



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 11 December 2025

by A Edgington BSc (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31st December 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/V5570/Y/25/3372821

7 Claremont Square, London N1 9LY

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Ms J Chen against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref is P2025/0934/LBC.
 - The works proposed are Refurbishment and tanking of one front vault. Amendments to existing outrigger to include installation of 2 sash windows, change in floor level at lower ground floor and installation of new glazed opening into staircase.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/V5570/W/25/3372818

7 Claremont Square, London N1 9LY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms J Chen against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref is P2025/0933/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Refurbishment and tanking of one front vault. Amendments to existing outrigger to include installation of 2 sash windows, change in floor level at lower ground floor and installation of new glazed opening into staircase.
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Decisions

Appeal A

1. In respect of the upper sash window only, the appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted in accordance with the terms of the application Ref P2025/0934/LBC subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) All new external and internal works and finishes and works of making good to the retained fabric shall match the existing adjacent works with regards to the methods used and to material, colour, texture and profile. All such works and finished shall be maintained as such thereafter.
2. The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused for refurbishment and tanking of one front vault, amendments to existing outrigger to include installation of lower sash window, change in floor level at lower ground floor and installation of new glazed opening into staircase.

Appeal B

3. In respect of the upper sash window only, the appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted in accordance with the terms of the application Ref P2025/0933/FUL subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: DM303, PP300, PP303, PP304, PP306, PP308, Sustainable Design and Construction Statement April 2025, Design and Access Statement March 2025 and Heritage Impact Statement March 2025, in respect of works to the outrigger only.
 - 3) The development shall be constructed in accordance with the schedule of materials and details noted on the plans and within the Design and Access Statement. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details so approved and shall be maintained as such thereafter.
4. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused for refurbishment and tanking of one front vault, amendments to existing outrigger to include installation of lower sash window, change in floor level at lower ground floor and installation of new glazed opening into staircase.

Preliminary Matters

5. Both appeals are concerned with the same development. In the interests of brevity and where appropriate, I will deal the appeals together in my reasoning.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are whether the proposals would preserve the Grade II listed 2 – 17 Claremont Square (consecutive) and attached railings, and whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the New River Conservation Area (Appeals A and B).

Reasons

Listed Buildings

7. Number 7 Claremont Square sits within a terrace of sixteen dwellings on the western side of a square, built as part of London's 19th century expansion. The terrace comprises beige bricks with banded stucco ground floors, artificial slate mansard roofs with dormers, and brick party-walls. Number 7's principal elevation is largely consistent with other dwellings in the terrace. Internally the listing notes a side-hall plan with staircase, accessing three storeys, with basement and attic.
8. There have been some internal alterations to plan form, mainly to the basement and ground floors where internal partitions between front and rear rooms have been removed. At basement level, there is a recently constructed single storey glazed extension which extends into what was formerly a small rear yard at a lower level than the garden. However, the heritage statement notes that the historic plan form remains largely intact, and I see no reason to disagree in relation to the stairwell and the linkages between the rooms in the main house and the closet wing.

9. The heritage statement states that although the earliest map representation of the terrace does not show closet wings, the level of detail cannot be relied upon. The earliest cartographic map, dated 1871, shows that all dwellings in the terrace have a rear closet wing. The heritage statement concludes that this suggests that the closet wings were built at the same time as the rest of the building. It is unclear to me why the heritage statement then states that the outrigger is not an original feature. I have concluded, on the basis of the cartographic map evidence, that a closet wing, or outrigger, was an integral part of the original dwelling.
10. The closet wing appears to have been extended upwards by one floor in the 1980s. There is a 20th century external door and side window accessed from the half landing between the basement and ground floor. On the floor above, in the upper room of the closet wing, there is a poorly proportioned and highly incongruous 20th century window. As the closet wing has been part rendered it is not possible to determine whether the external door is original, or if a door did exist, if it was in this location. In any case garden levels appear to have been lowered as part of the current redevelopment.
11. Nonetheless, the Council's argument that a door from this room would have provided an access to the garden appears a reasonable assumption, as the only other garden access would have been through the basement kitchen and yard area. I see no reason to disagree with the Council in this regard. Moreover, the panelling of the door frame on the half-landing suggests that this was a doorway used by residents of the main house.
12. There are two subterranean vaults beneath the footway, accessed from a front lightwell. Only one vault is accessible and this has a brick barrel roof and brick walls.
13. The heritage statement notes that No 7 is a good example of a late Georgian terraced town house that retains much of its architectural interest. Moreover, it has retained its closet wing, unlike some other dwellings in the terrace. The appeal statement notes that No 7's rear elevation is not described in the listing. However, whilst I acknowledge that the significance of No 7 and the remaining terrace arises primarily from the aesthetic value of its principal façade, the stark contrast between the public and private faces of the dwelling reflects the social and architectural values of the time. This also contributes to the overall appreciation of Georgian terraced housing.
14. Notwithstanding my observations in relation to the closet wing's openings, I conclude that No 7's significance derives from its internal plan form and retained historic fabric, the contribution its principal elevation makes to the consistency of built form in the street scene, and its historic and social associations with planned development in north London. Vaults contribute to an understanding of former domestic life and have significance arising from their largely unaltered historic fabric and former function.

New River Conservation Area

15. This area was developed in the 18th and early 19th centuries and comprises mainly residential estates with a distinctive architectural coherence and consistency which has remained largely intact. The residential streets and the square display a wealth of fine detailing and considered design, enabling an appreciation of the area's original scale and appearance.

Proposals and effects

Closet wing

16. At basement level there is a low room below the half-landing, which was formerly accessed from the rear yard. The current access into this space is significantly lower than a standard doorway. The plans suggest this is a consequence of raised floor levels of the glazed extension, but even at the ceiling height of 1.7 metres shown on the survey, this room would be uncomfortable for modern access.
17. The proposals would remove the floor which currently separates this space from the lower room of the closet wing directly above. This would create a room which would effectively be more than one and half storeys tall yet would retain the horizontal dimensions of the closet wing. The existing external door and side window would be removed and replaced with a multipaned sash window in the style of others at No 7. The newly redundant internal door from the staircase would be replaced with glazing. The new room would be accessed from the glazed basement extension.
18. The main premise of the appeal statement is that the closet wing is a later addition, yet this is inconsistent with the heritage statement. I have concluded that the closet wing comprising the lower room and the additional basement space is original. Notwithstanding the upwards extension of the 1980s, this has not altered the internal stair layout or No 7's underlying spatial hierarchy. I did observe that other dwellings showed evidence of varied piecemeal development at the rear, with a variety of routes between the main house and the garden but this reinforces my reasoning that No 7's closet wing is less altered than others in the terrace.
19. With regard to changes to Georgian terraces, Historic England¹ notes that issues to consider include changes to the original plan form, as well as the room hierarchy and the relationship between the main and service rooms.
20. Internally, the proposals would remove the linkage between the half landing and the ground floor closet wing room and create an artificially tall room accessed from basement level. This would result in the loss of historic fabric, and disruption to the original room layout and hierarchy, not least in creating a room with a ceiling height that is atypical of its position in the basement, which would typically be the most subservient level. The insertion of a glazed panel in the internal door frame would allow views into the closet wing, and an appreciation of its footprint but this would not alter the disruption to the rhythm of the original room hierarchy. In any case, the insertion of a full-height glazed panel where there was formerly a door, would in itself appear bland and incongruous on a stairwell linking the ground and basement floors.
21. Externally the entrance door and window of the lower room of the closet wing would be replaced by a period style sash window which would broadly reflect the geometry and the style of the other windows on the rear elevation. However, this window would be overly tall, and its cill level would be set lower than the former floor level of the lower room. This would disrupt the window hierarchy of No 7's rear elevation, giving an apparent grandeur to the lowest level, which would jar with the sizing of windows on other floors which clearly reflect status. Moreover, given it seems likely that there was a door giving access to the garden from this room, a

¹ Conserving Georgian and Victorian terraced housing, Historic England July 2020

window is not necessarily an appropriate substitution. Although I accept the window would be an improvement in visual terms on the current situation, it is likely that it would obliterate a former functional relationship between the garden and the closet wing.

22. At upper room level the existing 20th century window would be replaced by a multi-paned sash window which would be beneficial to the appreciation of No 7's rear elevation.
23. There would be a significant loss of historic fabric and original plan form in the closet wing, as well the disruption of the original spatial hierarchy and relationship between the service rooms and the main house. Moreover, the lower sash window would be disproportionately large. As such, although I appreciate that the glazed extension has altered the original relationship between the garden and basement level on one side of No 7's rear elevation, the spatial and access relationship between the main house and the closet wing remains intact. Notwithstanding that the proposed replacement of the upper sash window would benefit the appearance and appreciation of No 7's rear elevation, this small benefit would not outweigh the other harm arising from the proposals for the closet wing.
24. With regard to the proposals excluding the upper sash window, No 7's special features or historic interest would not be preserved. Nor would those proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

Vault

25. The vault is a brick lined structure with brick partitions and slate shelves which the heritage statement notes are part of No 7's original construction. There was no sign of water ingress emanating from the brick walls or moisture on the wall surfaces. However, there was standing water on the brick paved floor and condensation on a copper pipe. Although the atmosphere within the vault appeared humid, the shelves themselves appeared dry.
26. The plans indicate that the existing brick partitions and slate shelves would be removed and the vault would be tanked. However, although there are drawings showing a removable membrane on the walls and floor, there are no details as to how this would be attached to the walls or the floor. In the absence of greater detail I am unable to conclude that the membrane could be removed without damage to the original brickwork. Moreover, as the source of the standing water on the floor has not been identified, it is unclear how these proposals would benefit the structure of the vault itself or how it would drain. There could be adverse effects on the vault's structure over time if the paths of moisture ingress and egress are disrupted.
27. In addition, although parts of the evidence state that the brick partitions would be rebuilt, the drawings show timber studwork partitions. The new slate shelves would also be significantly thicker than what is there now and the proposed slate floor would not replicate the existing brick floor. The original materials and features would be removed, damaged or concealed and appreciation of the original vault would be substantially eroded.
28. Reference is made to specialist reports but these do not appear to be before me. I conclude that there is insufficient detail to conclude that the proposed works would remedy the water ingress, provide appropriate mitigation or indeed that the current

situation is harmful to the fabric of the dwelling as a whole. Moreover, subterranean storage areas have a particular environment and are not suitable for all storage needs. The vault appears to be fulfilling the purpose for which it was built and is neither inaccessible nor unusable. I see no imperative to use the space for storage needs requiring a different environment. I disagree that the proposals would secure the vault's long term preservation and given the introduction of new materials, it would not reinstate architectural features.

29. As such, I am unable to conclude that the proposals for the vault would not damage the historic fabric and erode No 7's significance. Number 7's special features would not be preserved.

Heritage balance

30. As set out above, I have reached different conclusions with regard to different elements of the works. I have also concluded that given the nature of the works, they are severable. As such, it would be appropriate to issue a split decision.
31. With regard to the upper sash window, this would enhance No 7's special interest and historic character. It would also enhance the character and appearance of the CA. This would be in accordance with Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) and Policies DH1, DH2 of the Local Plan, which are concerned with the safeguarding of heritage assets.
32. However, with regard to the remaining proposals in the closet wing and the vault, the proposals would fail to preserve No 7 or the features of special or historic interest which it possesses, or preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. In this regard the proposals would be contrary to the provisions of Sections 16 and 72 of the Act and LP Policies DH1 And DH2, as outlined above. These proposals would amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of a listed building, and the CA, and I give that harm considerable weight. This harm would not be outweighed by the benefits arising from the upper sash window.
33. Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that where proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
34. I appreciate that the basement space has limited usability as liveable space and the proposals would relocate floor space from the lower closet wing to the basement. However, these are essentially private benefits, arising from personal preference. In my experience this is a very highly sought after part of London and there is nothing before me to indicate that these changes are essential to ensure that No 7 remains viable as a dwelling, particularly as this room arrangement is commonplace in this type of Georgian terrace.
35. In addition, I give no weight to the argument that the glazed doorway on the half landing would restore an original feature. The panelling suggests that the door opening is of some age, and it seems highly improbable that the main occupiers of the house would access the garden through a basement space occupied by the servant class. I appreciate that the stairwell may be dark on this half- landing but that is characteristic of these properties.

Other matters

36. The appellant has drawn a recent consent for works at 17 Claremont Terrace to my attention. However, this is a corner dwelling and the works granted permission are not comparable to what is before me.

Conditions

37. With regard to the upper sash window, I have considered the Council's suggested conditions. In addition to the standard time and drawings conditions I have imposed conditions for each permission in respect of materials to be used to safeguard the special interest of the heritage asset and to ensure that the development is of a high standard.

Conclusion

38. Appeal A is allowed in respect of the upper sash window to the closet wing and listed building consent is granted. Appeal A is dismissed in relation to all other works and listed building consent is refused.
39. Appeal B is allowed in respect of the upper sash window to the closet wing. Appeal B is dismissed in relation to all other works.

A Edgington

INSPECTOR