

13-15 John's Mews,  
London,  
WC1N 2PA

**Design & Access Statement**  
May 2024

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## Introduction & Site Description:

Studio Three Architects have been appointed by Highgate Luxury Properties Limited for the development of the property sited at 13-15 John's Mews, London, WC1N 2PA.

The two adjacent former stable buildings sited at numbers 13 and 15 John's Mews were constructed in the early 19th century, in conjunction with the development of the houses at (now numbered) 23 John Street and 24 John Street. The property is sited in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is not listed. It is a neutral building within the conservation area, and is not identified as being of any particular merit.

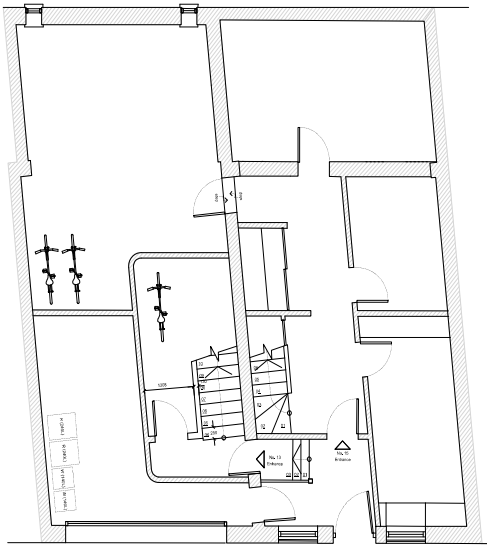
The property is currently arranged as 2 x 1-bedroom flats (C3 Use) with a combined gross internal area of 214m<sup>2</sup>, 2304 square feet.

## Planning History

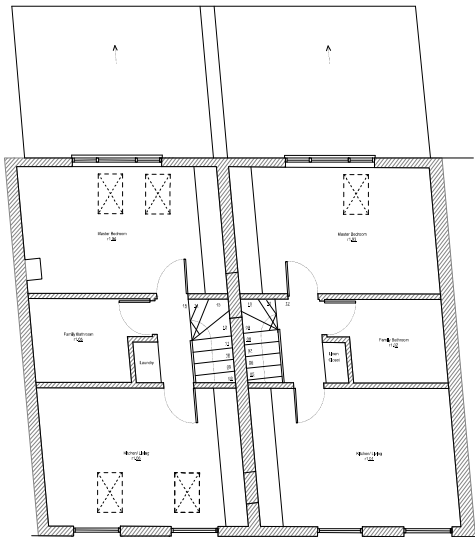
2024/0042/

Prior approval not required, March 2024

Change of use from commercial (use Class E) to residential (Use Class C3) to create 2 self-contained dwellings under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).



2024/0042/ - Ground Floor Plan

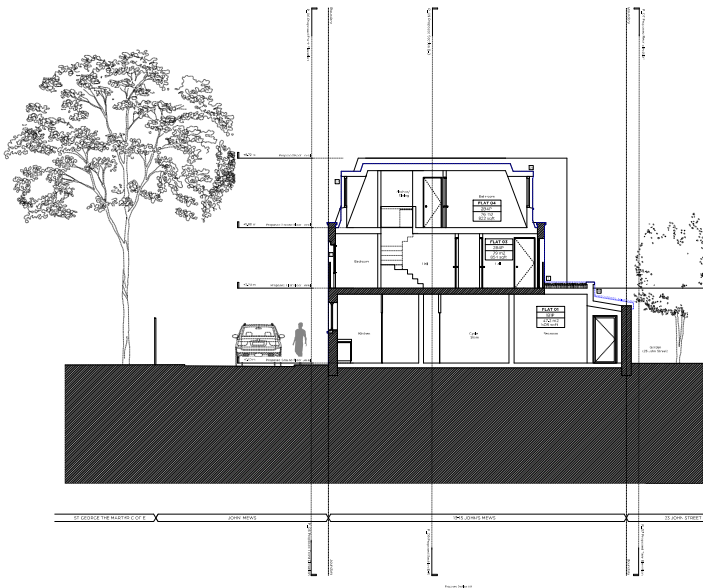


2024/0042/ - First Floor Plan

**2021/0020/P**

Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement, February 2022

Partial demolition of existing building and change of use from Class E (garage / workshop / offices) to Class C3 residential flats (2 x 2 bed & 2 x 1 bed units), front fenestration alterations, mansard extension and associated works.



**2021/0020/P - Proposed Section**



**2021/0020/P - Existing / Demolition & Proposed Front Elevation**

## Planning History

### **2017/4302/P**

Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement, March 2019

Partial demolition of existing building and change of use from Class B1 (garage / workshop / offices) to Class C3 residential flats (4 x 2 bed units), including excavation of a basement level, a mansard extension and associated works.

### **2014/3330/P**

Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement May 2017

Change of use from garage/workshop/offices (Class B1) to residential use (Class C3) to provide 2 dwellinghouses, including excavation works to create a new basement floor level, creation of 2 new courtyards, mansard roof extensions and elevational alterations to front and rear.

### **2013/4967/P**

Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement, March 2014

Change of use from garage/workshop/offices (Class B1) to residential use (Class C3) to provide 2 dwellinghouses, including mansard roof extensions and elevational alterations to front and rear.

### **8900191** (11-15 Johns Mews, WC1)

Granted Subject to Conditions , February 1990

Demolition of existing building and its reconstruction with an additional mansard storey to provide additional office (B1 Class) use as shown on drawing numbers 89010/01A 02A & 03A revised by letter dated 24th November 1989.

## Design Principles & Concepts

The proposals seek to extend the existing residential units, via mansard roof extension, from 1-bed properties into 3-bed family homes. The Gross Internal Area of the new development will be 270m<sup>2</sup>, (2906 sq ft). Number 13 John's Mews will be 133m<sup>2</sup> (1432 sq ft). Number 15 John's Mews will be 137m<sup>2</sup> (1475 sq ft).

The fenestration of the existing building will be altered to,

1. Ensure that each house has its own access from John's Mews.
2. Enhance the design of the façades to ensure that the development is commensurate with the historical use of the building and improves the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

### Use:

#### Existing Use

The building is currently arranged as 2 x 1-bedroom flats (C3 residential use) sited at 13 John's Mews and 15 John's Mews although accessed from a single shared pedestrian entrance at 15 John's Mews, via a communal hall.

#### Proposed Use

The use of the building will not change as part of the proposals. The proposals will increase the size of each residential unit, via mansard roof extension, to provide 2 x 3-bedroom mews houses. Each dwelling will be afforded its own pedestrian access from John's Mews.

### Layout:

The existing building fully occupies the site at 13 and 15 John's Mews with party walls on the northern, southern and eastern boundary walls.

There are two small windows at the rear ground floor level of 13 John's Mews which currently overlook 23 John Street. It is proposed to infill these as part of the proposals.

A small courtyard (1.9m<sup>2</sup> / 20 square feet) is proposed to each of the properties to afford natural light and fresh air to the rear of each dwelling at ground floor level. The courtyards are enclosed by walls (minimum 2.4m tall) at their boundaries so there is no risk of overlooking.

### Scale:

The immediate neighbours of the application site are 11 John's Mews and 17 John's Mews. Both of these converted mews buildings have mansard roof extensions, as do all of the converted mews houses on the eastern side of the road.

The proposed mansard roof extension at 13-15 John's Mews will complete the conversion of the properties on the eastern side of the street and ensure consistent scale and appearance across the terrace of mews houses.

### External Space and Landscaping:

The existing buildings currently fully occupy the site at 13-15 John's Mews with no external space provided. The proposals will afford each property a small courtyard garden (1.9m<sup>2</sup> / 20 square feet) at the rear of the dwelling houses at ground floor level.

## Context & Design

### Context:

The building is located in the sub area of “Great James Street/ Bedford Row” which is designated as “sub area 10” of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The application site is not identified as a building of merit in the Conservation Area.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (April 2018) describes the Great James Street/Bedford Row sub area as follows,

*The Great James Street and Bedford Row sub area was developed during the Georgian and Regency periods under various ownerships, although part of the street pattern was laid out earlier by Nicholas Barbon. The area has a clear street hierarchy structured on a grid layout. Bedford Row, Doughty Street and John Street are wide thoroughfares characterised by larger properties. There is a progression in scale (and grandeur) from Millman Street, through Great James Street to Bedford Row. There is no planned open space in the sub area, although the more formal streets are characterised by regularly spaced street trees, planted at regular intervals in the pavement.*

The building’s immediate context is the eastern side of John’s Mews in which the property is sited amongst a terrace of Mews House conversions, all 3-storeys (including a mansard).

### Design:

The design seeks to complete the terrace of 3-storey mews buildings, providing sympathetically detailed dwelling houses with new fenestration making reference to the historical use of the properties as carriage houses with a view to enhance the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

#### Proposed Dormer Windows:

The proposed street-facing dormer windows are in keeping in design and proportion to the other dormer windows which are a feature of all of the mews houses on John’s Mews. These are proposed to be traditionally detailed with lead cheeks and timber fascias (paint finish).

#### Street-facing Fenestration:

Historical research (refer to the detailed Heritage Report appended to this application) has identified that both number 13 and number 15 John’s Mews originally had large carriage openings at ground floor level. The width of these openings was proposed to be increased in the 1970s with a single large beam spanning across both properties. However, it is unlikely that this work was completed. What remains is a confused and non-original configuration of windows, pedestrian door and garage door at ground floor level.

The new designs refer to the original scale and configuration of the openings on the front façade of the building. Large bressummer beams are proposed for each property, proportionate to the buildings’ original carriage openings. Beneath the bressummer beams, traditionally-detailed windows afford light into the ground floor plan.

At first floor level, four openings are proposed with each property provided with 1 x sash window and 1 x tall casement window with a metal railing. The tall casement window is a reference to a traditional “winch door” which is a feature of mews buildings. It is possible that winch doors were a feature of the properties during their use as carriage houses.

The proposed composition is appropriate to the heritage of the buildings and streetscape. The proposed alterations will enhance the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

#### Rear-facing Fenestration:

There are no windows on the rear elevations of the buildings at ground floor level.

The design of each house includes a single window at first floor level and a single dormer window at Second floor (mansard) level.



## Context & Design

### First Floor Level Window:

There are currently 2 x rear facing windows at first floor level serving 13 and 15 John's Mews respectively.

The 2021 planning permission (2021/0020/P) approved 2 x sliding doors and 1 x fixed window at this floor level. The total area of the windows consented by the application is 16.7 square metres.

The proposals will provide a set of French doors with sidelights. The total area of windows proposed in this application is 14.6 square metres, thereby reducing the amount of glazing from the 2021 Permission.

### **Materials:**

The materials proposed will generally match those of the existing building. Where new materials are proposed, these have been selected to match the appearance of the other Mews Houses on John's Mews and the Character of the Conservation Area.

### Masonry:

Where new masonry is proposed, it will match that of the existing building.

The front facade will be re-rendered as part of the proposals.

### Windows:

New windows will be double-glazed, timber framed (paint finish) with traditional details befitting the character of the street (typified by other mews house conversions) and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

### New Front Door:

The front door is traditional timber vertical groove, paint finish.

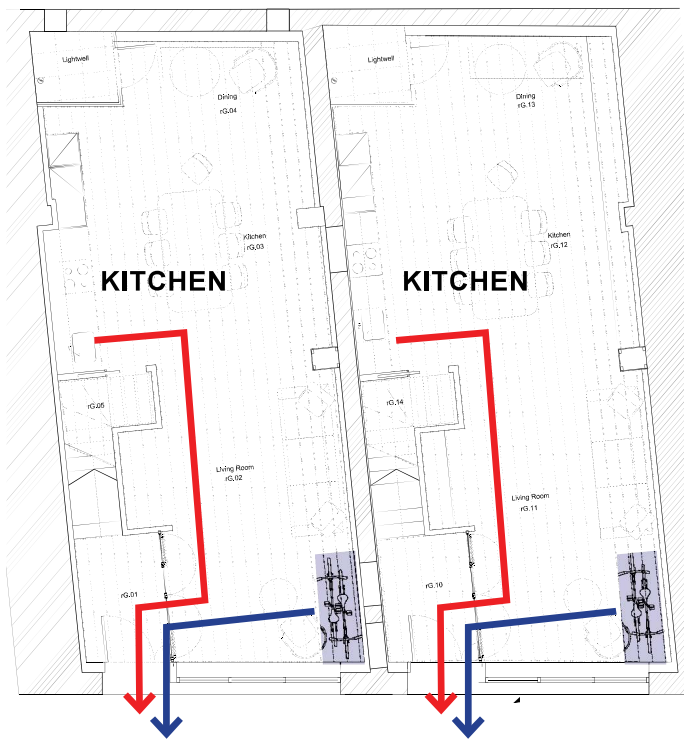
### Roof:

The new mansard roof will be finished in traditional slate. The flat section of the mansard roof (not visible from the street) will be finished in a single ply membrane. Solar panels are proposed on the flat section of the roof to ensure that the new dwelling houses achieve maximum performance in terms of sustainability.

## Access

The buildings at 13 John's Mews and 15 John's Mews are currently accessed via a single shared pedestrian entrance at 15 John's Mews, via a communal hall. The access from John's Mews is approximately level-access (allowing for a weathering step at the front door sill).

The proposals will provide a pedestrian front door for each house at 13 John's Mews and 15 John's Mews with level access.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

### Key

→ Waste

→ Cycles

■ Cycle storage area