

Heritage Statement
42 Southwood Lane
London N6 5EB



AHP Architectural
History
Practice

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement for 42 Southwood Lane, Highgate in the London Borough of Haringey was commissioned in September 2022 by Retrouvius Architects on behalf of clients. The report was prepared by Neil Burton BA FSA IHBC, a director of The Architectural History Practice Ltd.

42 Southwood Lane, Highgate (National Grid Reference TQ 28398 87616) is part of a continuous terrace of houses which was built between 1813 and 1835. The terrace was listed grade II in May 1974. The whole of Southwood Lane also lies within the Highgate Conservation area in the Borough of Haringey.

2.0 Background History

In 1813 that part of the frontage of Southwood Lane now occupied by numbers 24-48 was still open ground and is shown on the 1813 Enclosure Award Map of Hornsey parish as part of a large rectangular plot of land owned by W G Hicks esq (fig.1). Hicks is also shown as owning another property in Southwood Lane, slightly further to the east.

On 23 April 1835 the *Morning Herald* newspaper carried an advertisement for the sale of, 'A very eligible estate, held for 70 years from 1834, consisting of thirteen brick built and very neatly finished private residences with gardens, numbers 1-13 in Southwood Terrace, Southwood lane Highgate, commanding most delightful views, and about half an acre of garden ground walled on two sides, let to highly respectable tenants...'

These thirteen houses correspond to the present numbers 24-48 Southwood Lane and it seems clear that they were built as a single terrace at some time between 1813 and 1834. It has not been possible to fix an exact building date but it was probably in the early 1830s, since apparently the leases of all the houses date from 1834. The whole terrace was originally known as Southwood Terrace. The first Ordnance Survey map published in 1870 (fig.2) shows them as Southwood Place, but this is not correct; the census returns from 1841 onwards all refer to Southwood Terrace. The houses were originally numbered 1-13 and the present number 42 Southwood Lane was originally number 10 Southwood Terrace. The present street numbering was adopted in the mid-1880s.

Census returns and street directories give some information about the occupants of the house, none of whom was particularly distinguished. In 1841 the occupant of 10 Southwood Terrace (now number 42 Southwood Lane) was Eleanor Thursfield, a 32 year old widow and her 13 year old son. Her immediate neighbours were a barrister and a former employee of Her Majesty's Ordnance Office. In 1851 number 10 was occupied by Anne Galbrethe, a widow of independent means; in 1861 it was Mr and Mrs Howard and one servant; in 1871 it was William Stratton, a schoolmaster with his wife and three daughters; in 1881 it was Mary Cowley, aged 77, with one female servant. In the early twentieth century the occupant was Charles Smith, described in the 1911 census as a coachman (not domestic), together with his wife, two children and a lodger.

There is no information about any alterations to number 42 until the 1960s. In 1966 planning permission was granted by the newly-formed Haringey Council for a lower ground floor extension at the rear of the house. The whole terrace was added to the statutory list of historic buildings in 1974 and in 1976 listed building consent was granted to alter three of the windows in the front of the house to return them to their original size. The appearance of the house before the window alteration is recorded in a photograph of 1975 (fig.4). It is not known whether any internal alterations were made at the same time.



Figure 1: A detail from the Hornsey parish Enclosure Award map made in 1813, showing the site of the present numbers 24-48 Southwood Lane still undeveloped.



Figure 2: A detail from the Ordnance Survey London III, surveyed in 1863 and published in 1870



Figure 3: A detail from the 1895 Ordnance Survey, which shows clearly the bay window behind number 40, the central house in the northern part of Southwood Terrace.



Figure 4: The front elevation of number 42 in 1975, showing the windows before alteration in 1976 (London Metropolitan Archives)

3.0 Brief Description & Analysis

Exterior

It appears that the nine eastern houses in the original Southwood Terrace were built as a symmetrical composition, with a row of three three-storey houses (now numbers 38, 40 and 42) flanked on either side by a row of three two-storey houses. The three central houses have rusticated pilasters up to first floor level, continued up as plain pilasters with sunk panels on the second floor. The central house (number 40) is distinguished by channelled rustication across the whole of the ground and first floor front, with raised window surrounds, and also has a projecting bay at the rear. The four western houses (numbers 24, 26, 28 and 30) have similar details and are clearly of the same date but are not part of the formal composition.

Number 42 Southwood Lane is a late Georgian terrace house, built of London stock brick and with a version of the standard London terrace house plan, with a front and back room on each floor linked by the stair. The most common terrace house planform has the staircase at the rear of the house but in this case the staircase is placed at the front of the house immediately inside the front door. This front staircase variant of the standard plan can be found in several and almost always where the rear of the house faced an important view. Most of the known examples in North London date from the 1770s, 1780s and 1790s. They can be found in Colebrooke Row and Canonbury Lane in Islington and Gower Street in Camden and also in the New Kent Road in Southwark. In all these cases the backs of the houses originally faced open fields. The Southwood Lane houses, built at the very end of the Georgian period, are late examples of the type but the view from the rear of the houses across London is spectacular.

The street front is faced entirely in stucco and is two windows wide and three storeys high above a basement storey with a small front area. The front door to the right is original and has a moulded surround and a hood on brackets. The first and second floor windows are rectangular with timber 6/6 small-paned sashes. Most of the sashes are presumably modern (see fig.4). Above the first floor windows is a moulded cornice and the second storey rises to a plain parapet concealing the roof. The roof concealed behind the parapet has two slopes with a central gutter running from front to back and draining principally through the front wall with an unsightly central downpipe.

The fall in the ground allows the rear elevation to be of four full storeys; the walls of the lower ground and ground floor are stuccoed, with stock brick above laid in Flemish bond. The lower ground floor has a single-storey extension dating from 1966. The ground and first floors have rectangular window openings with timber 6/6 small-paned sashes. The first-floor windows have small balconies with iron railings of typical early nineteenth century anthemion pattern. The balcony projections look modern and it is possible that the railings were originally in front of the ground floor windows, as in adjoining houses, and were moved up in 1966.

The top storey rises to the same height as the bay behind number 40, but is not matched by number 38 which has only three full storeys at the rear, with a Mansard. The obvious explanation is that the top storey of number 42 is a later addition, but the brickwork seems continuous, with no sign of a break in construction, so the top storey may be original. It has a single wide window-opening with a flat brick arch head with splayed ends, like the windows in number 40, but the window itself is a Crittall metal casement window from the twentieth century. The rear wall rises to a plain brick parapet with narrow copings.



Figure.5: The street front of 42 Southwood Lane



Figure 6: The rear elevation of number 42, to the right of the canted bay of number 40.

Interior

The staircase is set immediately inside the front door and rises from the basement to the second floor. The stair is of timber with winders serving a passage-landing on all floors and has stick balusters and a plain moulded handrail. At first floor level the handrail has been cut to allow the insertion of fluted timber posts which support a cupboard inserted into the staircase at second floor level. This cupboard also constricts the width of the very steep stair from first to second floor. According to the present owner of the house these and other alterations were made by her grandfather in the 1960s or 1970s.

At basement level the front room is the kitchen, with the stair descending into it. The floor and much of the wall is covered with modern tiles and there is a modern timber sash window to the front area. The area gives access to a single vaulted space, originally for the storage of coal and ash. The vault has been tanked with cement. A solid brick wall separates the front room from the rear room which has a slightly lower floor level. The chimneypiece has been lost but the hearth-slab is still visible under the carpeted floor. Projecting nibs mark the extent of the original rear wall, beyond which is a modern conservatory extension added in the 1960s.

At ground floor level, the smaller front room has a carpeted floor and a projecting chimney-breast with a pointed opening, now adapted for shelving. The room has a picture rail but no cornice. Double doors open into the rear room which extends the full width of the house and has two sash windows with shutters. The chimney breast has a simple timber chimneypiece and is flanked by modern shelving. The room has a picture rail and a plain moulded cornice. The frieze above the picture rail is taller than in the front room, and it is possible that the front room ceiling has been lowered, probably to accommodate the pipes from the first floor bathroom.

At first floor level, the original front room has been subdivided into a modern bathroom and lavatory. The conversion work may date from the mid-1970s when the window was altered. All the fittings and finishes are modern, as is the door opening from the bathroom to the landing; the original room door opens to the WC. The full-width rear room has two full-height sash windows with shutters and external balconies. The room has no visible cornice but does have a large but plain timber chimneypiece with good carved timber brackets.

A steep narrow stair with winders top and bottom rises to the second floor. The original arrangements have been muddled by the insertion of a timber cupboard space in what was originally a small lobby at the top of the staircase. The whole of this floor now has a suspended ceiling but plaster cornices survive in both front and rear rooms above the inserted ceilings. In both rooms the hearth-opening has been covered-in. The rear room has a single large window opening with a Crittal metal casement window.



Figure 7: The basement kitchen with its modern finishes



Figure 8: The ground floor rear room



Figure 9: The second floor rear room, showing the suspended ceiling and the metal casement window



Figure 10: The timber inserted ceiling below the cornice in the second floor front room



Figure 11: The first floor stair landing

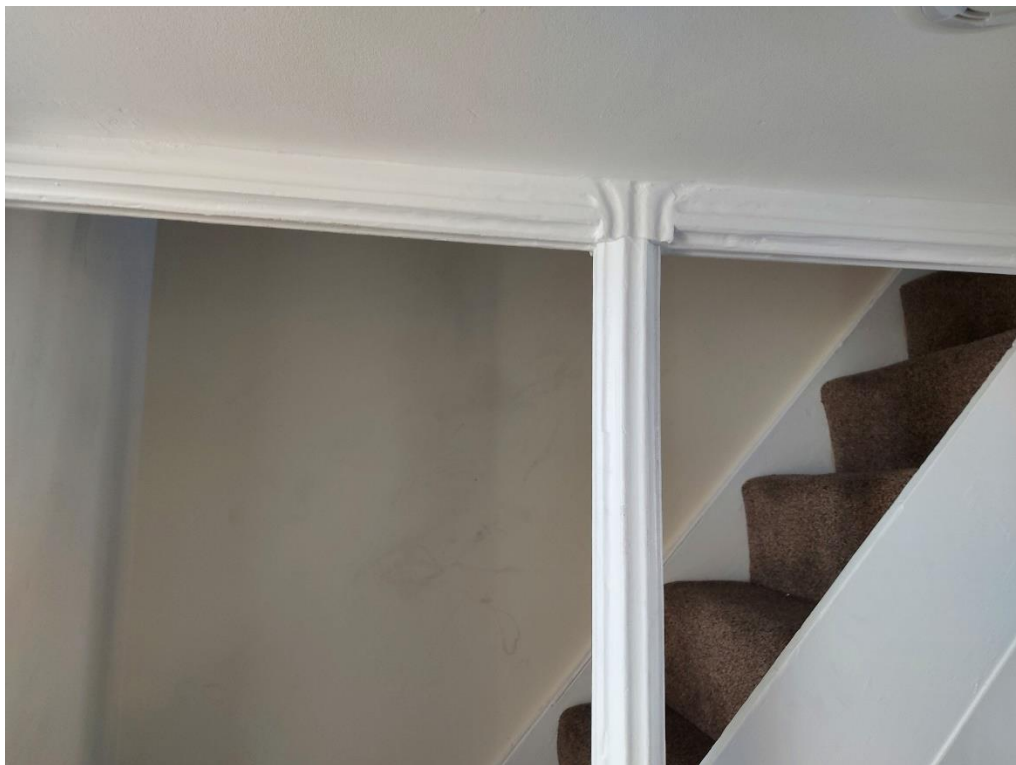


Figure 12: A detail of the inserted support for the second floor cupboard structure

4.0 Assessment of Significance

The assessment of the significance of historic buildings and their settings is not an exact science. It is based on detailed knowledge of the building type, a comparison with what exists elsewhere, and the extent to which it may be distinctive or have special meaning for different groups of people. Statutory designations provide some guide to the importance of historic buildings. Numbers 24-48 Southwood Lane were all listed at Grade II in May 1974. Historic England guidance is that Grade II buildings are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them. The list description is included at Appendix 1. Southwood Lane also lies within the Highgate Conservation area in the London Borough of Haringey.

In 2008 English Heritage published *Conservation Principles*, which identified four principal heritage values which might be taken into account when assessing significance and which can be used to amplify the assessments in the statutory lists. These values are *Evidential*, deriving from the potential of a place to yield (mainly archaeological) evidence about past human activity; *Historical*, deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present; *Aesthetic*, deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place; *Communal*, deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory.

In 2012 the Department of Communities and Local Government issued the National Policy Planning Framework (slightly revised and updated in 2019 and 2021) which suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of historic buildings should be assessed under the headings of *archaeological*, *architectural*, *artistic or historic* (which are closely related to the English Heritage values) and points out that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting. Heritage Significance is essentially a hierarchical concept, using descending levels of value. These follow guidelines established by James Semple Kerr, which have been adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and others. The levels of significance are:

- *Exceptional* - important at national to international levels
- *Considerable* - important at regional level or sometimes higher
- *Some* - usually of local value only but possibly of regional significance for group or other value
- *Little* - of limited heritage or other value
- *Neutral* - features which neither enhance nor detract from the value of the site
- *Negative/intrusive* - features which detract from the value of the site

Archaeological Significance/Evidential value

The house was constructed on a greenfield site, and there is probably little below-ground archaeology of any value. The internal planform of the house is of interest but there have clearly been alterations and many of the original fittings have been removed. Overall the building is of ***Some Archaeological Significance or Evidential Value.***

Historical Value and Significance

The house is of some historic interest as a component part of the early nineteenth century expansion of Highgate but it does not appear that number 42 Southwood Lane is associated with any particular figures of historical importance. Overall the house is of ***Some Historical Value and Significance.***

Architectural/Artistic Significance

42 Southwood Lane is part of a symmetrical late Georgian terrace, crudely ornamented and simply fitted up internally and presumably builder's work without benefit of an architect. The planform of the house is of interest, being a variation of the standard London terrace house plan with two rooms on each floor but with the stair at the front of the house and the larger room on each floor at the rear with a fine view south across London. Examples of this plan have been identified in houses of from the 1760s to the 1790s in Islington, Camden and Southwark. The Southwood Lane houses, which presumably all have the same plan, are late examples of the type. The house has ***Some Architectural Significance as part of a formal composition and for its front staircase planform.***

Communal Value

42 Southwood lane has always been a private residence and has ***Little Communal Value,*** except as a part of the street scene and an element in the conservation area.

5.0 The Proposed Works and their Impact on the Built Heritage

The current proposals are detailed in the drawings and statements prepared by Retrouvius Architects. They provide for a general refurbishment of the building and some relatively minor internal alterations. The heritage impact of the works is considered below.

5.1 External Works:

There will be no change to the street front of the building, except that the present unsightly clutter of downpipes will be reduced to a single pipe. On the rear elevation it is proposed to replace the present glazed rear wall of the 1966 single-storey garden room extension with new double-glazed timber framed folding doors and to equip the extension with a green roof and a new skylight. Generally, the painted wall surfaces will be refreshed and features like the cast iron balcony railings to the first floor rear windows refurbished.

The intention is to install slimline double-glazing in all the timber sash windows, retaining the existing sash-boxes and internal shutters. On the evidence of a 1970s photograph (fig.4) most of the sashes in the front elevation are modern.

5.2 Internal Works:

In the basement the vaulted former coal store will be converted into a shower and WC with a new door leading directly into the enclosed space under the front step. The original door from the vault to the front area will be closed-up. The existing modern kitchen fittings will be stripped from the front room and a new pine floor laid to replace the existing modern tiled floor. The brick wall between the front and rear rooms will be partly demolished and replaced by a new partition on the line of the old wall with strip-glazing at high level and a new door connecting the front and rear rooms. The rear room will be fitted up as a kitchen. The nibs of the old rear wall of the house will be slightly cut back and the present timber and glass end wall of the 1960s extension will be replaced by new folding glass doors.

On the ground floor it is proposed to close-up the existing doorway between the entrance hall and the front room and form a new wider opening central to the room with sliding doors.

On the first floor the fittings of the existing bathroom and WC spaces at the front of the house stripped-out and the two spaces will be recombined, restoring the original planform. The modern doorway from the landing to the bathroom will be blocked up but the original door opening, presently leading to the WC, will be retained but fixed shut. A new doorway will be formed in the wall between the front and rear rooms to provide direct access between what will be the master bedroom and the master bathroom. In the staircase, the modern timber structure supporting the second floor cupboard will be removed the stair restored to its original appearance.

On the second floor, the planform will be reconfigured to provide central a bathroom which will be lit by a skylight. The existing suspended ceiling across the whole floor will be removed and the moulded plaster cornice which is presently concealed will be re-furbished and re-run to follow the new room arrangement.

5.3 NPPF Advice

The National Planning Policy Framework, as re-issued in July 2021 (Section 16) advises local planning authorities on decision-making in relation to the historic environment. They are to take account of *‘the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation’* (para.197). A key principle enshrined in the NPPF is the conservation of heritage assets and the presumption against harm to an asset’s significance (para 199). Significance must be taken into account when assessing the impact of a proposal.

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities are instructed to 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. Where a development proposal will lead to what is described as ‘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 (para 202). In this case para 202 of the NPPF applies because alterations can amount to less than substantial harm.

5.4 Conclusion

There will be no alterations to the main front of the house and very minor alterations to the modern extension on the rear elevation. The external appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the conservation area will be completely unaffected by the proposed works.

The proposed changes to the interior consist partly of undoing some unsympathetic later twentieth century alterations which adversely affect the character of the staircase and the planform of the first floor. Otherwise the alterations are concentrated mainly in the basement and on the second floor, leaving the rooms on the two principal floors largely unchanged.

The proposals will cause little if any harm to the listed building in the terms of the NPPF. There will be no impact on any below-ground archaeological remains. Loss of original fabric will be minimal. There will be no adverse effect on the building’s character and significance. The works will encourage the continued use and conservation of a heritage asset, which is a clear public benefit.

6.0 Sources

Archive Sources

Census returns

Historic maps

Street Directories

Published Sources

Baggs A P, Bolton Diane K, Hicks M A and Pugh R B eds., *The Victoria County History of Middlesex: Volume 6, Friern Barnet, Finchley, Hornsey With Highgate*, (London, 1980)

Burton, Neil and Guillery, Peter, *Behind the Façade: London House Plans 1660-1840* (2006)

Cherry, Bridget and Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Buildings of England, London 4: North West*, 2002

Frith, David, *The Hornsey Enclosure Act 1813*, Hornsey Historical Society (2021)

Appendix: List description

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1079165

Date first listed: 10-May-1974

Statutory Address 1: 24-48, SOUTHWOOD LANE N6

Location

Statutory Address: 24-48, SOUTHWOOD LANE N6

County: Greater London Authority

District: Haringey (London Borough)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: TQ 28398 87616

Details

1. 4415 SOUTHWOOD LANE N6 (East Side) Highgate -----
Nos 24 to 48 (even) TQ 2887 40/247

II GV

2. A range of late C18 or early C19 houses, 2 and 3 storeys on the road. The road fronts have been stuccoed or cemented and many of them much altered, notably the middle block about 1840. The backs of the houses however, overlooking the steep slope of Highgate Hill down to the east, though plain, form a good almost symmetrical terrace. Brown brick with stuccoed ground and 1st floors. 3 storeys, with 4 storey blocks at ends and centre, which has a full height flattened segmental bay (probably circa 1840) on left. Iron balconies to some windows. A few windows altered and some glazing bars missing; also 1 or 2 mansard attics added.

Nos 24 to 50 (even) and No 54 form a group.

Listing NGR: TQ2839887621



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