

Heritage Assessment

5 Lyme St

NW1 0EH

1 Scope of Assessment

1.1 This Heritage Assessment has been prepared to inform an application submission for window replacement at 5 Lyme Street.

1.2 This assessment is based on an examination of the building, together with a review of relevant conservation policy documents including the Local Plan, Camden Planning Guidance 1: Design, the Regents Canal Conservation Area Appraisal 2008, the National Planning Policy Framework and other planning consents in the immediate vicinity.

2 Location and historical background

2.1 Number 5 is located on the north–east side of Lyme Street and lies in sub-area 2 of the Regents Canal Conservation area.

2.2 Residential development in the area dates from the late 18th century, with greater impetus in the first half of the 19th century.

2.3 Lyme Street runs to the north-west, away from the junction with Georgiana Street, and forms a triangular block with the western side of Royal College Street. The properties in Royal College Street, combined with the industrial properties along the back of the quay to the Regent’s Canal, shut off views of and from the Regent’s Canal.

2.4 Number 5 is at the western end of this block and lies at the wider base of the open triangular space created. The garden to number 5 tapers away from the back of the house with a tall blank wall on the northern side and a large silver maple tree at the end screening the back of the properties in Royal College Street.

2.5 On the southern side of Lyme Street is what Pevsner describes as ‘a curiosity’ in a formal composition built as a piano factory in 1852-5, which is now known as the Limehouse Studios with a four-storey pedimented centre and lower wings, flanked by slightly earlier houses built 1849. These are of three storeys in grey brick and, according to Pevsner, are ‘*a conscious contrast to the small semi-detached stuccoed villas opposite*’. These smaller villas are the group of five semidetached blocks which include numbers 5 and 6 Lyme Street as their central focus.

3 Building significance

3.1 Description. Number 5 Lyme Street is a semi-detached building, paired with number 6 and they form part of a mid-19th century row of ten semi-detached villas, faced in stucco with hipped slated roofs and projecting eaves. The ground floor windows have alternate triangular and segmental pediments. Numbers 5 and 6 are the central pair in the row of villas and are exceptions in that, unlike the rest of the villas which have rusticated quoins to the front façade, they have full height pilasters.

3.2 The villas are of two storeys, above a semi-basement, with a single front window on each level and a side entrance porch. Below the entrance porch is a lobbied entrance from the side passage, and also a lavatory and other small service area. The side porches have in several cases been extended backwards but have retained the overall height and width of the original porches.

3.3 Number 5 has a back extension at the lower ground level. Some of the villas have larger extensions with a terrace at ground floor level, and some have extensions with sloping roofs or in the form of a conservatory.

3.4 The group of villas 1-10 is listed grade II and lies within the Regents Canal Conservation Area, sub-area II. There are several other listed buildings in the vicinity.

The listing description reads: ‘CAMDEN TQ2984SW LYME STREET 798-1/66/1085 (North side) 14/05/74 Nos. 1-10 (Consecutive) GV II Street of 10 semi-detached villas. Mid C19. Stucco with rusticated quoins except Nos. 5 & 6 with pilasters at the angles. Hipped slated roofs with projecting eaves and central slab chimney-stacks. 2 storeys and semi-basements. 1 window each. Stucco porticoes on returns with flanking pilasters carrying entablature; doorways with fanlight and panelled doors. Architraved sashes, ground floor with alternating triangular and segmental pediments to each pair; 1st floor with architrave forming pilasters and bracketed sills; some retaining margin lights. Nos. 3 & 4 originally with cast-iron balconies to ground floor windows. INTERIOR: not inspected.’

3.5 The back elevations are of brick above a stucco lower ground level, with sash windows to the main back room of ‘8 over 8’ panes, while the staircase is lit by a window at half-level with 6 over 6 panes. Many of the buildings have a single small window at the end of the ground landing leading down to the lower ground level.

3.6 Interior. The villas all follow a similar, although not identical, plan with a tight staircase in the back corner nearest to the entrance porch which is located at the side of the building. The rooms are of simple rectangles with chimney breasts on the party wall and a central chimney stack serving both halves of the building.

3.7 Bathrooms have been introduced in all the houses in several forms. In some cases this has meant the loss of a bedroom at the first floor level while in others, such as number 3, a room has been created beside the main front room. Care has been taken not to disrupt the regular appearance of the front façade and any new windows which are needed have been provided in the return façade leading to the porch.

3.8 There is hierarchical decorative plaster work and, in number 5, there is a more decorative scheme on the ground floor and simpler mouldings in the lower ground and first floor. Similar embellishments appear in the joinery mouldings.

-Decorative plaster cornices.

In the lower ground and first floor the cornices are two rows of Cygma Recta mouldings at the top of the wall, with returns across the ceiling comprising three rows of reeds.

On the ground floor there is a strip around the ceiling with a series of rosettes at regular intervals and a central ceiling rose with acanthus leaf decoration.

-Joinery.

Staircase -Painted with simple, square-section balusters at close centres.

Skirtings - Most are in simple rectangular section. On the ground floor they have a two- stage vertical face with a quirk, above which is a cygma recta and a small capping bead.

Windows

-Front Windows - the existing windows are wood framed single pane with structural bars.

The ground and lower ground windows are sash windows, and the first front floor window is a casement window that has been installed into a sash window frame.



Lower ground front sash window



Ground front sash window



First front casement window that has been installed into a sash window frame

-*Rear windows* – the existing openable rear windows are wood framed single pane with structural bars. There is also a non-opening window at the rear that is not planned to be replaced



Ground rear sash window



Stairs rear sash window



First rear sash window



Non openable window at the ground rear will remain as existing.

Doors. Simple square-section frames, with flat panels on both sides to the first and lower ground floors. Doors on the ground floor have planted cygma recta mouldings on the frames and similar planted mouldings on the junction between the frame of the door and the flat panels. The first and lower ground floors have simple, square section frames with no decorative mouldings and the ground floor with inset mouldings and architrave round door frames.

3.9 The group of 10 buildings has an overall significance as confirmed by the listing. They have retained a uniform general appearance from the road, with a regular window pattern facing the street and a generally uniform roof form and central chimney stacks on the line of the Party Wall. At the same time there is a variety in detail, including the corner pilasters to numbers 5 and 6 in contrast to the rusticated quoins in the other villas.

3.10 The contrast between these crisply detailed stucco villas and the more romantically detailed villas opposite is noted by Pevsner and is welcomed as reinforcing their significance.

4 Relevant conservation guidance and legislation

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework.

4.1.1 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF confirms the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.1.2 Section 12 deals with Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment. Paragraph 134 deals with the situation where a development proposal would 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 securing its optimum viable use.

4.1.3 [https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/generalintro/heritage-conservation-defined/Definition of Heritage Conservation](https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/generalintro/heritage-conservation-defined/Definition%20of%20Heritage%20Conservation). ... Conservation (or preservation, when given its proper **meaning**) of the most sensitive and important buildings or sites may come close to absolute physical preservation ... Indeed change is often vital to facilitate the optimum **viable use** of an asset so that it continues to receive investment.

4.2 Local Plan

4.2.1 Section 7 deals with Design and Heritage.

4.2.2 Policy D1 includes a requirement that: *The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development: a. respects local context and character; b. preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;*

4.2.3 This is developed in paragraph 7.2: *The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:*

- character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- *the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;*

- *the prevailing pattern, density and scale of surrounding development;*

4.2.4 Policy D2 Heritage *The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.*

4.3 Regent's Canal Conservation Area Appraisal

4.3.1 The site lies within sub-area 2 and, while clearly related to the development of the area and its commercial and residential character, it is in fact hidden from the canal itself.

4.3.2 The canal was finally finished in 1820: 5 Lyme Street and its related group of five semi-detached villas followed around thirty years later. By 1840 the canal was carrying building materials, grain, hay, cheese, chemicals and beer to many related wharves.

4.3.3 In the Appraisal it is noted that numbers 1-10 Lyme Street, 1-6 Lyme Street, and 11-19 Lyme Street are listed as making a positive contribution to the area.

4.3.4 The management strategy provides clear guidance on what to consider in assessing any development proposals. In particular, the sections on Roof and Rear Extensions are relevant. *'Roof extensions which fundamentally alter the roof form of buildings where visible from the canal will not normally be permitted, although each proposal will be considered on its own merits'. Rear extensions 'should be as unobtrusive as possible and should not adversely affect the character of the building or the conservation area. The proposal's general effect on neighbouring properties, the setting of the canal and the conservation area will be the basis of its suitability. Within the terrace or group of buildings what is permissible will depend on the original historic pattern of extensions. Rear extensions will not be acceptable where they would spoil a uniform rear elevation of an unspoilt terrace or group of buildings, particularly when the elevations concerned are clearly visible from the canal.'*

5 Proposals and their impact on the significance of the building and the Conservation Area.

5.1 The Proposals

5.1.1 The proposals are shown on the drawings

5.1.2 For the purposes of this assessment the proposed works comprise the following:

- replacing the front 'wood framed single glazed windows with structural bars' with 'wood framed slim double glazed windows with structural bars'
- the existing casement first floor window that sits in a sash frame will be replaced back to a sash window like the rest of the 10 villa properties
- replacing the rear openable 'wood framed single glazed windows with structural bars' with 'wood framed 24mm plant on bars glazed unit with duplex internal windows'.

5.2 The significance of the building is that it forms an integral part of the group of five semi-detached, mid 19th century villas. Although there have been alterations to the backs of most of the villas and to some of the sides, the existing form including the roofscape and the chimney stacks has been retained.

5.3 The significance of the fronts of the villas, and their form, is reinforced by the subtle detailing with the alternate pediments to the ground floor windows, the emphasis on the corners of numbers 5 and 6 which have pilasters rather than the rusticated quoins which are used on the two pairs on either side. The layout of the windows at the front is preserved while the replacement of the casement window on the first floor to a sash window will restore the front facade to its original look and restore the uniformity to the rest of the 10 villa properties.

5.4 None of the proposals affect the significance. There are no alterations to the roofscape, chimneys or building, slimline windows on the front will keep the form and thickness of the windows exactly as it is while also providing much needed draught relief and energy efficiency. It is clear that the proposals do comply with the guidance set out in paragraph 4.3.4 above for works in the Regent's Canal Conservation Area.

5.5 There are no alterations to the designated listed building and, as such, there is no harm as defined in the NPPF. The proposals do, by enhancing the efficiency of the building, comply with the Historic England's approach to change as being essential to the optimum viable use of the building in accordance with paragraph 134 of the Framework. As noted above, there is no harm to the form or general appearance of the building.

5.6 The Local Plan sets out the need for any development to respect both the local context and the character of nationally and locally listed heritage assets. In preserving the form and appearance of the building it is considered that these proposals comply with the Local Plan guidance.

5.7 Internally the decorative work will be retained and so the original hierarchy of the rooms will be retained.

6 Summary

6.1 It is considered that the proposals do not harm the significance of the building and do comply with the Historic England objectives to secure a viable future for, and attract future investment in, the building.

6.2 The significance of the Conservation Area will not be harmed and character of this particular part of the area, including the contrast referred to by Pevsner which contributes to the character of the area, will be retained.

6.3 It is therefore considered that the proposals do comply with both national and local conservation area objectives and guidance.