

Built Heritage Advice Note

Rugby Chambers, 2 Rugby Street WC1N 3QU

12 June 2024

Introduction

1. This advice note sets out the heritage baseline and impact assessment for the proposed conversion of Rugby Chambers, 2 Rugby Street WC1N 3QU (the Site) under Class MA of the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) 2021.
2. The Site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and opposite several Grade II listed buildings:
 - Rugby Public House (NHLE: 1271397)
 - Rugby Street Group
 - 7 Rugby Street (NHLE: 1271398)
 - 9 Rugby Street (NHLE: 1271400)
 - 13 Rugby Street (NHLE: 1246368)
 - 10-16 Rugby Street (NHLE: 1246366)
 - 18 Rugby Street and attached railings (NHLE: 1246371)
 - Great James Street Group
 - 20 Great James Street (NHLE: 1113198)
 - 21-22 Great James Street (NHLE: 1113200)

The Site

3. Historic mapping shows that while in the 1680s the Site remained undeveloped countryside, by the turn of the century Rugby Square had been laid out and a building constructed on the Site.

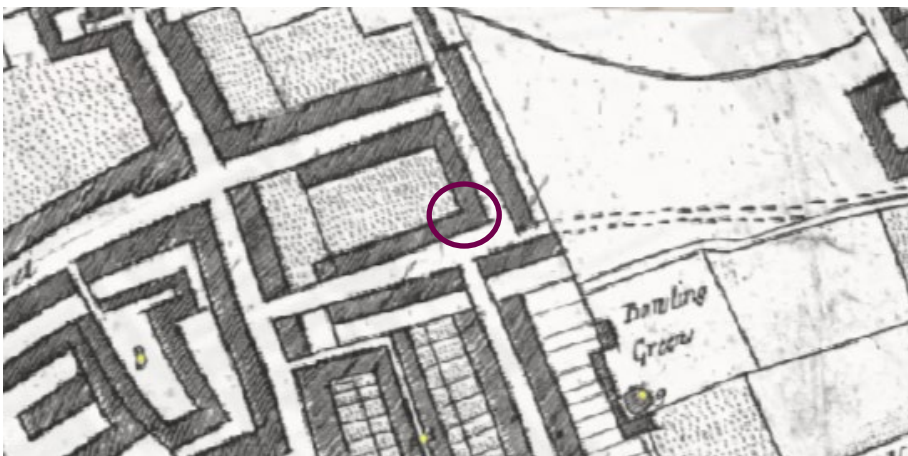


Figure 1 - 1694-1720 Blome and Strype Map of London.

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4. Mapping from the mid-18th to mid-19th century shows that a chapel was constructed on the Site and rather than being known as Rugby Street, it was called Chapel Street.

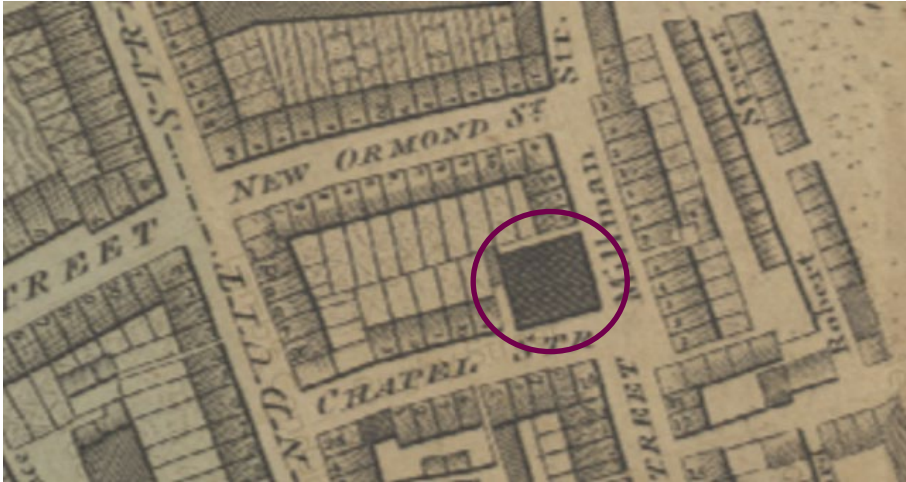


Figure 2 - 1799 R Harwood Map of London.

5. By the late 19th century however, the Site has been redeveloped to form the south-east corner of the Square. The road is still known as Chapel Street.



Figure 3 - 1910-1915 Valuation Office Survey Plan.

6. The Site comprises a five storey building, plus basement. It is currently used for offices.

Assets

7. This section identified the heritage assets with the potential to be affected by proposals in accordance with Step 1 of Historic England's GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets. The Site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and opposite several Grade II listed buildings:

- Rugby Public House (NHLE: 1271397)
- Rugby Street Group
 - 7 Rugby Street (NHLE: 1271398)
 - 9 Rugby Street (NHLE: 1271400)
 - 13 Rugby Street (NHLE: 1246368)
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- 18 Rugby Street and attached railings (NHLE: 1246371)
 - Great James Street Group
 - 20 Great James Street (NHLE: 1113198)
 - 21-22 Great James Street (NHLE: 1113200)
8. The Site is not included within Camden's Local List of non-designated heritage assets. As such, the Site itself is not considered to be a heritage asset, but it does form part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and lies within the setting of the above listed buildings.

Significance

9. This section assesses the significance of the identified heritage assets in accordance with Step 2 of GPA3.

Rugby Public House

Significance

10. The public house (PH) is known as the Rugby Tavern and is situated at the corner of Rugby Street and Great James Street. It comprises 18th century houses behind a 19th century façade. The upper three floors are stuccoed with a glazed tile pub frontage. The Significance of the building is derived from its architectural and historic interest as former 18th century dwellings and 19th century PH as part of the development of Bloomsbury.

Setting and contribution to significance

11. The setting of the pub is comprised by the southern side of Rugby Square, including the Site, and the northern end of Great James Street. Both of which retain a number of 18th century buildings, many of which are listed, and make a positive contribution to the significance of the PH.

Rugby Street Group

Significance

12. This group comprises numbers 7, 9, 13, and 10-18 (even), all of which are listed at Grade II. The buildings, which were built as terraced dwellings, all date to the 1720s. The buildings are all four storeys in height plus basements, with lightwells to the pavement enclosed by iron railings. They are generally constructed from stock brick with red brick detailing and are three bays in width with sash windows at each floor. The significance of these buildings is derived from their historic and architectural interest as 18th century houses constructed as part of the planned expansion of Bloomsbury.

Setting and contribution to significance

13. The setting of the buildings is comprised of the south side of Rugby Square, including the Site. The buildings share group value with each other as part of the 18th century development of Bloomsbury. They also share group value with the Rugby Tavern. The setting of these buildings makes a positive contribution to the significance of the buildings.

Great James Street Group

Significance

14. These buildings comprise numbers 20-22 Great James Street, which are Grade II listed. These terraced dwellings also date to the early/mid-18th century. They are four storeys in height plus basements, with lightwells to the pavement enclosed by iron railings. The buildings are constructed from stock brick, which is soot blackened. Nos 21 and 22 are a mirrored pair, each of three bays, while No 20 is of two bays. The significance of these buildings is derived from their historic and architectural interest as 18th century houses constructed as part of the planned expansion of Bloomsbury.

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Setting and contribution to significance

15. The setting of the buildings is comprised of the northern end of Great James Street and the south-western corner of Rugby Street, including the Rugby Tavern and the Site. The traditional buildings, including the PH and the Site, make a positive contribution to the significance of the buildings, while the modern apartment buildings opposite Nos 20-22 make a neutral contribution.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area

16. The Conservation Area (CA) covers an area of approximately 160 hectares which extends from Lincoln's Inn Fields and High Holborn to Euston Road and from King's Cross Road to Tottenham Court Road.
17. The CA is situated midway between the earlier settlements of the City of London and the City of Westminster. The CA is located to the northern periphery of the older areas of Soho and Covent Garden, which had been developed during second half part of the 17th century and now are a focus for leisure and entertainment.
18. Bloomsbury is noted for its formally planned arrangement of streets and the contrasting leafy squares. The urban morphology comprises a grid pattern of streets generally aligned running north-west to south-east and south-west to north-east, with subtle variations in the orientation of the grid pattern. The quintessential character of the CA derives from the grid of streets enclosed by mainly three and four storey development which has a distinctly urban character of broad streets interspersed by formal squares which provide landscape dominated focal points.
19. The Site lies within Sub Area 10: Great James Street/Bedford Row. The 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 historic built form comprises townhouses built in long terraces with rear mews. This fine grain remains an important characteristic and the continuous building frontage created by the terraces creates a strong sense of enclosure.

Contribution of Site to Conservation Area

20. The Site lies within sub-area 10 of the CA, and conforms to the scale of the traditional built form in the area. However, it also differs as it was not constructed as a terrace of dwellings but as a block of chambers. Nevertheless, the conformity with the overall scale, rain and style of development means the Site makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.

Proposals

21. It is proposed to change the use of the Site from offices to residential (11 flats). The building would not be extended. The principal entrance to the building would remain unchanged, with the fenestration also unaltered, save for internal secondary glazing. Overall, the external appearance of the building would not change as a result of the proposals.

Impact

22. This section assesses the potential impact of the proposals on the identified heritage assets in accordance with Step 3 of GPA3.
23. As the proposals will result in internal alterations only, and no changes will be visible to the exterior of the building, its contribution of the Site to the settings and significance of the listed building will not be altered. Likewise, the contribution the Site makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As such, no harm is identified to any of the built heritage assets included in this assessment.
24. The conditions under Class MA.2, part (e) state that development under class MA is permitted where:

(i)the building is located in a conservation area, and

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*(ii) the development involves a change of use of the whole or part of the ground floor,
the impact of that change of use on the character or sustainability of the conservation area;*

25. No harm has been identified to the Conservation Area, thereby complying with the requirements of the GDPO.

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