

# **42 Bedford Square Heritage Statement**

Minor Changes to Consented Proposals

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## Minor Changes to Consented Proposals at 42 Bedford Square, WC1B 3HX.

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### 1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement supports the Listed Building Consent application proposals for a small number of minor changes to the previously consented works at 42 Bedford Square. 42 Bedford Square is a Grade 1 listed Georgian town house located to the south of Bedford Square, within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in Sub-Area 5: Bedford Square/Gower Street.

Bedford Square is an 18C speculative development of large townhouses that is now widely regarded as one of the most important and complete examples of eighteenth-century urban planning in London.

Major refurbishment works are currently being undertaken to 42 Bedford Square to reinstate the property, which had previously been divided into flats, to a single residence. The current works are consented under Planning and Listed Building Consent applications that are further detailed in the next section. A separate Heritage Impact Assessment by Montagu Evans was submitted in 2018 to support the previous applications.

### 2.0 Planning and Listed Building Consent (LBC) History

The main works currently being undertaken at 42 Bedford Square have been consented by LB Camden under the following Planning and LBC applications:

- **2017/6975/L** (granted 23.11.18)  
*Internal alterations, reinstatement and repairs at lower ground, ground, first, second and third floor levels to No 42 Bedford Square.*
- **2020/1731/P & 2020/2209/L** (granted 13.08.20)  
*Minor alterations to the West facing facade of the courtyard for 42 Bedford Square including reverting an existing sash window back into a door and changing two multiple paned fixed windows into opening windows with fixed panes beneath. There are also minor alterations to the link facade to divide up the louvres above the windows to align with the windows.*
- **2021/1440/P & 2021/1804L** (granted 09.03.22)  
*External roof plant re-configuration, replacement of plant and routing services on the roof, proposed combined door entry & CCTV to Main House front entrances and proposed lowering of satellite dish.*
- **2022/1487/L** (granted 14.06 22)  
*Minor updates to previously consented proposals for the main house are proposed in order to consolidate design development changes, including: omission of sauna and revised Lower Ground Entrance Hall area; revised proposals for internal doors; inclusion of blinds and curtains; secondary glazing change to sash style; addition of external lighting and living wall*

*to courtyard; revised lighting positions and sensors to ceilings; new ceiling roses; minor updates to fitted furniture. and amendment to the roof maintenance access safety system.*

- 2023/1432/P & 2023/1517/L (granted 02.08.23)  
*Reinstatement of external metalwork bars to Lower Ground Floor front windows.*

### **Current application and engagement**

This Planning and LBC application is for a number of minor changes that have arisen as a result of site constraints or design development. The items included in the application were first covered in an email correspondence with the Conservation Officer on 13.06.23. BDP architects consider that the proposed changes are minor, with limited impact to areas of low heritage significance and affecting modern fabric only.

## **3.0 History and Significance**

### **History**

The property at 42 Bedford Square is located on the south side of Bedford Square and is part of a terrace of fifteen houses, probably designed by Thomas Leverton or Robert Palmer for the Bedford Estate and dating from 1775-1777. Bedford Square was the first extension of Bloomsbury northward and is widely acknowledged as one of the most important and complete examples of eighteenth-century urban planning in London. Each side of the square is treated as a whole, with a stuccoed, pedimented and pilastered five bay centre.

On completion, Bedford Square quickly established itself as a favoured London address of the professional and upper middle classes. The property at 42 Bedford Square was first leased in November 1777 for 99 years to William Scott. Subsequent inhabitants have included Dr Henry Reynolds, physician extraordinary to George III from 1797, and Sir John Bayley, judge of the King's Bench, baronet and member of the Privy Council, who lived in the house from 1811-1835. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the celebrated Victorian architect William Butterfield lived at the property until his death in 1900. A Blue Plaque on the front elevation of the building commemorates Butterfield's residence.

The property remained in residential use until the 1930s but was later adapted as offices by Ellis Clarke & Gallannaugh for Abbey Life Assurance between 1970-92, with connections through extensions to the rebuilt mews behind. In May 2006, the Crown Estate sold the freehold of the entire terrace (fourteen properties) at 40-53 Bedford Square.

In 2007, consent was granted to convert the house and mews into six residential apartments (Camden Ref. 2006/5534/P & 2007/0134/L). More recently, a series of further consents were granted to restore the building and mews to its original use as a single family dwelling.

### **Setting and Context**

The main house fronting Bedford Square stands three-storeys in height with mansard and lower ground floor accommodation and was constructed of darkened yellow stock brick with evidence of tuck pointing. Originally, this property had a longer yard extending back towards a mews with a clear separation between the two buildings. That arrangement changed with the laying out of Bedford Avenue towards the end of the nineteenth century and the construction of a new mews closer to the main house. Today the two buildings on the site are physically linked at lower ground and ground floor levels.

The house is laid out on a broadly standardised plan, with the entrance leading through a hall to the main staircase, and with two principal rooms on each floor to the front and rear of the property. A closet wing originally provided a secondary means of circulation and a series of back parlours.

Adjacent to the principal entrances, the areas to the front of the houses are typically lightwells that are one storey deep, with boundaries defined by perimeter ironwork railings. Stone steps downwards give access from the street directly to a Lower Ground Floor external area that includes under-pavement vaults and a secondary entrance door. Large windows to Lower Ground Floor front rooms face into the lightwell. This historical arrangement remains largely consistent throughout the square.

### **Significance**

The property at 42 Bedford Square derives significant value from its setting within Bedford Square. The scale and layout of the square affords a number of long views towards the property, where it is seen within the context of the wider terrace, with many details replicated on adjoining properties.

These features combined with the broadly original plan form and the existence of some fine original interior features render the building a very good example of a large eighteenth-century townhouse. It must be noted that the building forms an integral part of Bedford Square, which is a particularly rare and largely intact example of late eighteenth-century urban planning.

The property has high historical value, again owing to its contribution to Bedford Square, an important and influential part of the development of Bloomsbury in the eighteenth century. The building illustrates the scale and quality of domestic architecture built through this period to attract wealthy, upper middle-class professionals.

42 Bedford Square has associations with notable individuals who have occupied the house, including the architect William Butterfield.

Externally, the aesthetic value of the property derives principally from its place in the terrace, and the overall architectural and spatial setting of the whole square.

### **4.0 Proposals**

The changes that are proposed are primarily in response to on-site constraints that have arisen throughout the refurbishment works. In addition, further items have resulted from design development and the changing needs of the intended occupants. The proposed changes are summarised below. More detail, including visual information, can be found in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

#### **1. New door entry panel to Lower Ground Floor lightwell**

A door entry panel unit is proposed to be recessed into the new joinery door and panel assembly adjacent to the Lower Ground entrance door within the lightwell. This comms panel is proposed in addition to the CCTV camera, previously consented under 2021/1440/P & 2021/1804L. The panel is proposed as entirely contained within new fabric and will be concealed from view by the steps to the principal entrance above.

#### **2. Raised threshold to rear courtyard door**

Application 2020/1731/P & 2020/2209/L was granted in 2020 to revert a courtyard window into a door. The doorway currently has a flush threshold to the outside and water ingress has occurred recently during unusually heavy rain. The proposal is to introduce a raised threshold (150mm) to this

door, in accordance with good construction practice, to prevent water ingress into the house in the future. It should be noted that the courtyard has original flag stones and it is therefore not feasible to create recommended falls externally for surface water drainage. The flag stones will not be affected by the increase of the threshold and will remain in place.

### 3. Internal moulding to Lower Ground Floor Stair area

A timber moulding is proposed to the Lower Ground Floor stair reveal to conceal structural elements. The moulding is proposed to the side and end only and will terminate at the party wall. It will be decorated to match skirting boards elsewhere on Ground Floor. No skirting or moulding has been proposed to this area in previous applications.

### 4. Minor changes to internal lighting

Further to application 2022/1487/L, the following lighting changes are proposed:

- 1 surface mounted rectangular light fitting to Pantry - Ground Floor
- 1 circular surface mounted WC light fitting - Ground Floor
- 5 no wall mounted fittings to Lift Hall – Ground Floor
- 1 circular surface mounted fitting to Spa Treatment room - First Floor
- 1 circular surface mounted fitting to Lift Hall – First Floor

The changes to internal lighting are proposed where there is insufficient soffit space above the ceiling to incorporate the previously consented recessed spotlight fittings.

## **5.0 Heritage Impact**

The alterations described above, in all cases, are to areas that have undergone modern interventions previously and heritage fabric will not be disturbed. In some instances the changes will have a positive impact, for example the introduction of the stepped threshold to the courtyard will protect the property from water ingress following heavy rainfall. It is considered therefore that the proposed minor changes will have a negligible impact on the historic fabric, context and setting of the Grade I listed house.

END

*Reference documents also submitted with this application:*

- *Drawing No: (15) AS 135 Revision I – Section G-G As Proposed, Main House.*
- *Drawing No: (15) AS 136 Revision J – Section H-H As Proposed, Main House.*
- *Drawing No: (15) AS 137 Revision I – Section I-I As Proposed, Main House.*
- *Drawing No: (23) AD 072 First Issue – Proposed Threshold Detail, Lower Ground Floor*
- *Drawing No: (32) AD 030-02 First Issue – Proposed Door Entry System, Lower Ground Floor*
- *Drawing No: (15) AC 122 Revision C – Reflected Ceiling Plan, As Proposed, Ground Floor*
- *Drawing No: (15) AC 123 Revision C – Reflected Ceiling Plan, As Proposed, First Floor*
- *Design and Access Statement for Minor Changes to Consented Proposals at 42 Bedford Square*