

35 Great Queen Street Heritage Impact Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of our clients, The United Grand Lodge of England. It assesses the effect of the proposal at 35 Great Queen Street, a Grade II* listed building.
- 1.2 The proposal comprises a series of re-instatement and repair works to remedy the effects of a fire located within the first-floor flat of this building. Most of the works relate to the first-floor flat, the ground floor restaurant and the communal residential stairwell.
- 1.3 The application Site comprises a three-storey plus attic terraced building with restaurant to ground floor and residential above. The site comprises one part of a three-part terrace, all of which is Grade II* listed. It is immediately opposite the United Grand Lodge of England (Grade II*) and there are a number of other listed buildings nearby. The site is located within the Seven Dials Conservation Area.
- 1.4 In accordance with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework, this HIA establishes the significance of the heritage assets to be affected, including an understanding of their setting and how it contributes to significance. It then considers the effects of the proposal on significance.

2.0 Methodology and scope

Methodology

- 2.1 This section sets out the approach to assessing the significance of heritage assets as well as the approach to assessing the proposal's effect on their significance, including consideration of how changes to setting will affect significance. The methodology accords with IEMA/IHBC/CIfA's guidance the 'Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK' (July 2021) which sets out a broad methodology for understanding heritage assets and evaluating the consequences of change.
- 2.2 The NPPF defines significance as the 'value' of an asset based on its 'heritage interest', and it defines that interest as archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic. This broadly aligns with the heritage values outlined in Historic England's Conservation Principles, 2008, which are evidential value, aesthetic value, historical value and communal value.
- 2.3 The overview of the significance of the heritage assets has been undertaken by desk-based study. Relevant desk-based sources as the National Heritage List for England and local conservation area appraisals have been consulted.

Scope

- 2.4 The following heritage assets were considered to be potentially affected by the proposal:
- 1 35 Great Queen Street (Grade II*)
 - 2 Seven Dials Conservation Area
- 2.5 There are several nearby listed assets, including 33 and 34 Great Queen Street which form part of the same listing as the application site. Due to the limited external nature of the works, these, and other nearby listed buildings will be assessed as part of the affect on the surrounding conservation area which encompasses these assets.

3.0 Heritage statute and policy

Statute and policy context

3.1 The relevant statutory development plan for the Site comprises Camden Local Plan 2017. The heritage statutory considerations for the proposal are s.16(2), and s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“the 1990 Act”).

3.2 Material considerations include:

- 1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021);
- 2 National Planning Practice Guidance: Historic Environment (July 2019);
- 3 The London Plan 2021 (March 2021);
- 4 National Design Guidance (January 2021);
- 5 National Model Design Code (July 2021); and
- 6 Relevant Historic England guidance.

Application of statute and policy

3.3 The following are the key heritage policies and statutory considerations the proposal will be assessed against:

- 1 Does the proposal preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the setting, significance and special architectural or historic interest of the affected listed buildings? (s.16(2) of the 1990 Act; Paragraphs 197 and 199, NPPF; London Plan Policy HC1; Local Plan Policy D2.)
- 2 Does the proposal preserve or enhance the character, appearance, significance of the conservation area? (s.72(1) of the 1990 Act; Paragraphs 197 and 199, NPPF; London Plan Policy HC1; Local Plan Policy D2.)

4.0 Baseline conditions

Site and surroundings

Figure 4.1 35 Great Queen Street on the left, with boarded up first floor windows. The rest of the listed terrace is to the right



- 4.1 35 Great Queen Street is a three storey plus attic Georgian terrace, dating to c.1710, with restaurant use to the ground floor. The ground floor comprises a timber framed glazed shopfront with some surviving traditional shopfront detailing but has largely been comprehensively altered. Above are two red brick storeys with a middle string course of red brick and lead flashing with a red brick cornice below the parapet wall. Each floor has three six-over-six sash windows with curved segmental arched heads. Currently, the first-floor windows are boarded up due to fire damage in 2022, which this application concerns. The party walls are also brickwork construction, which extend above the roof line to form low-level parapet walling. The roof is a twin duo-pitched structure, with clay tile finish, spanning front to rear, with a central valley.
- 4.2 Internally, the front room to the first floor is the main location of much of the proposed works and was the location of the fire. Much of the walls are clad with 18mm thick timber panelling over studwork framing with plaster surfaces where there is no panelling (Figure 4.3). A small kitchenette (Figure 4.2) is located in one corner to the front and side elevation and comprises kitchen units with a bookcase extending into the room to provide a small degree of partition. A small low-level corner cupboard is attached to the kitchenette, facing the front door (Figure 4.6). The front elevation internal wall comprises three sash windows with panelling between and below, with a cornice above. Opposite the kitchenette is a fireplace and surround on a wide chimney breast which is not panelled but has panelling to both recesses either side, one of which has been adapted into a fitted bookcase (Figure 4.3). On the rear wall opposite the front elevation is a large central double door which leads to

the rest of the apartment accommodation. To the left of this is a section of remaining panelling which surrounds the smaller front door which leads to the first-floor landing of the communal staircase.

- 4.3 The underside of the first-floor floor (the ground floor ceiling) has a lath and plaster finish, along with an additional suspended ceiling comprising modern bulkheads related to the restaurant use. Above this, the floor of the first floor flat comprises timber boards.
- 4.4 The original lath and plaster ceiling at the underside of the second floor has been replaced with a suspended plasterboard ceiling with insulation batts over.

Fire Damage

- 4.5 The fire damage of the property has been professionally assessed by Knapp Hicks & Partners Ltd and the findings are presented in an Inspection Report of Fire Damage dated 29th March 2022.
- 4.6 A summary of these findings, particularly in relation to historic fabric, is presented below.
- 4.7 The property has suffered localised damage at the front right-hand corner at first-floor level following a fire on the night of 18th March 2022, comprising the following:
- Smoke damage was observed throughout the first floor flat and communal stairs at first floor level;
 - In addition to the timber floorboards being locally burnt away at the front right-hand corner of the first floor flat, the front chimney breast trimmer is severely charred, along with the end of the adjacent trimming joist across the front of the breast and the end of the adjacent floor joist;
 - Further localised charring of the side faces of the adjacent floor joist and main floor beam up to 10mm depth has also occurred;
 - The timber panelling and stud structure to the front wall has also been locally burnt away, along with charring to the party wall panelling;
 - Localised smoke damage was also noted to the second-floor joist and underside of the floor boarding over where they are exposed following an area of the suspended plasterboard ceiling locally collapsing;
 - Although the first-floor timber structure has been locally severely damaged, with the exception of fire damage to the internal timber cladding, the brickwork walling does not appear to have been adversely affected;
 - Although not associated with the fire damage, the missing timber cladding to the front wall has revealed a significant 700mm long x 225mm high x 130mm deep void to the inner face of the brickwork front wall between the right-hand party wall and the adjacent window opening, 700mm above floor level;
 - In addition to the above, which is also not associated with the fire damage, a 70mm wide continuous vertical crack was observed in the corner between the brickwork front and right-hand party wall.

Fire Inspection Report Recommendations

4.8 The report by Knapp Hicks & Partners Ltd makes the following recommendations in relation to remedial work:

- 'Given the extent of the fire damage observed to the timber floor joists and trimming members, in addition to the replacement of the destroyed timber floor boarding, it is recommended that these members be replaced, which will also require the replacement of the hearth and adjacent un-affected floor joists across the front of the chimney breast';
- 'The above works will also require the localised replacement of the ground floor ceiling finishes and suspended ceiling under, which will need to comply with the current Building Regulations (Part B – Fire). These works will also require the local removal of the air-conditioning ductwork to allow access to the works and its subsequent reinstatement';
- 'The damaged internal decorative timber panelling and supporting studwork framing will need to be replaced, along with the disturbed plasterboard ceiling over. As part of these works, although not associated with the fire damage, it is also recommended that the front wall void be suitably infilled brickwork and that the crack damage between the front and party wall be repaired to reinstate the overall structural integrity of the property, which is likely to require the provision of restraint strapping and/or bed joint reinforcement';
- 'Although not associated with the fire damage, it would appear that excessive deflection of the supporting beam to the main internal cross wall at ground floor ceiling level appears to have occurred, resulting in the historic deformation of the openings in this wall and the sloping floors observed at first and second floor level. Given the above, it is recommended that the existing ground floor beam details be confirmed and, subject to these findings, suitable strengthening works be undertaken to prevent further deformation of the structure.'

Photograph schedule

Figure 4.2 Kitchenette showing cabinents and splash back in front of the panelled wall which can be seen above



Figure 4.3 This shows the corner which is most fire damaged. The floor and the front wall panelling can be seen to be damaged. The exposed brick face is the part of the wall which did not have panelling before the fire. The fire surround can be seen as fire damaged.



Figure 4.4 Fireplace and surround damage.



Figure 4.5 Plasterboard ceiling



Figure 4.6 View showing the front door to the right, and the low level cupboard attached to the kitchenette on the left



Figure 4.7 View looking through the front door from the communal staircase showing the kitchenette return



Figure 4.8 View looking to the left of the chimney breast showing the built in bookcase to be retained



Figure 4.9 View looking out from the first floor flat front door up to the second floor half landing



Figure 4.10 Exact opposite view as above, looking from half landing to full first floor landing, flat open front door and low level cupboard



5.0 Significance of heritage assets

35 Great Queen Street (Grade II)

- 5.1 The list description describes the terrace in the following:

'Terrace of 3 houses. c1710. Brown brick with red brick cornices below parapets. Moulded brick band at 2nd floor. Tiled roofs (No.33 slated) with dormers. 3 storeys and attics. 3 windows each. Red brick dressings and segmental arches to flush frame windows (Nos 34 & 35 C20). C20 shopfronts. No.33: C20 reproduction of original earlier C19 bow fronted shopfront. House doorway with fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: has good panelling. Staircase with closed string, turned balusters, column newels and moulded handrail.'

- 5.2 The building is listed at Grade II*, a high grade, which means it has been identified as a particularly important building of more than special interest. Its significance derives from its considerable age as an early Georgian house, which are much rarer in survival than later Georgian houses from the late C18 or early C19. The architectural significance derives from its characteristic Georgian architectural style with simple brick elevations to parapet roof with sash windows. The flush frame windows are a very late example as they were outlawed by the 1708 Mischief by Fire Act which stipulated that window frames should no longer be flush with the walls. The building was likely constructed at the same time as the law's enactment, suggesting design and construction had begun before the bill achieved Royal Assent. The windows contribute to the building's significance as a good surviving example of this early type of sash window.
- 5.3 The building's architectural significance also derives from its traditional craftsmanship and materials which can be found in the brickwork of the main front, rear and party walls, except where they have been latterly repaired, and in the plasterwork and panelling of the interior. The panelling is timber panelling set against a simple timber frame onto the brick wall. The panelling is a simple two panel design with one smaller panel below the dado and one taller panel above, with simple mouldings. In addition to the front room where the fire started, the panelling extends to the rear bedroom and bathroom, and to the communal corridors where the flats are accessed by a separate entrance to ground floor.
- 5.4 The building's historic significance derives from its illustration of the development of the area during the early C18, indicating the expansion of London with newly developed residential housing.

Seven Dials Conservation Area

- 5.5 The application site lies in Sub Area Two, Great Queen Street, an area largely built out in the first half of the C17. The character and architecture of Great Queen Street was also shaped by the development of Freemason buildings. In 1774 the Moderns' Grand Lodge (founded in 1717) bought a house on the southern side of Great Queen Street where the original Temple was built in 1775, with the addition of the Freemason's Tavern in 1786. The present Freemasons Hall, which is located at the junction of Wild Street and Great Queen Street, is the central headquarters of English freemasonry. Ashley & Newman completed the building in its present form in 1933.

- 5.6 The special interest of the area derives from the contrasting architectural styles from various periods which contribute to a varied and distinctive townscape. Great Queen Street is noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal as:

Great Queen Street has a number of listed buildings within it, including six early 18th century houses at Nos.27,28,29 and Nos.33,34,35 of three storeys, basement and dormers. All the houses have similar characteristics of red brick, heavy wooden eaves, cornices and pilaster orders rising from the first-floor level to the cornice. The street has great importance in the development of street design. Sir John Summerson in 'Georgian London' says that it 'put an end to gabled individualism, and provided a discipline for London's streets which was accepted for more than two hundred years'. In the 18th century it was known as the 'first regular street in London'. The front basement areas and railings are unusual in the Conservation Area.

- 5.7 The application site, being an early C18 example of a Georgian terrace, typical of Great Queen Street, contributes positively to the special interest of the area, and its character and appearance.

6.0 **Proposal's effect on significance**

Description of proposal

6.1 The full details of the proposal are described in the Design and Access Statement and shown on the application drawings. A combination of photographs, application drawings and a Schedule of Works has been used to assess the proposals. The following features are key aspects of the proposal relevant to this assessment:

- 1 **Strip out of fire damaged elements to first floor flat including ceiling, fireplace, wall panelling, kitchenette, sanitaryware flooring and floor structure.**
- 2 **Reinstatement of timber floor structure to structural engineer's design. Works include the removal and reinstatement of the ceiling to the ground floor restaurant to facilitate the works.**
 - a Details, including new steel and timber beams
 - b sand/cement screed finished hearth and GypFloor Silent flooring system
 - c Works include the removal and reinstatement of the ceiling to the ground floor on a like for like basis, this includes localised removal of lathe and plaster, with re-instatement to match following completion of repairs.
 - d Strip out fire damaged timber floor structure in accordance with structural drawing no. 37990/S/SK10-P1.
 - e On completion of works to the first-floor structure, install new bulkhead ceilings to existing locations and levels.
- 3 **Works including to replace all damaged and defective brickwork and repoint prior to fitting wall panelling.**
- 4 **Reinstatement of ceilings, fireplace, wall panelling, kitchenette, flooring and sanitaryware to the first floor flat.**
 - a Within the living area strip out the existing suspended plasterboard ceiling and insulation batts above.
 - b Replace fire damaged ceilings to the first floor flat with GypFloor Silent flooring system to underside of existing joists finished with a skim coat of plaster ready for decoration. Existing ceilings are plasterboard with insulation batts above and the replacement will be to match the existing appearance.
 - c Strip out fire damaged wall panelling, coving and sash window. Refer to drawing no. 713.0000.WD.100 for extent of removal.
 - d Replace fire damaged wall panelling and coving with new to match the existing as detailed on drawing 713.0000.WD.100-1st Floor Extent of Proposed Works. All new timber is to match the original species.
 - e Repair plaster where required following testing with mix to match existing plaster finishes.
 - f Remove existing fireplace hearth. Retain fireplace surround.

- g Replace fire damaged timber surround to fireplace match existing as detailed on drawing 713.0000.WD.100-1st Floor Extent of Proposed Works. New timber is to match the original species. Fireplace to be closed off to prevent use going forwards, with the opening boarded up with surround left in situ.
 - h Strip out all floor finishes throughout.
 - i Reinstall timber floor structure and hearth in accordance with the structural specification and drawings located at Appendix A.
 - j Following structural works, allow to install the GypFloor Silent flooring system to new floor joists (Ref: C204003 (EN)) with timber floor boarding to match existing over;
 - k To ceiling, provisionally allow to install the GypFloor Silent flooring system to underside of existing joists (Ref: C204003 (EN));
 - l Hammer test and remove all defective and debonded sections of wall plaster above fireplace. Apply new plaster where removed and feather into existing. Provisionally allow to replace plaster finish to entire wall surface. Plaster mix to match the original;
 - m Apply a skim coat of plaster to entire ceilings and leave ready for decoration
- 5 **Installation of new sash window and reglaze cracked panes to other windows on the front elevation of the first floor flat.**
- a Replace fire damaged timber sash window with new to match existing. New timber is to match the original species.
 - b Prepare and redecorate first floor windows with 1no. undercoat and 2no. coats of Dulux Weathershield gloss. Colour to match the existing.
 - c Allow to replace the existing mastic seals to the first-floor windows.
- 6 **Replacement fire doors, floor finishes and full redecoration to the communal staircase.**
- a Replace existing fire doors to entrances of first and second floor flats. New doors to be FD60(s) panelled doors to match the existing. Allow for new intumescent seals and ironmongery.
 - b Strip out existing flooring throughout the communal area.
- 7 **Repairs to tie the front elevation party wall in accordance with structural engineers drawing 37990SSK10-P1 - 1st Floor - Fire Damage Repair Details**

Assessment of effects

35 Great Queen Street (Grade II*)

- 1 **Strip out of fire damaged elements to first floor flat including ceiling, fireplace, wall panelling, kitchenette, sanitaryware flooring and floor structure;**

6.2 Whilst some of these elements do contribute to the significance of the listed building, particularly the historic panelling and other historic fabric such as the floor structure, these

elements have been damaged by fire and are no longer in a usable condition. The removal will be localised to the damaged components. In their current condition, in which they are beyond repair, they no longer contribute to the significance of the listed building, and detract from its historic and architectural quality.

- 6.3 Only elements which have been damaged by the fire will be stripped out. Historic fabric which is not fire damaged will be left in situ.

**2 Reinstatement of timber floor structure to structural engineer's design.
Works include the removal and reinstatement of the ceiling to the ground floor restaurant to facilitate the works;**

- 6.4 The works to the ceiling structure at ground floor and the floor structure at first floor are necessitated by the fire damage. The bulk-head ceiling to ground floor will be removed so that the first-floor floor structure can be accessed and does not contribute to the building's historic and architectural significance. Once the work to the first floor has been completed the bulkhead ceiling will be re-installed in its existing state. Localised works to the lath and plaster element will be necessary in order to repair the floor. This will be re-instated like-for-like after the repair has been completed.

- 6.5 This work will replace existing elements in a like for like manner, re-instating the timber floor structure and a new hearth. Above the joists, the Gyproc Silent flooring system will be installed in order to provide building regulation compliant sound proofing (with intumescent sealant). Existing steel and timber beams will be strengthened according to the First Floor Fire Damage Repair Details 37990/S/SK10 P1 drawing. These structural works will not effect the surviving historic fabric of the building or the integrity of its traditional construction. Steel beams have already been added to this structure. The overall historic and architectural character of the building, in particular the ground floor retail unit and first floor flat, would be preserved by these structural changes.

3 Works including to replace all damaged and defective brickwork and repoint prior to fitting wall panelling;

- 6.6 This work is local repair work in a like for like manner and would not affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The work will be carried out with the appropriate brickwork and mortar to match the surrounding.

4 Reinstatement of ceilings, fireplace, wall panelling, kitchenette, flooring and sanitaryware to the first floor flat;

- 6.7 Floorboards that match the existing thickness will be overlaid above the Gyproc plank, matching the existing external appearance. Ceilings will match existing appearance, as the original has already been replaced with plasterboard it does not contribute to the building's significance. The GypFloor silent flooring system will be installed to the underside of the existing joists above the ceiling. The ceiling would then be plastered over with a skim coat, matching the current appearance.
- 6.8 The existing fireplace surround will be repaired and decorated to make good. The fireplace itself will be closed off to prevent further use. The fireplace itself will be boarded up, with the exact method of closing the fireplace subject to agreement, with the surround left in situ. This could be re-opened at any point in the future and so would not be considered to harm the listed building's overall historic and architectural significance.

6.9 Where the wall panelling and coving has been fire damaged, it will be replaced like-for-like, with a matching timber species to the existing panelling. No historic panelling will be removed that is not fire damaged. The replacement panelling will preserve the character and appearance of the room. This would preserve the significance of the listed building.

6.10 The replacement of the kitchenette units and any sanitaryware will not affect the significance of the listed building. The removal of the partition component of the kitchenette will not affect the significance of the listed building.

5 Installation of new sash window and reglaze cracked panes to other windows on the front elevation of the first floor flat;

6.11 The new sash window will match the existing. The existing sash window is severely fire damaged and is not salvageable. This provides clear justification for removing the existing window and replacing it on a like-for-like basis. The detailing of the surround and glazing bars will match the existing, and the window will be single glazed as existing. The mechanism of the sash will match the existing. This will preserve the significance of the listed building. The proposed reveals, which house the timber shutters, will also match the existing.

6 Replacement fire doors, floor finishes and full redecoration to the communal staircase;

6.12 The existing fire doors are not original to the building and do not contribute to its special interest as a listed building. The replacement of the doors with FD60 doors to match the visual appearance of the existing will preserve the significance of the listed building. The new carpets and redecoration will not affect the significance of the listed building.

7 Repairs to the tie the front elevation party wall in accordance with structural engineers drawing 37990SSK10-P1 - 1st Floor - Fire Damage Repair Details;

6.13 The proposed Helifix ties will be a minor insertion into the existing brick front and party wall and will not be externally visible or compromise any historic building materials. They will have no affect on the significance of the listed building.

Seven Dials Conservation Area

6.14 The only change which would affect the external appearance of the building, and which could affect the character and appearance of the Seven Dials Conservation Area, is the replacement sash window. The replacement would be like-for-like and would be decorated to match the existing. There would be no change to the character and appearance and the significance of the conservation area would be preserved.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 This assessment has established the significance of 35 Great Queen Street and the Seven Dials Conservation and has assessed the potential effects of the proposal on their significance.
- 7.2 It has been identified that the proposal would meet the heritage policy tests outlined in Section 3.3, and the legal requirement can be carried out, as follows:
- 1 *Does the proposal preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the setting, significance and special architectural or historic interest of the affected listed buildings? (s.16(2) of the 1990 Act; Paragraphs 197 and 199, NPPF; London Plan Policy HC1; Local Plan Policy D2.)*
- 7.3 The proposals are largely like-for-like re-instatement and are justified due to the fire damage to the listed building. The re-instatement of the panelling and the sash window will ensure that elements of the building which contribute to its significance are restored and the building's appearance will be largely unchanged.
- 2 *Does the proposal preserve or enhance the character, appearance, significance of the conservation area? (s.72(1) of the 1990 Act; Paragraphs 197 and 199, NPPF; London Plan Policy HC1; Local Plan Policy D2.)*
- 7.4 The only external change will be the like-for-like replacement of the sash window which would preserve the character, appearance, and significance of the conservation area.

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