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# 53 Bedford Square London Borough of Camden



A Design & Access & Heritage Statement Describing the Heritage Significance of the Building and the Possible Impact of the Proposed Security Lighting & Cameras.

November 2023 (Rev4)

#### 1 Purpose of the Statement

1.01 This statement aims to outline the heritage significance of No.53 Bedford Square. The proposal to replace the existing front basement area entrance door will be assessed to terms of the possible impact on the significance of the listed building.

#### 2 Designations

2.01 No.53 Bedford Square is listed Grade 1 as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The listing description states;

#### TQ2981NE 798-1/99/80

CAMDEN BEDFORD SQUARE (South side) Nos.40-54 (Consecutive) and attached railings Includes: Nos.33 AND 35 BEDFORD AVENUE. (Formerly Listed as BEDFORD SQUARE Nos.1-54 (Consecutive)) GV

Terrace of 15 houses forming the south side of a square. No.54 formed by the return of No.53 to Bloomsbury Street. All built by W Scott and R Grews; probably designed by Thomas Leverton or Robert Palmer; for the Bedford Estate. Nos 40-53 form a symmetrical terrace. Yellow stock brick with evidence on most of the houses of tuck pointing. Plain stucco band at 1st floor level. The centre houses, Nos 46 & 47 are stuccoed. Slate mansard roofs with dormers and tall slab chimney-stacks. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, attics and basements. 3 windows each. Recessed, round-headed entrances with Coade stone vermiculated intermittent voussoirs and bands; mask keystones. Enriched impost bands and cornice-heads to doors. Side lights to panelled doors, some 2leaf. Fanlights, mostly radial patterned. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars. Nos 40-47 & 53 have cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Cornice and parapet, Nos 40 & 53 with balustraded parapets. INTERIORS not inspected but noted to contain original stone stairs with cast and wrought-iron balusters of various scroll designs, decoration and features; special features as mentioned: No.40: 4-window return to Adeline Place, 3 blind. Rear elevation has a full height canted bay. INTERIOR has fine plasterwork, ceiling with 5 restored painted panels and joinery. No.41: rear elevation with a full height bowed bay. A fine plaster ceiling. No.42: a fine plaster ceiling and friezes. Interesting original staircase in the canted bay at the rear No.43: rear elevation has a full height bowed bay. A fine plaster ceiling. No.44: rear elevation has a full height canted bay. Good detailing and a fine plaster ceiling. Nos 46 & 47: rusticated ground floor; 5 Ionic pilasters rise through the 1st and 2nd storeys to support a frieze, with roundels above each pilaster, and pediment with delicate swag and roundel enrichment on the tympanum. At 2nd floor level a continuous enriched band running behind the pilasters. Rear elevations with full height canted bays INTERIORS have identical form staircases which terminate with a series of winders at the head of a straight flight and returns with a long landing. No.46 with some curved doors; No.47 with 2 fine plaster ceilings. No.48: rear elevation with full height canted bay which is bowed internally. A fine plaster ceiling and good friezes. No.49: rear elevation with full height canted bay. 2 fine plaster ceilings. No.50: rear elevation with full height canted bay which is bowed internally. 2 fine plaster ceilings. No.51: rear elevation with full height canted bay which is bowed internally. 2 fine plaster ceilings. Courtyard retains original York stone paving. No.52: rear elevation with full height canted bay. Friezes of interest but otherwise plain. No.53: return to Bloomsbury Street forming No.54. 4 blind windows and entrance with Gibbs surround and sash to right. Rear elevation with a full height canted bay. Some houses with original lead rainwater heads and pipes. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas with urn or torch flambe finials. Most houses with good wrought-iron foot scrapers. HISTORICAL NOTE: the houses in Bedford Square form a very important and complete example of C18 town planning. Built as a speculation, it is not clear who designed all the houses.

Leverton was a country house architect and may have been involved with only the grander houses; he lived at No.13 (qv). Palmer was the Bedford Estate surveyor and may be responsible for the vagaries of the square. The majority of the plots leased by the estate were taken by Robert Grews, a carpenter, and William Scott, a brickmaker. The following have plaques or tablets: No.41 was the residence of Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins, novelist; No.42 of William Butterfield, architect; and No.49 of Ram Mohun Roy, Indian scholar and reformer (LCC / GLC plaques). Nos 50 & 51 have oval plaques inscribed "St. G.F.1859" and "St. G.B. 1823", the line that divides the parishes of St Giles in the Fields and St George, Bloomsbury running along the party wall. (Byrne A: Bedford Square, An architectural study: London: -1990).

2.02 Bedford Square is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

## 3 Heritage Significance

3.01 No. 53 is an end terrace house on the southeast corner of Bedford Square. The whole Square is listed Grade I. Grade I listing denotes a building, or group of buildings, of exceptional interest and importance. Only 2.5% of the estimated 400,000 listed buildings in England are Grade I.

3.02 No.53 forms part of a Grade I listed Square where the individual houses are of intrinsic interest but are also of exceptional interest as a complete 18<sup>th</sup> century London Square. The group value of the whole Square is further recognised by its inclusion within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, denoting an area of special architectural or historic interest.

### 4 The Proposal

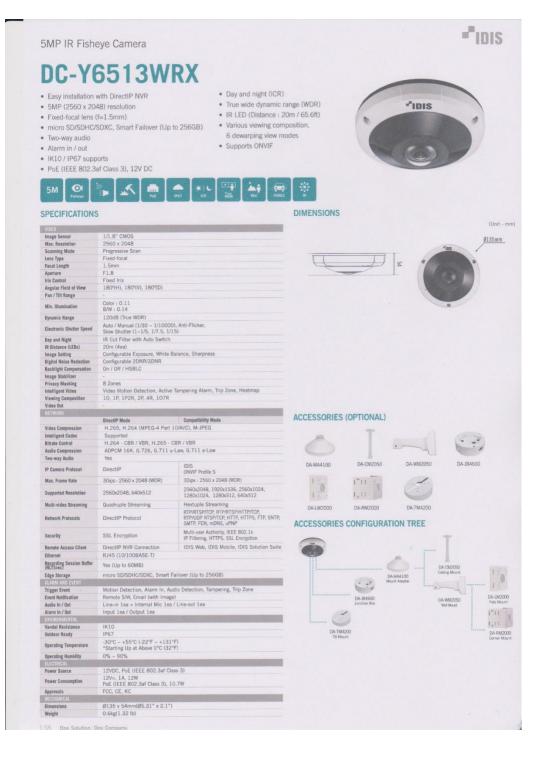
4.01 The proposal is to provide small fisheye security cameras and motion activated security lighting within the basement area of No. 53 Bedford Square.

4.02 The manufacturers details of the small circular fisheye cameras are shown on the next page of this report. Many houses in Bedford Square already have this security measure.

4.03 The proposed security cameras are very small and visually discreet being only 135mm in diameter and 54 mm in thickness.

4.04 The security lights and cameras would only be positioned in the basement area and would be small surface mounted units with a minimal if any impact on the character of the building. These lights would be motion activated.

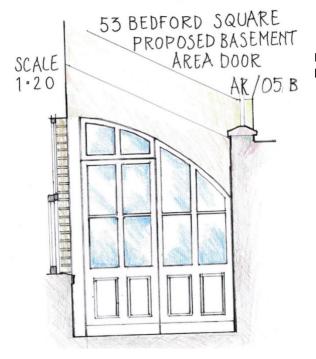
4.05 See drawing DRG AR/07B at the end of this report for the location of security cameras and lights.



Manufacturers details of proposed security cameras

# 4.06 Location: The service door under the entrance threshold in the basement area

The security camera would be located at the head of the service basement door. The drawing shown below is the door for which listed building consent has been granted (PP 08857532). The new door replaced an existing unauthorised glazed white metal door.



The proposed security camera would be located above the head of the consented replacement basement door.

#### 4.07 Location: Basement area, Bedford Square and Bloomsbury Street

The attached plan DRG AR/07C shows the position of five security lights and four security cameras; one to be over the basement service door (described above in 4.06) and three under the archways in the basement area. The small motion activated security lights would be mounted on the basement area outer wall.



The basement area on Bloomsbury Street elevation. The security cameras would be installed on the soffit of the arches, with the lights on the outer wall.

### 5 The Security Issue

5.01 London Borough of Camden has the second highest annual crime rate in London, after the City of Westminster. Larger houses in the more desirable streets and squares of the borough are clearly a target for burglary. It is also true that Bloomsbury has the second highest crime rate in the borough after Holborn and Covent Garden. Security measures are therefore prudent and necessary.

5.02 Many of the houses in Bedford Square already have security cameras, alarms and motion-activated lighting, obviously in response to the level of crime in the area. This makes No. 53 Bedford Square particularly vulnerable as one of the few houses without these security measures. An added risk factor is the corner location of the house with Bloomsbury Street. This produces a basement area along the front and side elevations, providing extensive cover for intruders.

# 5 Conclusion

5.01 The installation of security cameras and basement area motion-activated lights is a necessary and prudent measure, as is demonstrated by the numerous other houses in Bedford Square which already have security cameras in place.

5.02 It is important that meeting security needs does not result in intrusive or visually harmfully equipment being installed on prominent parts of this Grade I building's exterior. The current proposals, after discussions with the local authority, are confined to the basement area.



BASEMENT PROPOSED PLAN -1'100 @ A4