



GQA HERITAGE ASSESSMENT 33 JOHN STREET

to Accompany
Planning & Listed Building Change of Use Consent Application by [AL_A](#)

Giles Quarme Architects
7 Bishops Terrace
London, SE11 4UE
www.quarme.com
mail@quarme.com

CONTENTS

Section 1	Introduction
Section 2	Location, Discription and Site Inspection
Section 3	Historic Research
Section 4	Significance
Section 5	Proposals Review and Assessment
Section 6	Conclusion

SECTION 1 Introduction

This *Heritage Assessment* has been prepared by Natasha Brown of Giles Quarme Architects on behalf of our client, ALA, to provide information to the local planning authority at application stage in support of proposals for works of alteration at 33 John Street, London. The property is a grade II listed building as part of the group between 29-36 and falls within the boundary of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Giles Quarme Architects are an architectural practice that specialise in the repair, restoration, alteration and refurbishment of historic buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas. Giles Quarme Architects were made part of the Planning team due to their specialism.

Natasha Brown is a Chartered Architect with 20+ years experience of working on historic buildings throughout her career at GQA. She has undertaken the specialist diploma in Building Conservation at the Architectural Association and is a Part III examiner at The Architectural Association and holds AABC and RIBA SCA accreditation. Amongst other roles Natasha has been the conservation consultant for the Rosewood Hotel (Pearl Assurance Building), Bentley Priory, Glynde Place, Wiston House, Trent Park, St George the Martyr Bloomsbury, St Paul's Clapham, Senate House and the Holborn Link including Scilian Avenue Development.

33 John Street

No. 33 John Street is a Georgian house built in the 1750s, as part of a unified row of nine dwellings. It stands within the Bloomsbury conservation Area, in the London Borough of Camden. In 1951 numbers 29-36 were listed as a group at Grade II for their architectural and historic value as a row of attractive Georgian terrace houses, from a period when there was very little building activity in London. Although the facades of nos. 31 and 32 have been rebuilt in facsimile and several other houses have been partly rebuilt, the row still retains most of its original character. Although built as a grand family home, no. 33 has been in office use for the whole of the twentieth Century, and would benefit greatly from being converted back into single residential use.

The Proposals

The proposals are to return the building to single residential use and occupancy.

Assessment

The first part of this report analyses the history of the house, charting its development as far as it is known, and using this information to create an assessment of its historic and architectural significance.

The second part discusses the local and national planning policies relating to the historic built environment and considers the effects of the proposed works on the fabric and significance of the listed buildings.

The assessment and justification elements of this report have been carried out with reference to criteria laid out in current statutory guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. These include Planning Policy guidance 15: Planning and the historic environment (referred to as PPg15), the London Borough of Camden's replacement Unitary Development Plan, 2006 (the replacement UDP), the London Plan and the supplementary Planning Guidance contained within the London Borough of Camden's Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement.

The purpose of the report

This Heritage Assessment is in support of a planning and listed building consent submission which seeks permission for the following development:

“Internal repairs and alterations at lower ground, first, second and third floor levels; replacement of ground floor doors on the rear elevation of 33 John Street with traditional glazed double french doors”

The report is to advise and guide the re-development of the site to ensure that the development proposals will preserve the listed building and enhance the setting of the Heritage Asset whilst having the least impact on the fabric and setting of the building. To comply with the Camden’s Local Planning and National Planning Requirements, this report should be read in conjunction with AL_A’s Design and Access Statement and is a response to their considered and sympathetic proposals for the Change of Use:

Section 1 Describes the building and outlines its history.

Section 2 Assesses the significance of the building.

Section 3 Assess AL_A’s proposals Historic Building Impact Assessment

Section 4 A brief conclusion.

How the report has been carried out

The heritage investigation has been based on three different methods:

METHOD 1: Physical Onsite Examination:

It can be seen when assessing the materials that survive onsite that the majority of the internal areas of the buildings have been thoroughly altered, the external areas have been retained.

METHOD 2: Written documentation:

This consists of the following planning documents:

University of London Senate House Listed Building Management Guidelines – AHP
Nov 2015

NPPF

English Heritage’s Conservation Principles

English Heritage’s PPS5 Planning and the Historic Environment:

Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (2010)

Listed Building Description

Camden Local Plan

Research

The University of London Archives

London Metropolitan Archives

Historic England Archives

METHOD 3: Drawings:

Review of the proposals against the research and the planning policies



Elizabethan London, 1567
(approximate site of John Street
circled)



Fig.5: Fortified City of London,
1642-43 (approximate site of
John Street in red)

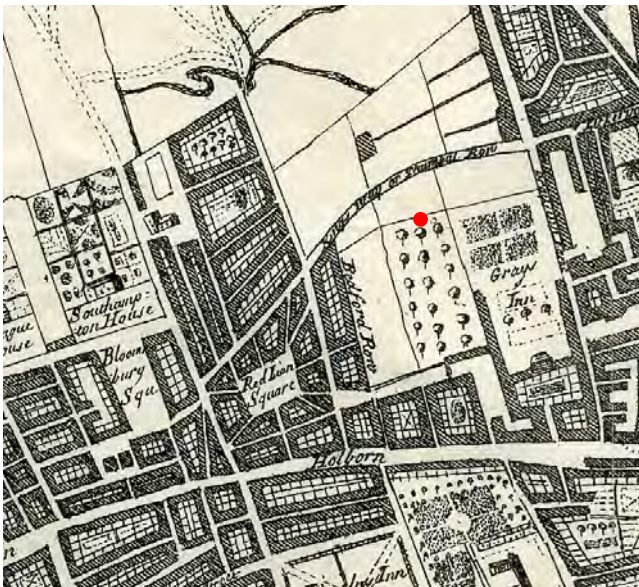


Fig.6: Map of London, 1724,
John Senex (approximate site
indicated in red)

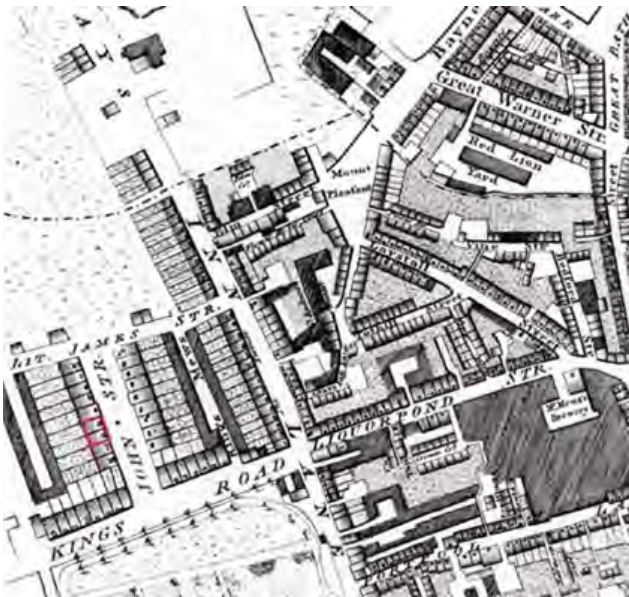


Georgian London, 1740 (site
indicated in red)

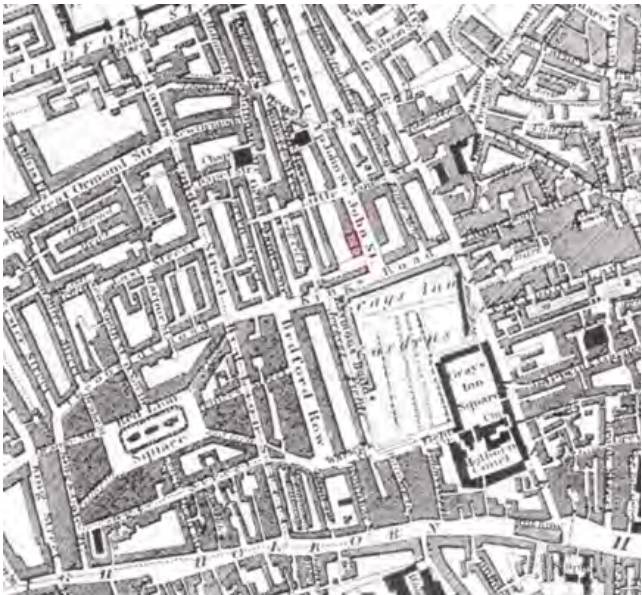
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOHN STREET 1567-1824



Fig.7: Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster and , 1767 (site indicated in red)



Horwood, 1792 (site indicated in red)



Greenwood, 1824 (site indicated in red)



Fig.8: Mogg's Strangers Guide to London and Westminster, 1834 (site indicated in red)

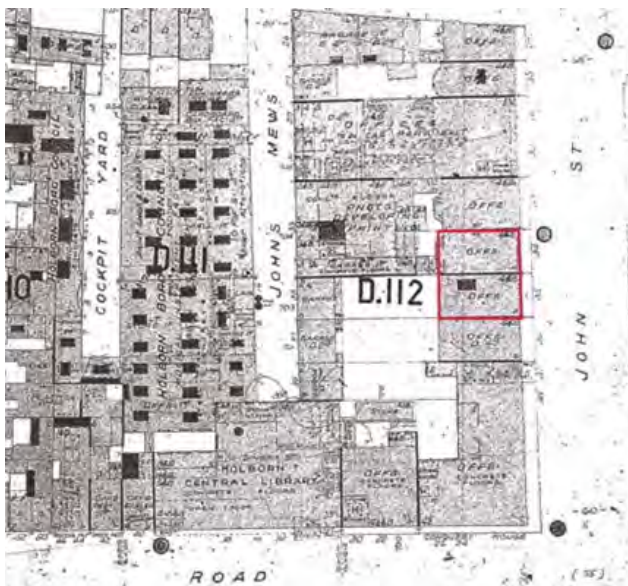
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOHN STREET 1567-1824



Fig.9: Middlesex XVII OS map, 1868-73 (approximate site of



Ordnance Survey, 1873 (site indicated in red)



Goad Insurance map, 1901 (site indicated in red)



Fig.10: Map of London, 1913-1914 (site indicated in red)

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOHN STREET 1567-1824



Fig.11: OS Map of London, 1938-1955 (site indicated in red)



Fig.12: Stamen Toner Map, 2017 (site indicated in red)

The *BLOOMSBURY Conservation Area* contains a large, contiguous area of middle class houses, developed in a piecemeal fashion over the course of about 50 years, and therefore showing the development of architectural tastes.

The townhouses along John Street, Doughty Street and Guilford Street are of significance as they are almost complete Georgian streets, lined with terraces. John Street dates from the mid 18th century, whilst Doughty Street and Guilford Street span the late 18th century to the early 19th century. Although later in date, the townhouses are similar in plan form to those in Bedford Row, but are of a smaller scale and footprint.

They are constructed from yellow stock brick, the earlier examples with red brick trim and the later examples with stucco detail. Various designs of doorcases, fanlights and balconies are evident. Doughty Street comprises a mixture of four-storey terraces with basements and three-storey terraces with basements and mansard roofs. All the buildings within the street are Grade II listed, with the exception of Dickens' House Museum at No 48, which although architecturally almost identical, is listed Grade I for historical reasons.

Buildings on John Street are generally of four storeys with basements, some are stuccoed at ground floor and some have mansard roofs with dormer windows. A number of

townhouses are of particular architectural significance and are thus listed grade II* in their own right. No 33, is not one of these.

The postwar buildings at No 1 and Nos 37-38 are of consistent scale and proportions and have classically influenced detailing. The later 19th Century public house (No 11a) is more decorative and retains its traditional wooden ground-floor front. Whilst the office building at No 21a is significantly larger than its neighbours, rising to eight storeys. It has fine Art Deco influenced 1930s detailing, particularly around the main entrance and at roof level. It was listed Grade II in September 2010 because it is “a stylish design characteristic of the 1930s, which responds in scale and materials to the streetscape of Georgian Bloomsbury, the quality of its sculptural embellishment and brickwork and its planning interest as an early mixed use development of commercial offices, flats and a public house which was particularly forward-looking for its time.”

The historic cores of the conservation area have a relatively consistent use of stucco and stock brick in a complicated network of rectilinear streets, garden squares and crescents. Houses are mostly Regency or Italianate in style, other than pockets of “Queen Anne” red brick houses at the western end of the Conservation Area.

The property makes a positive and significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOHN STREET 1567-1824

HISTORY OF No. 33 John Street

This analysis of 33 John Street, London WC 1, has been researched and prepared by Natasha Brown RIBA ARB AABC on behalf of Amanda Leveté Architects.

The site consists of a mid-late 18th century listed building on the west side of John Street, south of the junction with Northington Street. It is part of a terrace of buildings of various dates from the 18th to 20th centuries. Together they are listed Grade II as a group between 29-36 with their railings and were primarily listed in 1951 for the group for the group facade. Specifically, No 33, was noted in the Listed Building Description as follows:

No.33: slightly projecting with evidence of tuck pointing. Mid c19 stucco doorcase with attached columns. Cast iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Cyma-bracketed cornice on 3rd floor with pediment across attic storey and oculus in tympanum. Attached mid C19 cast-iron railings to area. INTERIOR: noted to retain moulded ceiling to 1st floor. Turned balusters and carved ends to stairs.

The building was constructed between 1746 and 1799, and is part of a larger group, 29-36 John Street. The street was laid out on gardens to the north of a road called The Kings Way, or Kings Road, now known as Theobalds Road, see previous development maps.

The list description makes the unreferenced claim that these structures were built by J Blagrove, W Barlow, J Bosworth, S Room and R Meel. As the reference is to them being “built by” it is most likely that they were not the architects, but the developers. J Blagrove may have possibly been the Tory MP who held the Reading seat between 1739-41. The list description also claims that the date of construction can be tied down to c 1754-9, but does not provide the evidence for this. However it is possible to see the progression of the construction on the location within the different historical maps referenced previously.

Originally known as 4 John Street, see 1792 Horwood map, the building was served by a mews at the rear, known as Johns Mews in the 19th century.

Initial use as a private house

This house was built with the overall architectural composition of the street being considered. It is the centre piece, and mirrored previously with No 6 on the opposite side of the street. The two central buildings are slightly wider and have a slightly projecting facade with pediment and originally tympanums. Sadly the main facade and property of No6, was damaged during WWII and was replaced and re-built behind the facade in the 1960s. The other properties were all relatively similar with less high level

Colour Key References (for guidance only)

Black
Total
destruction

Purple
Damaged beyond
repair

Dark Red
Seriously damaged;
doubtful if
repairable

Light Red
Seriously damaged,
but repairable
at cost

Orange
General blast
damage – not
structural

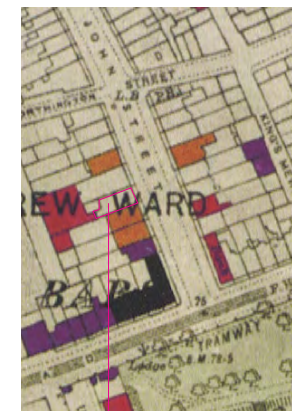
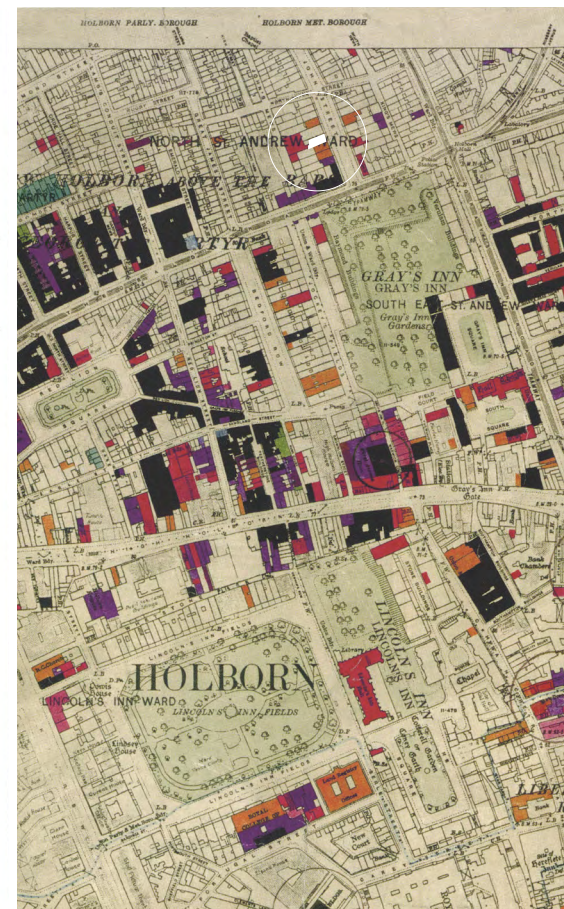
Yellow
Blast damage,
minor in nature

Light Blue
Clearance
areas

Light Green
Clearance
areas


V1 flying bomb


V2 long
range rocket



34

Fig.13 Map showing bomb damage post WWII, LCC Bomb damage Maps, 1945

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOHN STREET 1567-1824

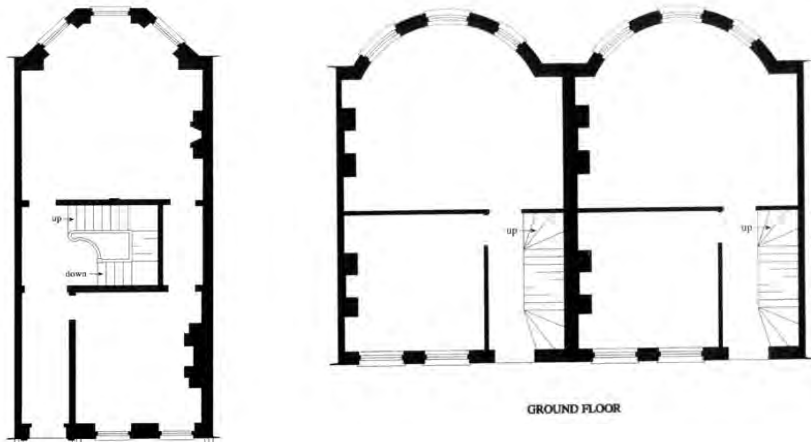
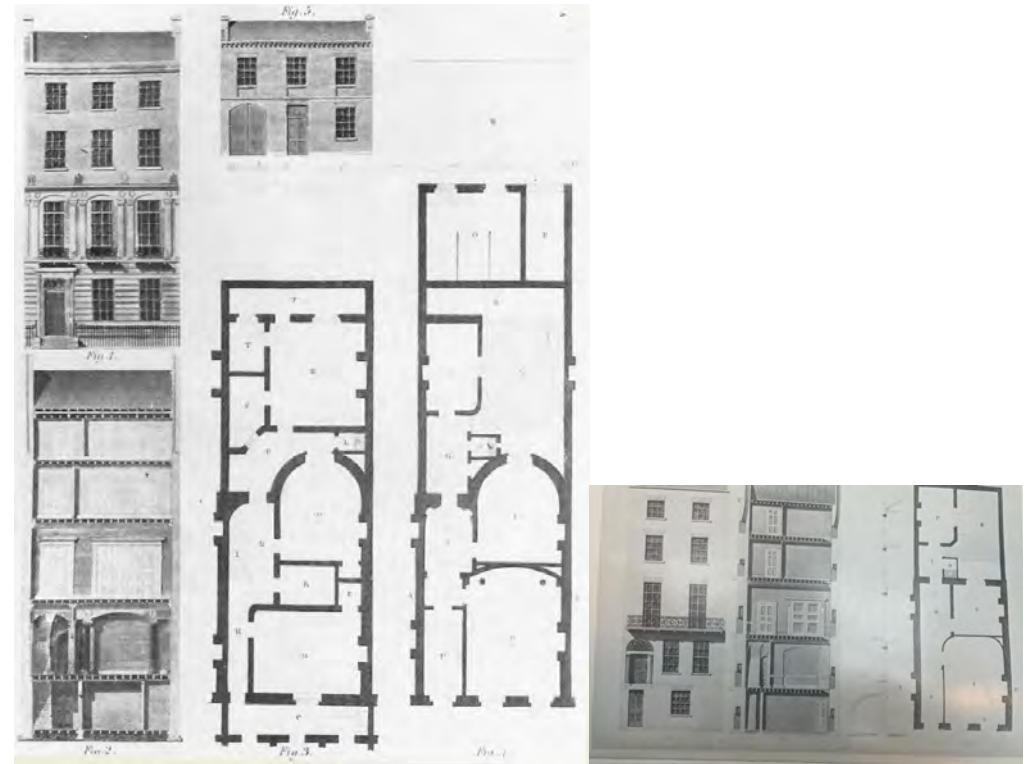
details and all were made up of four main storeys, each three windows wide, faced in stock brick.

Following contemporary practice, the house would originally probably have functioned as several separate zones:

- Servants would have worked in the kitchen and ancillary rooms in the basement, and slept on the third floor.
- The ground floor may have contained a reception room or library at the front, and a dining room to the rear.
- There would have been a drawing room at the rear on the first floor, while the front of the house would probably have been divided into a bedroom suite.
- The second floor would have been occupied by family bedrooms.

This house would probably have been occupied by well- to-do families at least until the construction of the first railways from the 1840s enabled the wealthy to move to new developments in the outer suburbs and commute to the city and West end by train.

Little evidence of early alterations has come to light, and it is uncertain at what date the main 19th Century alterations/additions of Victorian detailing were enacted.



20 Langham Street, Fitzrovia c.1770. A similar plan to 35 John Street and a late example of the central well stair (from Guillery & Burton)

162-164 New Kent Road, Southwark, c.1790. Houses of similar plan form to 34 John Street, with the increasingly common arrangement of stairs to the side (from Guillery & Burton)

7, 8, 9, 10 Elevations and plans for First, Second, Third and Fourth Rate houses from Peter Nicholson's *The New and Improved Practical Builder and Workman's Companion* published in 1823. Nicholson was deeply interested in the application of scientific methods to building practise and apart from his improvements to the construction of hand-railing for which the Society of Arts awarded him its Gold Medal in 1814, he is believed to be the first author to have written on the construction of hinges and the hanging of doors

Conversion to office use

The flight of wealthy families from southern Bloomsbury in the later 19th Century would have presented an opportunity for the expanding legal profession or other businesses to take over the lease on the house, and convert it into offices.

The Goad Insurance map suggests that by 1901 No. 33 (and all other neighbouring houses) were in use as offices, and it also indicates that its plot outline was roughly the same as today.

By 1839 the Post Office Directories indicate that the house, re-numbered to 33 John Street, was the head office of the Imperial Gas Light & Coke Company.

From the 1880s the building was used by various firms of solicitors, along with the Middlesex Reversionary Investment Company in the 1930s. In the 1950s it seems to have been used by a publicity company, and in the 1980s by the Federation of Master Builders and a firm of publishers and exhibition organisers.

From the mid-19th century onwards this terrace of buildings contained several commercial uses, including glass cutters and mounters, gold and silver smiths, accountants, solicitors. It also contained the headquarters of the Shaftesbury Society and at least ten other charitable institutions.

The only real visible difference on the historic maps, regarding the layouts of No 33, has been the separation of the Mews House to the rear which was sold into separate hands, as illustrated on the historic maps development. The current footprint is the scarred remains of this division with the loss of any garden/terrace space dividing the mews house with the main house. Several chimney pieces, dado mouldings and other door architraves are also similar to other details within John Street and historical photographs, as can be seen in the following pages.

Postwar reconstruction

During the Second World War no. 37 and the houses south of it were completely destroyed by bombing, while Nos. 36 and 35 and No 6 also seem to have suffered some damage (fig.13). A photograph from 1942 also shows the front of no. 35 missing its top storey, with a newly constructed temporary parapet. The top two storeys were reconstructed in facsimile in 1951. A photo from 1950 shows that no. 34 was also heavily reconstructed, with the top two storeys at the front rebuilt in matching style. The canted bay at the back may also have been rebuilt at this time. The roof structure of the house was replaced according to their original m-shaped configuration. The upper floor and roof construction of No33 seem very similar in plan form.

It is less certain what alterations were carried out to the interiors of the house at this time, although it is probable that the secondary staircase on the second and third floor were put in during the 1950s when the wartime damage was repaired. The lack of chimney-pieces on the upper floors suggests that the ones lost during the war were not replaced, presumably as the installation of central heating made them unnecessary.

Subsequent alterations

During the post war years the “Gordon Fisher House”, No 33 John Street, was under various commercial ownerships as evidenced with the Post Office records and the previous planning applications - the most recent having been:

1988 federation of Builders

1989- 1999 Barichem Ltd

200-2003 The British Psychological Society

The building was purchased by AL_A in 2021. Almost all the floors and rooms have been in regular use as their main offices in London and the building is well maintained internally.

The building has been the subject of proposals for internal alterations, including a lift for access to the first floor. The Planning Search has provided a list of the following applications some were refused, some granted with conditions via appeal and some granted with conditions.

Application Number	Site Address	Development Description	Status	Date Registered	Decision
PSX0205396	33 John Street, WC1	Change of use from offices (Class B1) to residential (Class C3).	FINAL DECISION	--	Withdrawn Application
LSX0104334	33 JOHN STREET LONDON WC1N2AT	External and internal alterations, including alterations to front railings, removal of basement steps, introduction of disabled lift, removal of part of floors and introduction of lift access from basement to first floor, and the installation of three toilets in the basement, as shown on drawing numbers: AVL 450, 20-D17, 2577/01, /02, /03, /04, /05 Rev. A, /06 Rev. A, historical analysis, conservation methodology for alteration and access plan.	FINAL DECISION	29-06-2001	Grant L B Consent with Conditions
PSX0004340	33 JOHN STREET LONDON WC1N2AT	External alterations including altering front railings, and removal of basement steps for lift access, as shown by drawing numbers 6706-1A, 6706-2A, 6706-6A, 9902277/11, 9902277/12, 9902277/14 & photographs 1-7.	FINAL DECISION	24-03-2000	Grant Full Planning Permission (conds)
LSX0004341	33 JOHN STREET LONDON WC1N2AT	External and internal alterations including altering front railings, removal of basement steps and removal of part of floor for lift access, as shown by drawing numbers 6706-1A, 6706-2A, 6706-3A, 6706-4A, 6706-5A, 6706-6A, 9902277/11, 9902277/12, 9902277/13, 9902277/14 & photographs 1-7.	FINAL DECISION	24-03-2000	Refuse Listed Building Consent
8900657	Gordon Fisher House 33 John Street WC1	The erection of a roof extension as an extension to the existing offices as shown on drawing numbers 27.02 27-07 & 27-08. Appeal received against the Council's failure to issue their decision within the appropriate period.	APPEAL DECIDED	15-12-1989	Refuse (subject to Appeal decision)
9070056	Gordon Fraser House 33 John Street WC1	The removal of part of existing roof structure and construction of a roof extension together with internal and external alterations as shown on drawing numbers 27.02 27-07 & 27-08. Appeal received against the Council's failure to issue their decision within the appropriate period.	APPEAL DECIDED	15-12-1989	Refuse (subject to Appeal decision)
8970171	33 John Street WC1	The erection of a roof extension and a lift tower together with internal and external alterations as shown on drawings numbered 27.02 05 and 06. Appeal received against the Council's failure to issue their decision within the appropriate period.	APPEAL DECIDED	06-10-1989	Refuse List.Build. or Cons Area Consent
8900495	33 John Street WC1	Erection of 4th floor extension for office use plus lift tower at rear as shown on drawings numbered 27.02 05 and 06. Appeal received against the Council's failure to issue their decision within the appropriate period.	APPEAL DECIDED	06-10-1989	Refuse Full or Outline Permission
8970163	Gordon Fisher House 33 John Street WC1	Roofing over the existing courtyard at lower ground floor level together with minor alterations internally and the removal of a rear extension as shown on drawings numbered 27.01B 02 and revised by letter dated 3rd January 1990.	FINAL DECISION	22-09-1989	Grant List.Build. or Cons.Area Consent
8900474	Gordon Fisher House 33 John Street WC1	The erection of an extension at lower ground floor level for office use as shown on drawings numbered 27.01B 02 and revised by letter dated 3rd January 1990.	FINAL DECISION	22-09-1989	Grant Full or Outline Planning Permissn.
8800426	Gordon Fisher House 33 John Street WC1	Change of use of the second and third floors from residential to office use.	APPEAL DECIDED	15-09-1988	Refuse Full or Outline Permission

At an unknown date, post war, new partitions, both solid and glazed, were inserted. Numerous other alterations were also made, including the insertion or upgrading of kitchenettes and lavatories, and related services, on all floors. In general, pipework and electrical trunking has been hidden behind studwork, hollow skirtings and dados. The development and alteration of the floor plans and external facades are reviewed below from archival and on site review.

External Review and Description of 33 John Street:

The building is in the mid-late 18th century classical style. It is constructed of buff coloured brick with tuck pointing and rubbed red brick dressings, and some stucco detailing. It consists of three storeys with an attic and basement, in four symmetrical bays.

The facade is dominated by an applied pediment within the attic storey, immediately below a plain parapet. There is an oval window in the brick tympanum. All the sash windows have been re-glazed with sheet glass and those on the ground and first floor are Victorian or later, with horns. The first floor windows have small iron balconies, and there is a stucco storey-band above the first floor. This was probably applied in the later 19th century when a heavy stuccoed doorcase was added to the right hand bay. The doorcase has a segmental head and attached columns with modified capitals.

In front of the basement area is a low stone plinth with iron railings, sweeping up to a flight of steps into the main entrance. These railings continue to the south and link with the front doorway of 34 John Street. The steps of No 34 are curved towards 33 John Street, and there is only one gate in the railings giving access into the basement. In my opinion, this strongly suggests that 33 and 34 John Street were combined into one unit during the late 19th century, and this may be reflected in the fact that during most of the 20th century the Post Office Directories are ambiguous about the address, sometimes omitting it altogether and sometimes recording two business users.

The rear elevation of 33 John Street is not publicly visible and consists of two main projecting elements. One of these is semicircular on plan and the other is squareended, being canted at the upper levels. These elevations are built of buff stock brick and have timber sash windows. There is a narrow 19th century single storey extension at the rear, probably for coals, scullery and other services. This is now a kitchen. There are other modern extensions and alterations at the rear basement level incorporating glazed roofs similar to those of conservatories.

The former mews is now in separate occupation.

Roof:

The alterations to dormer windows and the internal ceiling are noted within the previous granted planning and listed building applications. However, what is important to note from the previous applications and especially ones that were refused was that the historic roof structure and shape have been retained and restored.

Interior description of 33 John Street

Basement: The basement level has probably always been plain, and retains no original cornices, fireplaces, doors or historic features of interest.

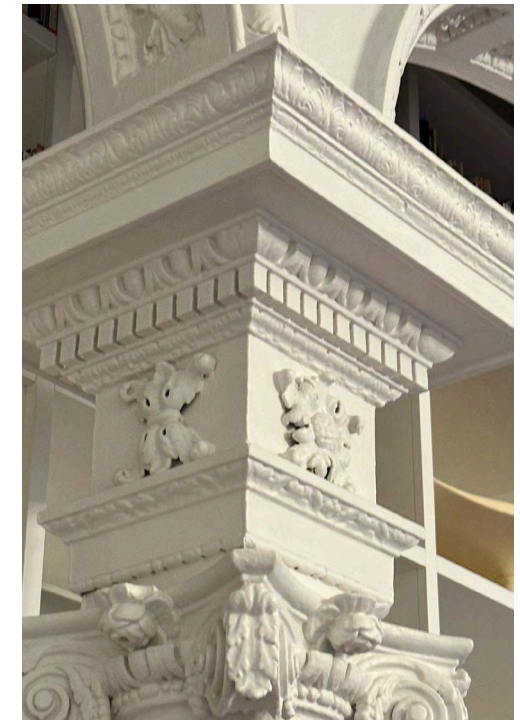
Ground Floor: There are four main rooms at ground floor within the historic envelope of the building. The main entrance hall is the principal space, containing an 18th century staircase, although it has a variety of modern finishes. An intrusive modern internal entrance lobby and built-in cupboard were removed during previous consented works during the late twentieth century. To the side of this are two reception rooms, the cornices and internal partitions of which have been altered. In the front room is some panelling and the only intact fire grate in the whole building, dating to c 1870. The smallest of the four rooms is at the back of the building. All the doors appear modern 20th Century and have been upgraded to meet fire regulations.

First Floor: At first floor level there are three rooms. The principal room occupies the whole frontage, and contains the most elaborate internal decoration, including a fire surround. There is an ornate plaster ceiling of Baroque type, with a heavy cornice on consoles, with a servery and other applied arcaded details of uncertain date. This arrangement is unlikely to be original to the building and was probably altered during the commercial use of the building in the 19th century, when it could have been used as a combined boardroom and dining room. As you can see from the photos even within this space there is a dichotomy with the capital and moulding details. This clearly indicates that irrespective of whether it is original or 19th Century, there are also modern 20th century alterations and modifications.

At the rear of the building are two smaller rooms, similar in plan and status to those immediately below on the ground floor. All the doors are modern. Part of the landing



modern capital with less moulding details



original moulding detail with edge and dart and acanthus leaf detailing to the cornice detail of the capital and the

has been boxed in to form two toilets. It is possible to see from the evolution plans by AL_A and the previous planning permissions the altered plan form from the staircase/landing.

Second Floor: The second floor has four rooms, probably used originally as bedrooms and later as offices.

Third Floor: It appears from the surviving fabric and the previous alterations that were granted Planning and LBC that the staircase was altered, the interlinking fire escapes between the properties at high level were blocked up.

Overall, the interior shows signs of considerable alteration and adaptation to commercial use, and much of its detailing (apart from the main staircase) probably dates to the 19th and 20th centuries. This is hardly surprising when it is considered that the building has been used by successive businesses as offices/mixed use. This can be seen in the drawings marked up by AL_A for the current fabric assessment and the GQA significance plans.

The building has been significantly altered at various times in the past, and it is capable of sustaining a degree of further sensitive alteration in order to accommodate its continuing use.

Ground floor 18th Century detailing with modern dado



First Floor floor late 18th/early 19th Century detailing



Within staircase lantern details 18th Century details low flying cornice detail

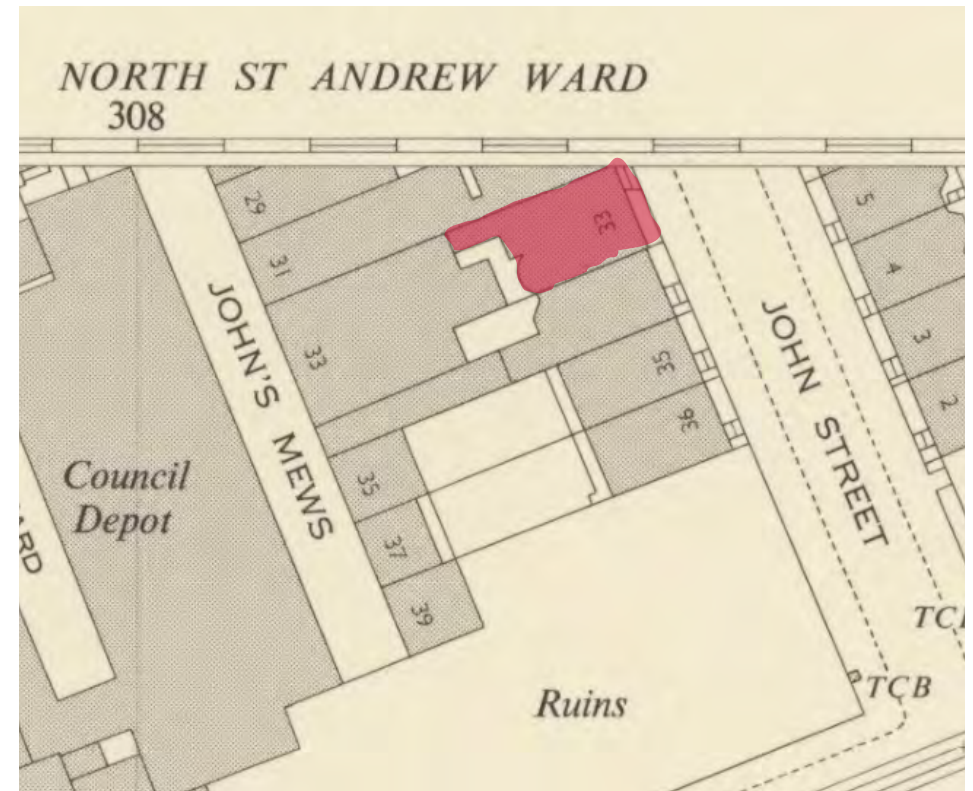


HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOHN STREET 1567-1824

Fig.14: OS Map of London, 1914 (site indicated in red)



Fig.15: OS Map of London, 1951 (site indicated in red)



HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF 33 JOHN STREET



John Street in 1950, showing no. 37 destroyed, no. 36 rebuilt, and no. 34 with the top two floors rebuilt



Images © Copyright London Metropolitan Archives images of 33 John Street interiors and exteriors from 1960 and the interior of 34 John Street main staircase as a comparison to the detailing of No 33.



SECTION 4 Heritage assessment of Significance

The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest. The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department of Culture Media and Sport and supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building type.

Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are designated if they are of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Historic England has revised and republished its guidance in respect of conservation areas and this provides a framework for the appraisal and assessment of the special interest and significance of a conservation area.

All Heritage Assets

Historic England has published guidance on the identification of four types of heritage value that an asset may hold: aesthetic, communal, historic and evidential value.

Together, this guidance provides a framework for assessing the significance of designated or non-designated heritage assets.

Setting

The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

Historic England has published guidance in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes.

ASSESSMENT

The following statements of significance are proportionate to the importance of the identified designated heritage assets and sufficient to understand the impact of the application proposals, given their nature and extent. Assessment is based on existing published information, archival research and on-site visual survey.

Evidential Value

The house, whose plan form is relatively unaltered, gives evidence of a typical upper-middle class house of the 19th century. It is a plan form which changed little from the late-17th century to the early-20th century and can be found in examples across Central London.

Historical Value

33 John Street’s historical value is as a relatively unaltered late 18th century townhouse. Whilst it is not exceptional for London, it retains many interesting original features and is part of a wider streetscape of near contemporary houses.

John Street provides evidence of a typical “speculative development” in which landowners released areas of land to builders on medium-term leasehold agreements. John Street is a good example of a developer creating a desirable street which fitted into the irregular boundaries of the original landholding.

Communal Value

The communal value of the house is tied to its evidential value. Still clearly legible is the social stratification of the Regency period, with service rooms in the basement for staff and the grander living rooms above for the family of the house.

The house is a good example of its type, showing the rapid expansion of London over the last 200 years.

Aesthetic Value

Façade to John Street: 33 John Street is the central pin of the large front formed by the neighbouring properties, and its external appearance is therefore extremely important to its group value. The upper part has been very carefully reconstructed and restored, and is close to its original appearance. The front façade is therefore of high architectural

and historic significance, contributing strongly to the character of this part of the Conservation Area. The only detracting factors are the variations in glazing patterns caused by the Victorian changes that have been re-provided in modern replacements with modern glazing.

Plan form:

The basement area of the house has been almost completely denuded of its original interior features of any significance appear to survive.

The ground floor retains its original internal walls, although the modern partitions in the rear part detract and could beneficially be removed.

On the first floor of no. 33, partitions interrupt the space to the rear of the staircase.

On the second floor, partitions have subdivided the original rooms in all areas, except for the staircase.

The third floor of the house has been altered to create corridors and larger spaces which were more convivial with office working. Although it is in line with lower storeys the original layout at this level would probably have involved several stud partitions.

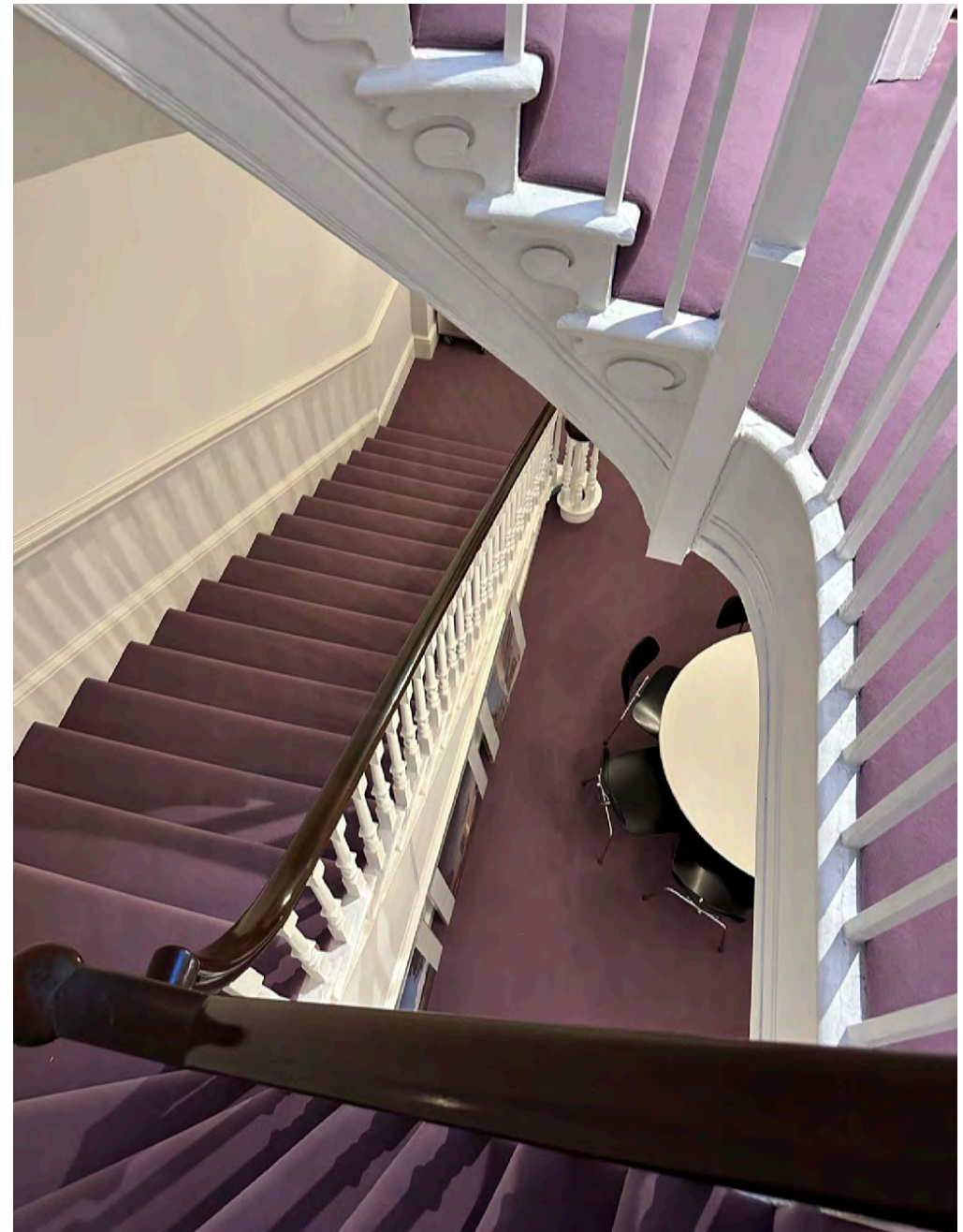
Overall, the original plan form of the ground and first floors is of the most significance, as these spaces were always the most important in the house and mainly retain their original walls. Where this original plan form is currently interrupted by later partition walls it would be beneficial to restore it. The second floor plan is of some significance and would benefit from being clarified by the removal of some partitions. The third floor plan form is neutral in significance.

Interior features:

The basement is of neutral significance as it has lost any original features it may once have possessed.

The staircase of the house, running from the ground to the second floor, is highly significant, and for the most part its original turned balusters, newels and handrails.

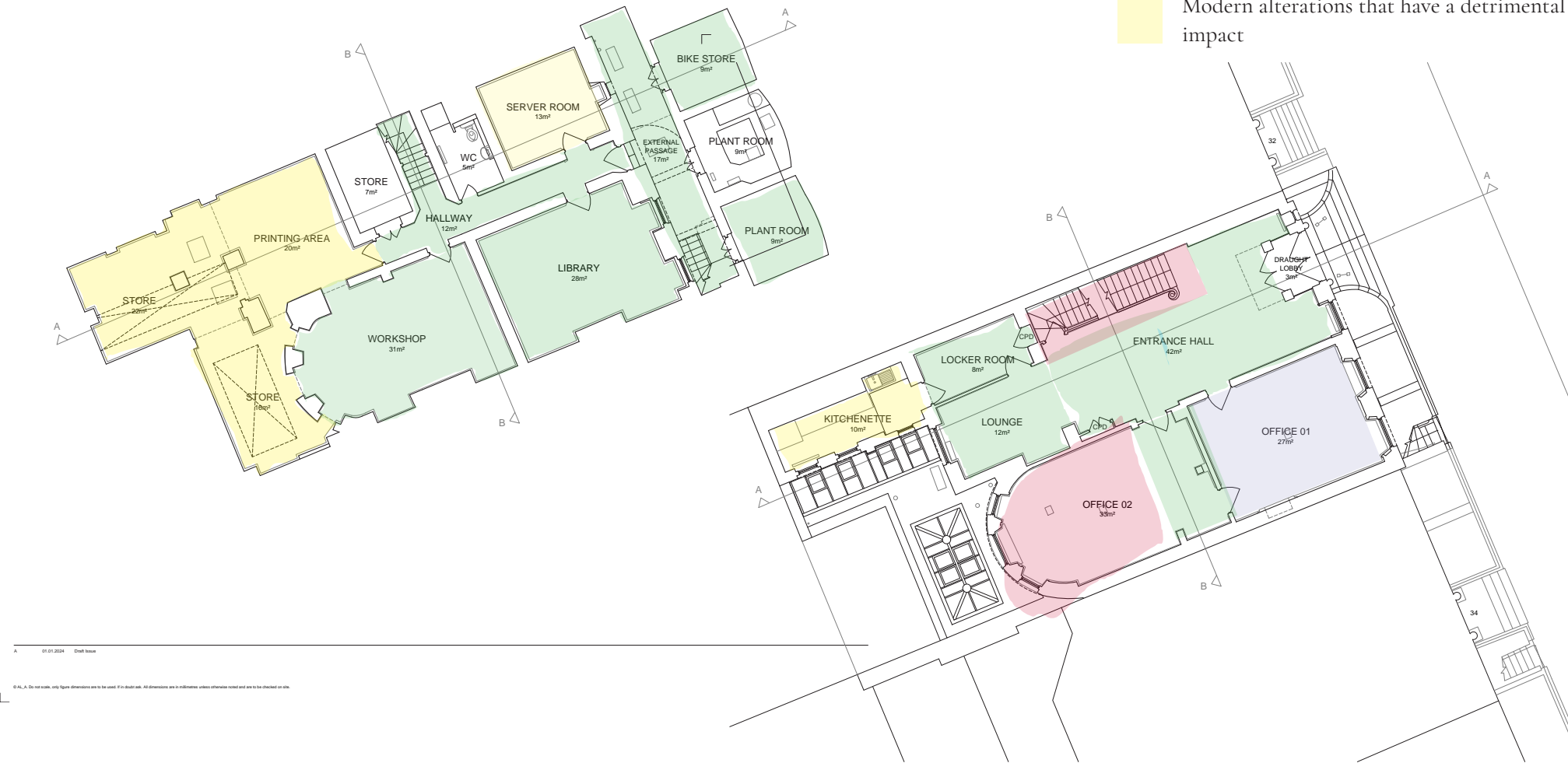
Overall, the collection of historic features, historic plan form and the house's situation as part of a larger development are of aesthetic and architectural value.



SECTION 4 Heritage assessment of Significance

└

- 18th century detailing - significant
- 19th Century alterations - significant
- 18th Century floorplan with little or no surviving mouldings and details - neutral
- Modern alterations that have a detrimental impact

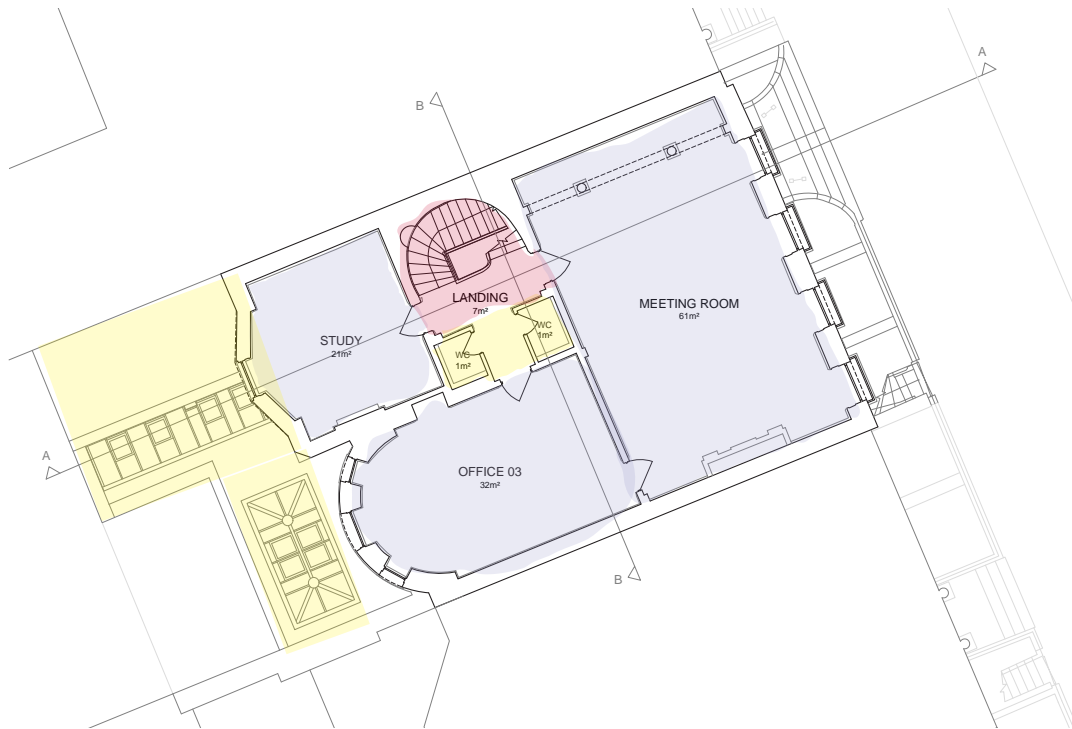


A 01.01.2024 Draft Issue

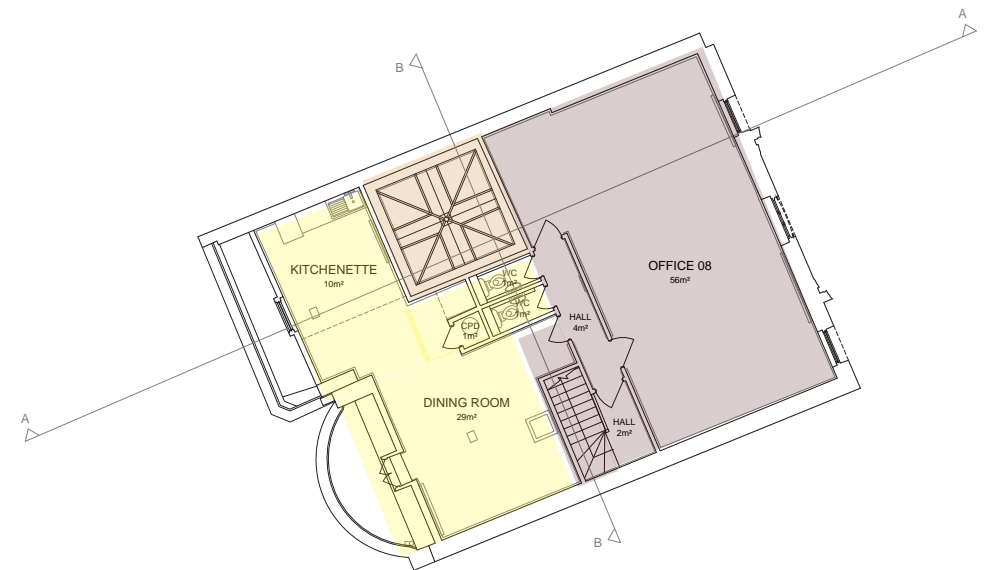
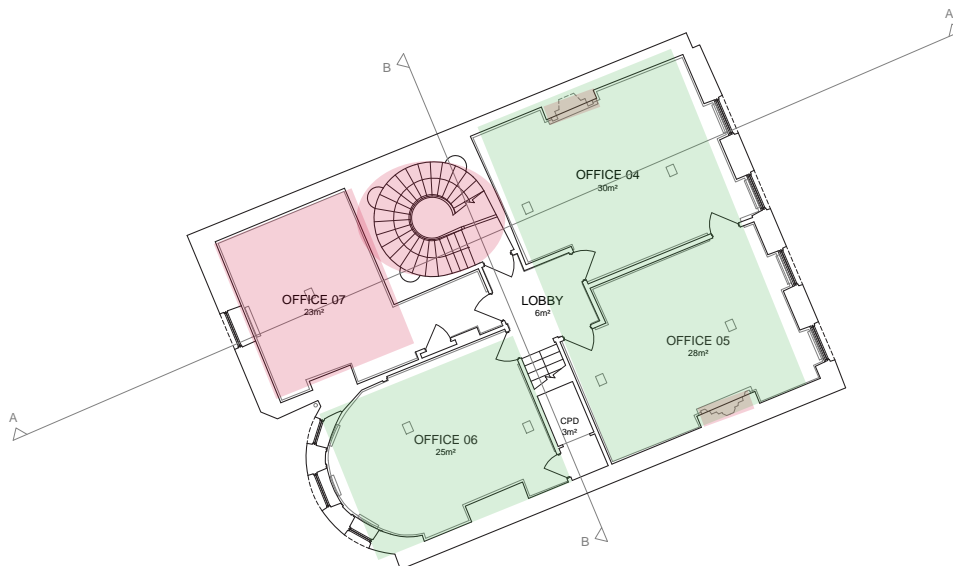
© ALA. Do not scale, only figure dimensions are to be used. If in doubt ask. All dimensions are in millimetres unless otherwise noted and are to be checked on site.

└

© ALA. Do not scale, only figure dimensions are to be used. If in doubt ask. All dimensions are in millimetres unless otherwise noted and are to be checked on site.



- 18th century detailing - significant
- 19th Century alterations - significant
- 18th Century floorplan with little or no surviving mouldings and details - neutral
- Modern alterations that have a detrimental impact
- 18th century reproduction with Victorian detailing in 20th Century materials
- Modern alterations that have a neutral low impact





Highly Significant Facade:
Front elevation

Highly Significant Facade:
Rear Elevation

- 18th century reproduction with Victorian detailing in 20th Century materials
- 19th century Victorian detailing in 20th Century reproduction and materials
- Modern alterations that have a detrimental impact
- 19th Century alterations - significant

SECTION 5 Design Proposal and Impact

The proposals seek to repair the historic fabric of the house, keeping it largely as it is today, but with some localised modifications to make it a more practical family home. Many interiors are largely unaltered since the 1920s, which give the property historic significance, but also therefore provide challenges to make it a suitable house for the 21st century. In particular, services will have to be replaced and some structural repairs are required. See also attached drawings and AL_A's Design and Access Statement..

DESIGN PROCESS

The brief was to update the property to provide a comfortable family home, by carrying minor alterations to the layout of the interior of the house which would be required as part of its change of use from commercial to residential.

GQA's first step was to analyse and advise AL_A on possibilities was to undertake research into the building's history, to understand the date of its surviving fabric, and the significance of the building as a whole, and of specific elements. This was used to inform them as to which areas were particularly sensitive, and would require conservation, and which parts were of lower significance and could accommodate limited change without harming the building.

We undertook a condition review, which identified a small amount of repair works to ensure the long-term survival of the building's fabric, which also included the exterior brickwork and moulding details.

AL_A have minimised alterations to areas of low significance, such as in parts of the basement, and where new fittings are required, such as the kitchen and bathrooms. The design of new interventions will be in-keeping with the character of the house and those where partitions are required will be suitable for removal in the future without affecting or causing harm to the historic fabric.

AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

There is no major proposed development of the house.

USE

The house was originally developed as a family home. During the 19th Century it became offices and this application seeks to reinstate it to its original function as a family home, which is beneficial to the historic use and fabric.

LAYOUT

The general layout of the property will remain largely as it is today, with only localised alterations to make the existing spaces more usable, or more in line with the client's needs.

The basement will be slightly reconfigured to ensure best use of the space and suitability for current use.

Most importantly the proposals seek to remove the modern twentieth century interventions to the rear of the basement and ground floor and reinstate an external terrace area.

SCALE

Due to the de-minimis nature of the additional development, the scale will be in keeping with the existing house. Any other internal alterations will also be of a domestic scale suited to the house.

APPEARANCE

Exterior

The house's appearance externally will be largely as it is. The only change will be to the rear elevation which will be replaced in keeping with the style of the windows of the rest of the rear facade. Period detail etc. The exterior will be repaired and made good where it is currently suffering from water damage.

Interior

Internally, it is intended to keep the current appearance and character of the principal rooms on the ground floor, but with colour schemes and lighting more in keeping with their interiors. Where possible modern features and structure that have had an effect on the historic fabric and its surrounding will be removed.

At basement there is a proposal to install an opening between the front and rear rooms, it is hoped that there might be some evidence that this was an original opening and it has been adapted in the 20th Century.

The same applies to the first floor rooms. The modern partitions creating two wcs at landing level will be removed opening up the landing space and revealing the original ceiling plan as evidenced by the cornices.

The upper floors will allow for the use as bedrooms and bathrooms whilst maintaining significant features and where modern partitions are proposed they will be detailed so that, in the future they can be removed without impacting the historic fabric.

Where possible the fireplaces will be re-opened and traditionally detailed and period fireplaces will be installed sympathetically.

ACCESS

There will be no changes to the accessibility into or around the house. The house has very complex levels, and as a Grade II listed building it would be impossible to provide level access without major interventions which would diminish the building's significance. Following the works, the accessibility of the house will be in no way reduced, with all necessary handrails, guarding etc. upgraded and increased light levels in the basement which will help partially sighted people. The WC facilities will also be more conveniently located for those with impaired mobility.

INTERIOR

- Modern kitchen fittings, bathroom fittings and built-in cupboards will be replaced. None of these fittings are historic or of any historic significance. *Neutral impact.*
- The décor will generally be updated and changed. None of the decorative schemes are of any historic significance. As part of these works, some of the modern downlighters will be removed. *Neutral impact or minor benefit.*
- All existing historic cornices will be retained and carefully repaired with lime plaster as necessary. Some modern cornices will have to be altered to accommodate changes to the internal partition walls, but these will be reinstated to match the existing cornices. *Benefit*
- All historic fireplaces will all be retained and carefully cleaned and repaired as necessary. *Benefit.*

JUSTIFICATION

- The applicant wishes to reinstate it as a single family home, with most rooms returning to their traditional functions and the plan form remaining largely unaltered. The expressed desire is to restore the building to its "historic appearance" whilst at the same time subtly introducing conveniences required for 21st century living.
- A large number of repairs will protect the building's historic features and enhance its thermal performance. These are both necessary and desirable in the 21st century, can be achieved without detracting from the building's significance.

PROPOSALS CONCLUSION

The current proposals retain the majority of the plan form of the building and impressive suite of remaining interior features. We have recommended small changes which we feel would limit the harm caused still further. The broader scheme of repair and renovation would bring clear heritage benefits. Should these changes be made, we feel that the heritage benefits could be seen to outweigh the harm.

SECTION 9 Conclusion

This report has outlined how no. 33 John Street has been through several periods of considerable alteration; some of great sensitivity but others with much less regard to their Georgian character. While there is considerable survival of historic fabric and plan form, the upper two floors have been almost completely rebuilt, as have the rear façades of both houses.

The proposed scheme has the laudable aim of returning this building from office to residential use – the use for which it was originally built and intended – and contributing to an increase in their special interest. Further benefits include the removal of insensitive modern partitions, kitchenettes and services.

The proposals are in broad accordance with all relevant national and local policies on the historic built environment.

Overall, the proposals are, therefore, in line with national local guidance, and respond effective and appropriately to the challenge of returning these buildings to single family use.

GQA HERITAGE ASSESSMENT
33 JOHN STREET
to Accompany
Planning & Listed Building Change
of Use Consent Application by **AL_A**

Giles Quarme Architects
7 Bishops Terrace
London, SE11 4UE
www.quarme.com