

HERITAGE STATEMENT

RELATING TO

PLANNING

AT

16 GREVILLE PLACE

LONDON

NW6 5JH

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Potter Raper, in support of an application for conservation area consent in connection with the installation of a rear staircase in the garden area at 16 Greville Place, London, NW6 5JH. The proposed works form part of a planning application for the external works at this property.

The building, hereafter referred to as the Site, lies within the St Johns Wood Conservation Area in the City of Westminster.

The property is a four-storey terraced property, inclusive of a basement floor below ground level. This house has been converted into multiple flat units.

2.0 Architectural and Historical Appraisal

2.1 Historical Development of Local Area

St John's Wood was once a part of the Great Forest of Middlesex, a dense oak forest that extended north-west beyond London. Some street names in the present day St John's Wood have origins in the early history of the area: Barrow Hill is mentioned in a Saxon charter of AD986, a name which may derive from the old English word 'baeruwe' meaning a grove or wood; and a priory near what is now Abbey Road was attached to the Abbey of Westminster.

The land around St John's Wood remained forested throughout the medieval period. However, after the dissolution of monastic orders in 1539, the land reverted to the Crown. Henry VIII established hunting grounds nearby at Marylebone Park (now Regent's Park) and the trees of St John's Wood were felled to meet the demand for timber to build ships and royal palaces.

It was not until the 19th century that the development of St John's Wood as we know it today began. Larger institutions were built in the early 1800s, with the Clergy Orphan School being established in 1812, St John's Wood Chapel in 1813, Lord's Cricket Ground in 1814 and the Eyre Arms Tavern in 1820. The earliest developments were scattered over a wide area of the Eyre Estate and in more concentrated terraces in Portland Town. The construction of Abbey Road in 1824 and Wellington Road in 1826 were significant catalysts for the area's development, which was at its height during the late 1840s.

Clusters of terraces appear in Portland Town, along Portland Town Road (now St John's Wood High Street). Larger villas standing in substantial garden plots are located to the south of St John's Wood Road and along the Grove End Road. The earliest phase of the Harrow School Estate is starting to appear at the south end of Hamilton Terrace. Lord's Cricket Ground, the Clergy Orphan School and St John's Chapel and Burial Ground have also appeared. Between these pockets of development remain substantial areas of agricultural land.

The rapid development of St John's Wood that took place in the mid-19th century. Portland Town has become a dense urban development to the east. The Harrow School's land has been completely developed, with Hamilton Terrace and Upper Hamilton Terrace extending north. To the north of Abbey Road are new streets with terraces along Carlton Hill and Clifton Hill. Despite this rapid urban development on the fringes of the conservation area, the Eyre estate at the centre has retained its character, with substantial villas and semi-detached houses standing in large garden plots.

The comparatively inexpensive villas, surrounded by large gardens and tree lined avenues, attracted many who wanted rural calm whilst living close to the city. Many artists, authors, philosophers and scientists made their homes in St John's Wood.

By the turn of the 20th century many of the terraces around Portland Town had become slums and were redeveloped, resulting in the first apartment blocks in St John's Wood along Avenue Road, Allitsen Road and the lower part of St John's Wood High Street. Early 20th century redevelopment consisted of large detached neo-Georgian houses and mansion blocks along Wellington Road and parts of Abbey Road and Grove End Road. These did not all relate to the existing scale and changed the character in the centre of the conservation area. The new underground station built in 1939 further encouraged redevelopment of this area.

Large-scale redevelopment has taken place along the southern fringes as well as in the centre of the area, with mansion blocks replacing terraces and Victorian villas. The land is more densely occupied and in some areas, trees and large garden plots have disappeared. Although many of the original houses and gardens disappeared during the 20th century, much of the suburban character remains. St John's Wood was designated a conservation area in 1968.

3.0 Assessment of Significance

3.1 Site Assessment

Location and Setting

The property is located just within the North-Western boundary of the St Johns Wood conservation area.

St John's Wood represents the first example of suburban development in inner London; its architecture comprising a mixture of early-mid Victorian detached and semi-detached villas and terraces, these now interspersed with a variety of twentieth century buildings, including a number of detached houses from the 1930s and a range of Edwardian and later mansion blocks and flats.

The picturesque character of the area is derived in large part from the variety of architectural styles employed: restrained Classical, Italianate, Gothic or picturesque Cottage Ornee. Although there is no single standard design type, houses of one design run to a maximum of 4-6 in number, perhaps reflecting the Estates' preference for leasing to more rather than fewer developers. The widespread use of two building materials, yellow stock-brick and stucco, across most of the conservation area gives a coherence to its character.

There is a predominantly Victorian character within the conservation area, with those from the earliest phase of the development now in relatively isolated groups. Later development cuts through the centre of the area, particularly around the Circus Road/ Wellington Road and Grove End Road area. The south-eastern corner of the conservation area has the main concentration of late Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

4.0 Proposals and Assessment of Impact

4.1 Existing Staircase & Garden Area

The staircase used to be installed to the elevated area of the garden and joined the rear elevation where the rear double doors are located for the first-floor flat unit. The previous staircase was in a poor condition originally before it was then removed from the garden for safety reasons. The ground where the bottom of the staircase used to meet is in a relatively poor condition where you can see it has not been maintained well. The brickwork on the elevation where the staircase was attached has now been replaced.

4.2 Proposed Staircase

The proposed staircase will match the previous staircase closely in colour and style, with the only difference being the formation. Originally, the old staircase went directly down from the double doors to the elevated section of garden. The new staircase will now have a different platform at the top, which will enable the staircase to be installed next to the garden wall at the side. This will mean that the stairs do not block the kitchen window underneath where the previous staircase did.

5.0 Conclusion

To conclude, we believe that the proposal for the new staircase will benefit the residents living in the two affected flats at the rear of the building. This new staircase will simultaneously add to the value of the building by allowing access to the garden from the first floor flat, while matching the style of the previous staircase. The new formation will also allow for sunlight to come into the building through the ground floor flat kitchen, which will be of benefit to the residents there. These works will not diminish the character and architectural significance of the building, but instead offer benefits to those that live there.