

# Heritage statement

## Metropolitan Benefit societies Alms house

### Introduction:

This statement is in support of a stair lift to be installed on an existing stairwell at the Metropolitan Benefit Societies Alms House on Balls Pond Road, Islington, N1 4HA, a grade II Listed building.

### Site Location & History:

In 1829 John Chirstopher Bowels founded the Metropolitan Benefit Societies Asylum situated in Balls Pond Road, the foundation was laid by the then mayor in 1836. The building was to provide shelter for the elderly who lived in and around London.



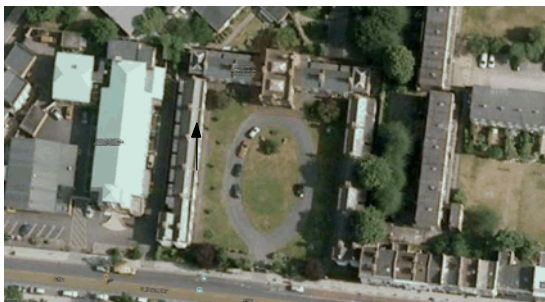
Site Location

The building was listed on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1972 the English building heritage ID is 368542. The building itself was designed by S.H Ridley in a Tudor Gothic Style of buff and grey brick with stone dressing. The lay out consists of 14 small houses and a central hall around three sides of a large court yard.

The Almshouse was previously modernised in 1959 and again in 1964 with the addition of twelve two story houses positioned around three sides of the large court yard. Up-to date extensive work has been carried out on the flats to bring them up to modern day standards. Additional detailed information about the building and current use can be found in appendix 1&2

### Location of central hall and stairwell :

The central hall highlighted in the images is where the existing staircase is situated and is where the stair lift is to be fitted.

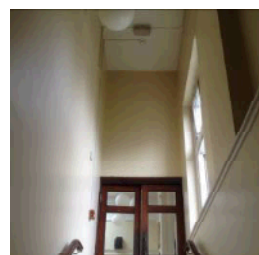
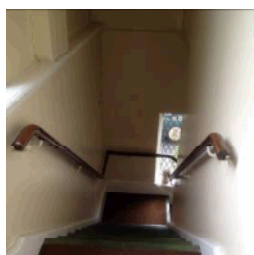
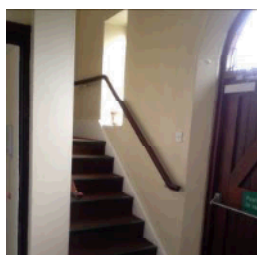


Location of Central Hall



Central hall

The general entrance of the building is through the central Hall situated north off the court yard. The ground floor consists of offices. The stairwell is positioned to the right of the entrance door. This single story stairwell with landing leads up to a glass panelled double door which leads to a communal space utilised by the existing residents. The photos show the current stairwell with existing finishes.



The stair lift which will be fitted is a Sarum Stannah stair lift. It consists of a push button chair attached to a rail. The rail is fitted to the staircase and not to the wall. Installation will be 'quick and clean,' without any affect on the structure of the staircase or surrounding interior. The stair rail also has a hinged rail option which enables the rail to be folded up out of the way when it is not in use.

### **Conclusion**

The heritage impact on the historic fabric and significance of the heritage asset of the building will be very minimal. The area where the stair lift is to be fitted has already been greatly altered with modern heating and carpets.

This stair lift is vital for the movement of elderly residents from the ground floor to the first floor. Currently the majority of the inhabitants are unable to attend bingo or birthday parties. This stair lift is vital for the benefit of social interaction and the welfare of the aged inhabitants of the Almshouse.

## Appendix 1 : history and use of building

### **Administrative history:**

The Metropolitan Benefit Societies Asylum (MBSA) was established in 1829 under the patronage of her Majesty the Queen and the Duchess of Kent. It was supported by voluntary contributions. The objectives of the MBSA were to 'afford an asylum for the reception of aged and infirm members of Friendly Societies.'

The original asylum was located in houses rented for the purpose, however once sufficient funds were raised the almshouses at 100 Balls Pond Road were erected. The foundation stone was laid on August 17th 1836 by the then Lord Mayor, W. Taylor Copeland, and the total cost of the building came to £3600.

The asylum was built to accommodate 28 residents and was eventually expanded with the addition of two side wings affording accommodation for 64 couples. (Sometime during the period up to the Second World war the Society changed its name from Asylum to Almshouses)

The MBSA was registered under the Friendly Societies Acts as a Benevolent Society, and although in later years it no longer came under the patronage of the Queen it still retained its voluntary contributions mainly from the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Subsequently the Benevolent Society registered under the Friendly Societies Act was dissolved and a new society was registered under The Charity Acts, enabling them to apply to form a Housing Association. The MBSA was registered in 1986 as a charity, and a Housing Association.

Since then much work has been done on the Almshouse building itself creating a Warden's residence and office, a central community block and 13 two room flats for residents.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=074-lma4228&cid=0#0>

## Appendix 2: Architectural history.

### Listing Text

#### ISLINGTON

Almshouses, originally known as the Metropolitan Benefit Societies' Asylum. 1836 (chapel and north wing), c.1865 (west wing), 1866 (east wing), and 1931 (rebuilding of chapel). By S.H.Ridley. Grey brick set in Flemish bond with stone dressings, roofs of slate. The accommodation in separate wings on three sides of a courtyard open to the street with the former chapel, now a hall, on the axis of the north wing; in a Tudor style. There are two houses on either side of the chapel and four in each of the side wings, plus East and West Villa at the end of their respective wings, which are separately handled. The houses are typically two storeys high and double-fronted. Each has a porch, entered through a Tudor-arched double-chamfered doorway with hoodmould; flat-arched, double-chamfered two-light mullioned windows with casements to either side. Two windows to first floor, of the same design but with hoodmoulds having stops of carved heads or floral ornament, the hoodmoulds linked by a moulded cornice; parapet with modern coping. Party walls rise above a single gabled roof and carry multiple stacks at the ridge. Modern flat-roofed extensions at the rear of each house. West Villa and East Villa differ in that they have four bays to the courtyard and a two-span roof with twin gabled fronts to Ball's Pond Road, each with a two-storey canted bay below it; the bay has four flat-arched lights to the ground floor with cavetto mullions and four Tudor-arched lights to the first floor, and pinnacles to the gables with corbels and crockets. (The plans of West Villa and East Villa have been altered so that they no longer occupy four bays to the courtyard.) The former chapel projects forward from the north wing, presenting a single gabled front. Central Tudor-arched entrance, elaborately chamfered and moulded, flanked by two small single-light windows, with a five-light oriel window above which has moulded corbelling, two ranges of Tudor-arched lights, a cornice with grotesque heads which continues round the rest of the chapel, and a band of lozenge-patterned openwork below its roof. The gable is truncated and carries a half-domed niche. Octagonal corner-buttresses ending in pinnacles. Side elevations have a two-light mullioned window each to the ground floor, and a cross window to the first floor. Dwarf, coped and stuccoed walls, square brick coped gate piers, recently rebuilt, and cast-iron railing with Tudor-Gothic finials to street. (Historians' file, English Heritage London Division).

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-368542-metropolitan-benefit-societies-almshouse>