber buildings and extensions particularly in south London, Morden and Dulwich for example, which, while generally now painted white were not infrequently tarred black in the past

1 . XI . 2023 rev,4

Peter Powlesland,
Architect and Historic Buildings Consultant.

peter@peterpowlesland.com
07583 428 667 0208 876 2489
7, The Terrace, Barnes SW13 ONP

Picture Appendix
To accompany Heritage Statement for 68 Lorrimore Road, SE17 3LX

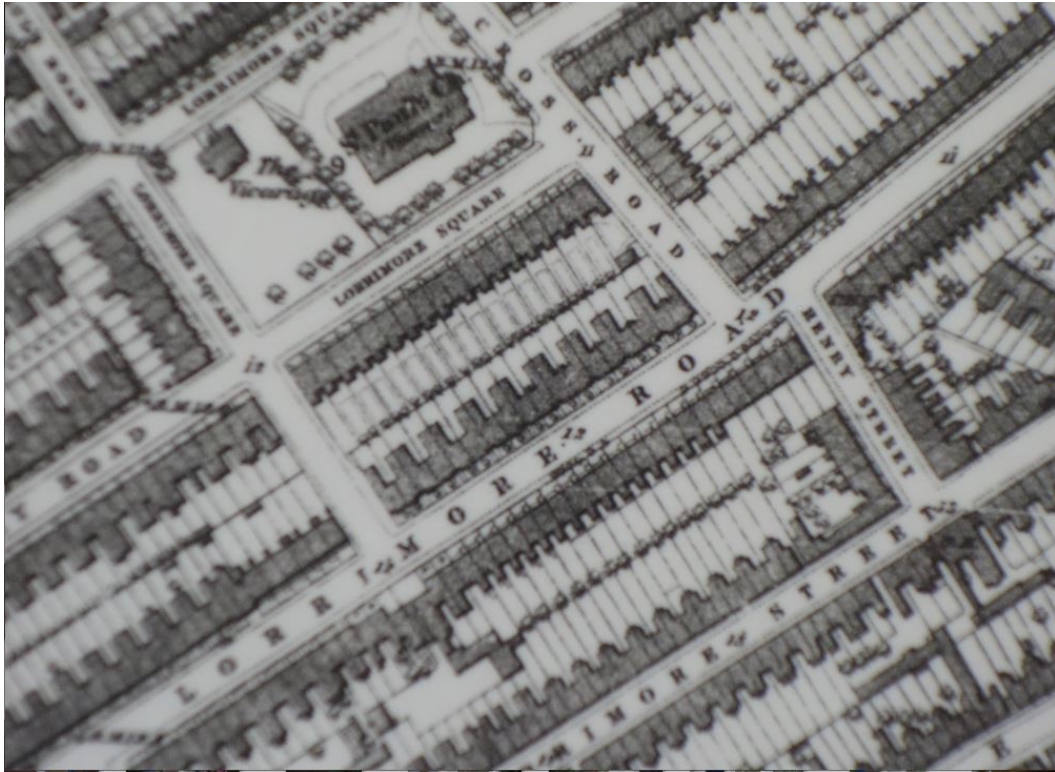


Image 1 First edition OS map 1871 showing 48-82 Lorrimore Road numbered from right to left.



Image 2 1894 OS map. 48-82 Lorrimore Road showing more clearly the outside privies also shown in image 1



Image 3 West end of 48-76 Lorrimore Road, May 1952. Iron railings have been removed but the stone plinths are still in place and paired gates with fences between are also clearly visible.



Image 4 48-76 seen from East end May 1952



Image 5 Porches to 58 and 60 showing clearly the Greek character of capitals and cornice.

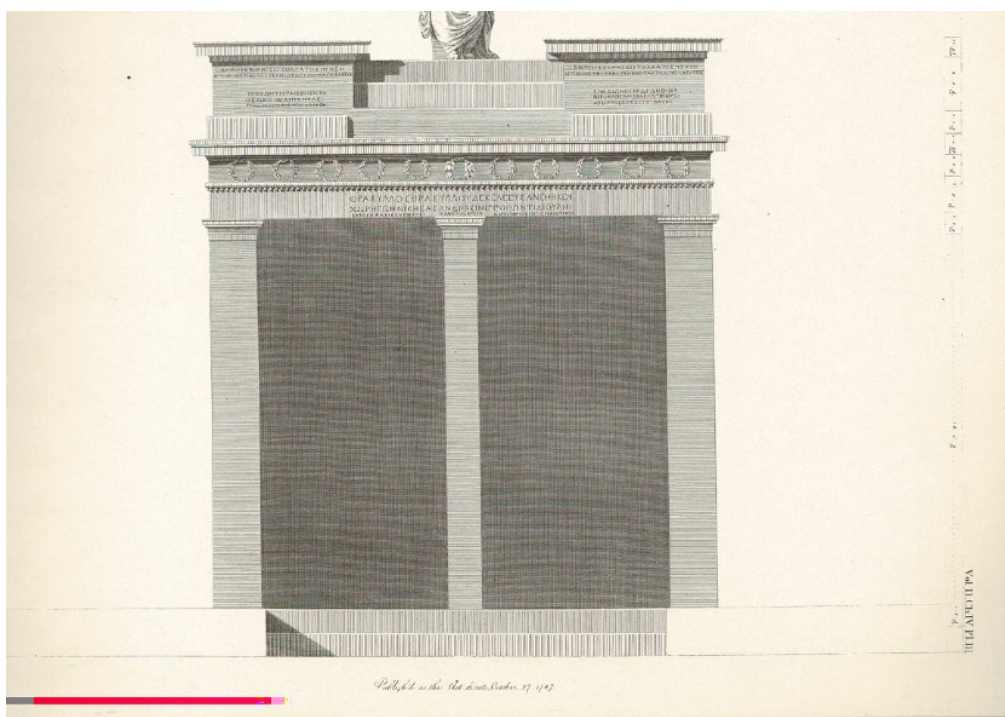


Image 6 Engraving showing the Choragic Monument of Thrasylus, a possible model for the paired porticoes in Lorrimore Road see image 5 above.

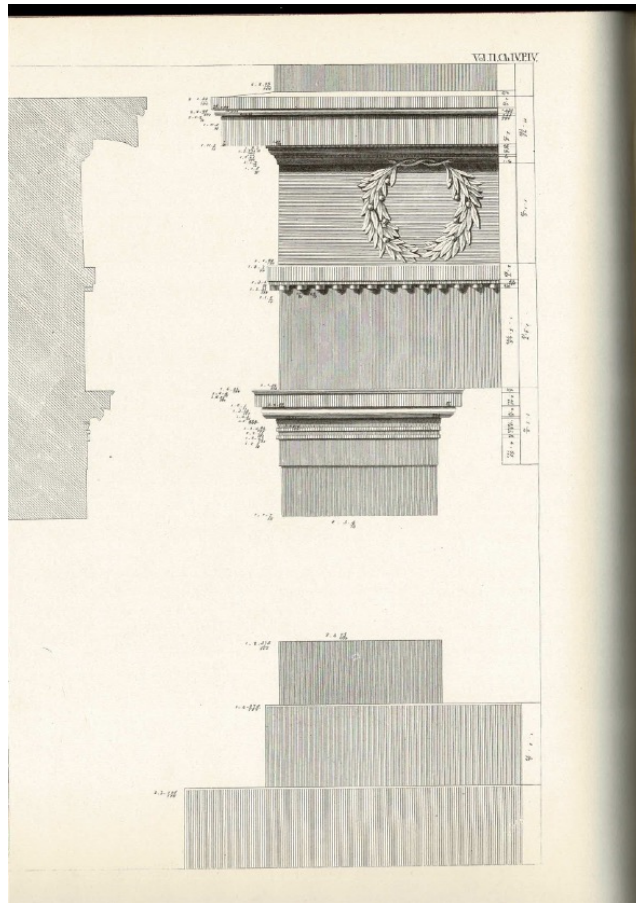


Image 7 Detail showing capitals and cornice in image 6, note the striking similarity in character to image 5.



Image 8 Interior of the lamentable existing conservatory showing modern opening in side wall to the rear wing