**Significance, building and scope of proposed works**

70 Great Russell Street is one of a terrace of six houses, built in 1777-8 and designed by John Nash. Built in stuccoed brick, the terrace is of four storeys plus cellars. The terrace is one of John Nash's first works, and one of the earliest developments pioneering the use of stucco in house construction.

67-70 Great Russell Street were redeveloped into their current configuration of commercial ground floor premises and residential apartments above in the 1980s. Flat 4, 70 Great Russell Street is a second-floor residential apartment. It has been in the same ownership since 1987; this is the first internal alteration to the apartment since then.

The proposed works are to:

1. Refurbish the 1980s fitted kitchen and appliances within the current footprint of the existing kitchen.
2. Replace the electric central heating and hot water systems to meet a Minimum Energy Efficiency Rating of 'C' on an Energy Performance Certificate.
3. Update the 1980s bathroom by replacing the bath with a shower, installing a new handbasin and toilet suite, installing a washing machine and tumble drier, and updating the lighting and tiling.
4. Install secondary glazing on four historic sash windows: three in the living room, one in the bedroom.
5. Redecorate throughout in colours and materials matching the current cream paint finish.

The apartment is currently being used by the owner and her family. It is intended to be let out residentially after the refurbishment. The scale of the refurbishment is restricted to the 2.66m x 1.74m kitchen area, plus the 2.9m x 2.8m bathroom and utility cupboard.

**Design and architectural features**

Beyond the practical need to replace fittings at the end of their working lives, the aesthetic aim of the refurbishment is to enhance the visual amenity of the main architectural feature of the apartment’s interior: it’s sense of light and spaciousness. This is due to the presence of five historic sash windows, which overlook Montague Street and the British Museum to the north and Pied Bull Yard to the south.

In the living room, this enhancement would be achieved by removing the visually intrusive overhead kitchen cupboards which, being at eye-level, interrupt the views north on entering the property (see Photo 1). In the bathroom, the proposed layout would complement the asymmetry of this space and enhance a sense of connection with Pied Bull Yard by the construction of a new unit within the window recess. This unit would serve the practical purpose of housing a handbasin, tumble drier and washing machine, while colour matching the proposed marble counter top with the pinkish brick of the buildings opposite would create a sense of coherence between the inside and outside spaces (see Photo 2). For privacy, a blind will be necessary over the bathroom window, but the selection of its design will focus on ease of opening as well as a sympathetic aesthetic.

Meanwhile, space and water heating upgrades will be visible exclusively as four energy efficient heating appliances inside the flat, replacing four 1980s radiators; the rest of the equipment will be hidden. Otherwise, after a thorough clean, the décor throughout the apartment will remain as now, subdued in cream tones, but freshened up with new paint and new carpets.

With regard to the secondary glazing, there is potential for a slight detrimental impact on the building’s external appearance, although the presence of the selected brand’s glazing on similar historic sash windows which I have seen is, to my amateur eye, imperceptible from the outside.

**Access:** the refurbishment will have no consequences for vehicle or disabled access nor public transport.