

36 LAMBS CONDUIT STREET

BLOOMSBURY

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

MINOR INTERNAL ALTERATIONS INCLUDING NEW JOINERY / CUPBOARDS AT ALL LEVELS, NEW WINDOW SHUTTERS, THE INSTALLATION OF GAS FIRE AT FIRST FLOOR LEVEL, ALTERATIONS INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF AN OPENING WITHIN A DIVIDING PARTITION AT THIRD FLOOR LEVEL & INSTALLATION OF EXTRACT VENT TO REAR ELEVATION

JULY 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application seeks listed building consent to enable minor, primarily internal, alteration works at No.36 Lambs Conduit Street in Bloomsbury. The main elements are:

- The replacement of modern joinery cupboards and the installation of new joinery at all levels of the property.
- The provision of a gas fire within the existing fireplace at first floor level.
- Installation of new window shutters at second floor level
- Installation of an extract vent to the second floor rear bathroom
- Provision of an opening within the partition between the front rooms at third floor level.
- Minor alterations to the corridor, including an increased opening and varied door positions at third floor level.

1.2 Whilst these works are relatively minor it is recognised that the property forms part of a Grade II listed terrace (Nos.28 - 38) and therefore when advancing proposals for alteration works it is necessary to do so in the context of a clear understanding of the special significance of the building and the likely impacts of the works on that identified significance. The extent of assessment and justification required should be proportionate to the scale of works and significance of the asset.

1.3 This statement provides the Applicants description of the asset and analysis of the minor works proposed in this context.

1.4 It is based upon a review of available heritage records and a visit to the property in May 2024.

1.5 It is set out as follows:

- 2.0 Site Context & Description
- 3.0 History & Heritage Description
- 4.0 Relevant Policy & Guidance
- 5.0 Assessment of Application Proposals
- 6.0 Conclusions

2.0 SITE CONTEXT & DESCRIPTION

Location

- 2.1 The application property is located on the east side of Lambs Conduit Street and forms part of the Grade II listed group running from No.28 at the southern end to No.38 at the northern end of the terrace as shown below.
- 2.2 The property stands within the Lambs Conduit Street Town Centre area, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and an Archaeological Priority Area.



Aerial view showing the terrace with No.36 highlighted



View of No.36 from street level

The Property

2.2 No.36 is constructed from a yellow stock brick and comprises four above ground storeys terminating in a parapet at third floor level which carries through to No.34. The property stands directly adjacent to the pavement with the ground floor façade comprised of a late 20th century shop front with central bay window and doorways to each side. The doorway to the right provides access to the shop unit whilst that to the left is the access to the residential unit above. Over the first to third floors the façade has two windows. At first floor these are set within round-arched recesses. At second and third floor levels the windows have gauged brick flat arched heads. The window arrangement is the same at No.34.

2.3 On entry through the residential doorway there is a narrow hallway which then opens out to stairs at the rear which lead to the upper floors. A review of the planning records for the site suggest that there were also stairs leading to the lower ground to the left side of the stairs but these were blocked in the 1990's when the shop premises was separated and the residential unit as it is today created.

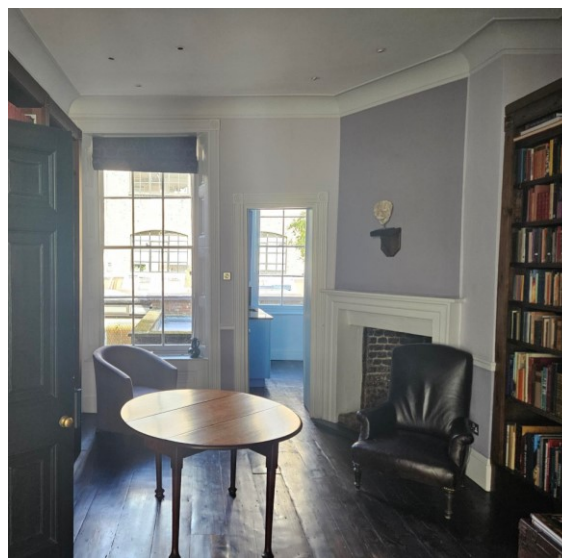
2.4 At first floor level there is a stairway hall and traditional front and rear room arrangement with small rear wing addition which includes the kitchen. A similar arrangement exists at second floor level with front and rear rooms and a bathroom occupying the rear wing space. At third floor level there are two rooms to the front with a rear bathroom benefiting from a dormer window. As is shown opposite the rear wing terminates at second floor level.



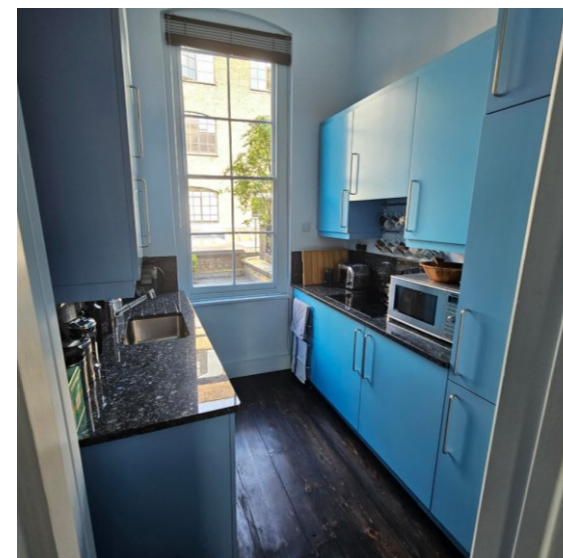
Aerial view showing the rear of the building



First floor rear room looking toward the front room



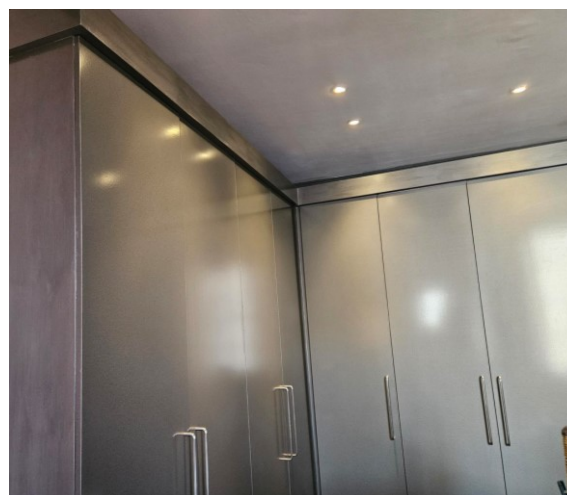
First floor rear room looking toward the closet wing



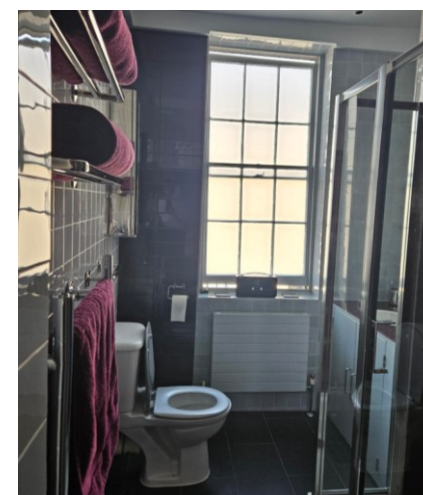
First floor kitchen set within closet wing



Panelling within second floor front room



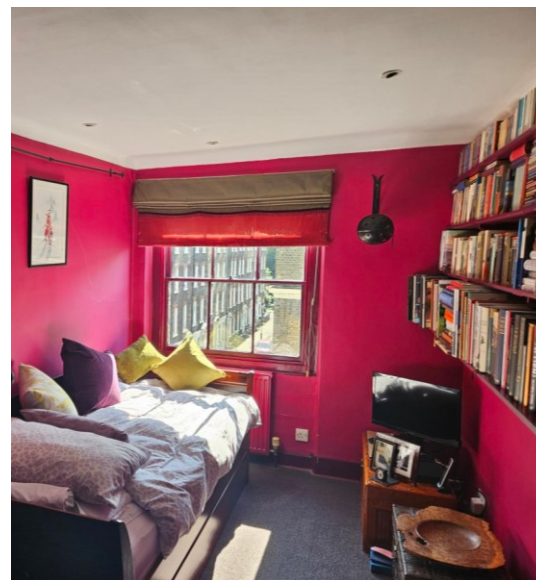
Modern fitted cupboards within second floor rear room



Second floor rear bathroom in closet wing



Third floor left side front room including modern joinery



Third floor right side front room



Third floor landing

- 2.5 As discussed further in Section 3, the Council's Planning records suggest that permission was granted to create the existing residential unit at No.36 (alongside similar proposals at No.38) in the form that it is now in 1994 /1995. It therefore seems likely that the modern kitchen fixtures and fittings at first floor level and the modern bathrooms at second and third floor levels (third floor bathroom not shown in the pictures above), the built in joinery, cupboards and shelving at each level and the recessed lighting etc. date from around the time of that refurbishment.

3.0 HISTORY & HERITAGE DESCRIPTION

The Listing

- 3.1 The property was listed as part of the group between 28 – 38 in April 1981. The listing description is as follows:

“GV II

Terrace of 5 houses. Nos 30 & 32 are one building. 1690-1700, No.28 built under a lease granted to Nicholas Barbon in 1686. Refronted early C19. No.38 rebuilt C20 above ground floor level but included for group value. Yellow stock brick with stone coped parapets. 4 storeys. 2 windows except Nos 28 & 38 with three. No.28 with C19 shopfront, the rest altered to various degrees in C20. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows, the 1st floor of Nos 34 & 36 in shallow round-arched recesses. Rear elevations of plum stocks with bands and flush framed ash windows. INTERIORS: not inspected but Nos 28 & 36 noted to retain original staircases, that of No.28 possibly late C17 with heavy turned balusters and closed string; No.36 with twist balusters and carved tread ends. Some panelled rooms.”

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area

- 3.2 The property lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (Sub Area 11). The appraisal explains:

“5.206 Lamb’s Conduit Street is called after a water conduit provided by William Lambe in 1577 to convey water to the City, which was removed in 1746. The street was laid out by Barbon in 1690 and completed by circa 1710; in the reign of Queen Anne it was a favourite promenade for Londoners..... The relatively large number of listed townhouses, which date from the early 18th century, reflects the architectural and historic quality of the street. The townhouses are generally of four storeys, some with basements and the majority with shopfronts at ground-floor level (although the short terrace on Guilford Place is residential. There are several examples of high quality shopfronts and the detailing, colour of brick, parapet heights and ridgelines of the townhouses vary. Together with the active shopfronts, these elements create a visually interesting and vibrant street scene..... “

Other available historic commentary

- 3.3 Lambs Conduit Street forms part of the Bedford Chrity Estate which as noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal was developed by the speculative builder Nicholas Barbon. Barbon initially planned the street in 1688 but it was construction did not commence until after 1700.

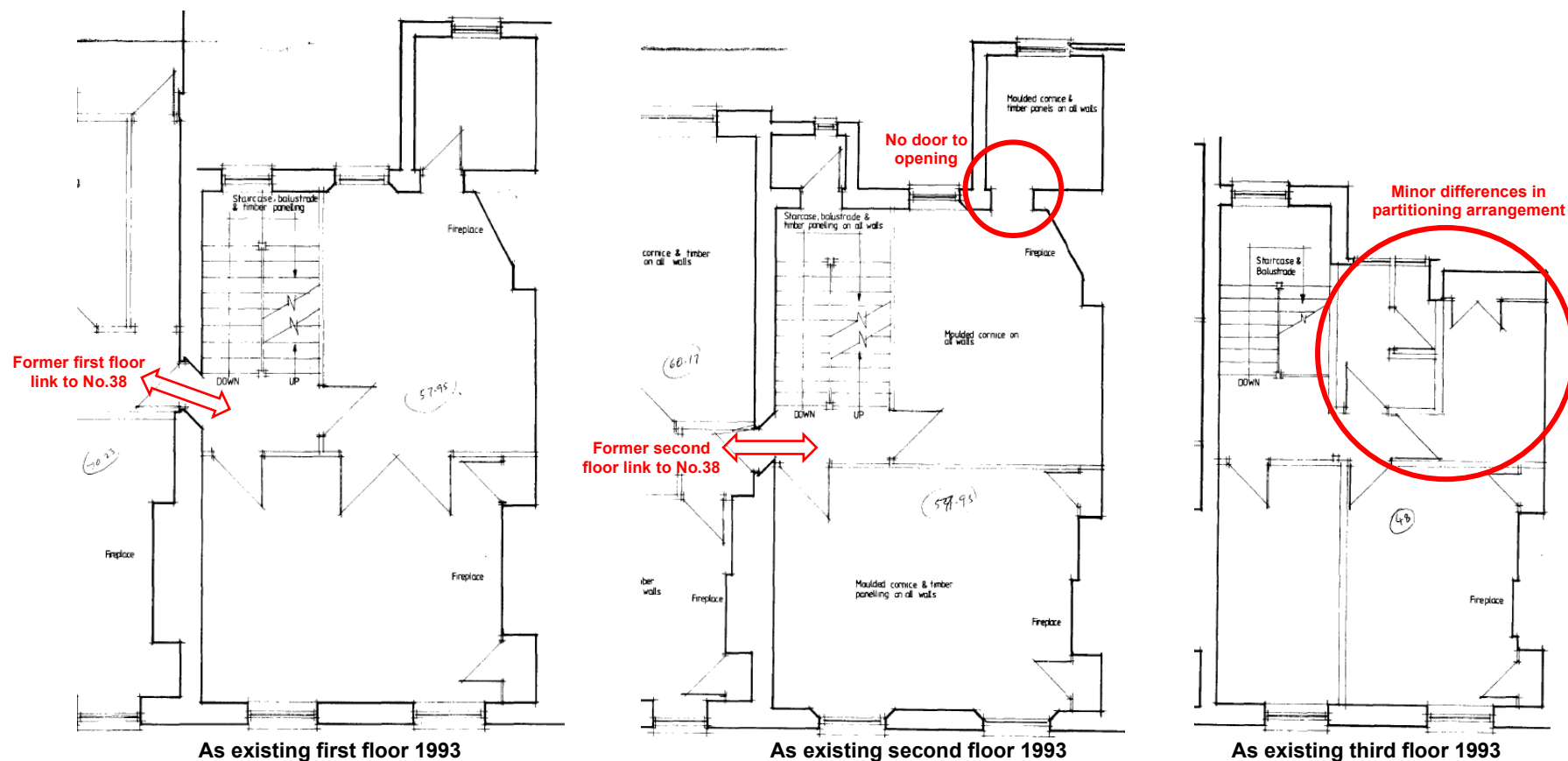
- 3.4 The development was brought forward in small parcels with No.36 being planned and built alongside No.34 rather than as a whole with the wider terrace now listed as a group (Nos. 28-38). Records suggest that the detailed design of the two houses was probably the work of the Bedford Estates builder Mr John Richbell exhibiting the traditional approach of the period with two rooms per floor with staircase to the side and closet to the rear.

Planning Records

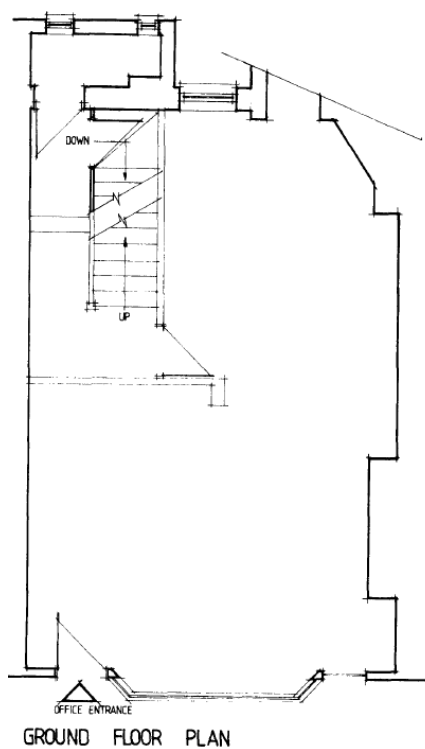
- 3.5 The Council's records include an entry from 1994 (9401221) associated with Nos. 36 and 38 Lambs Conduit Street entitled:

“Change of use and works of conversion to provide one self-contained residential dwelling unit at each building above ground floor level as shown on drawing numbers 36/01 & 38/01 dated October 1994 as revised by letter dated 2 November 1994.”

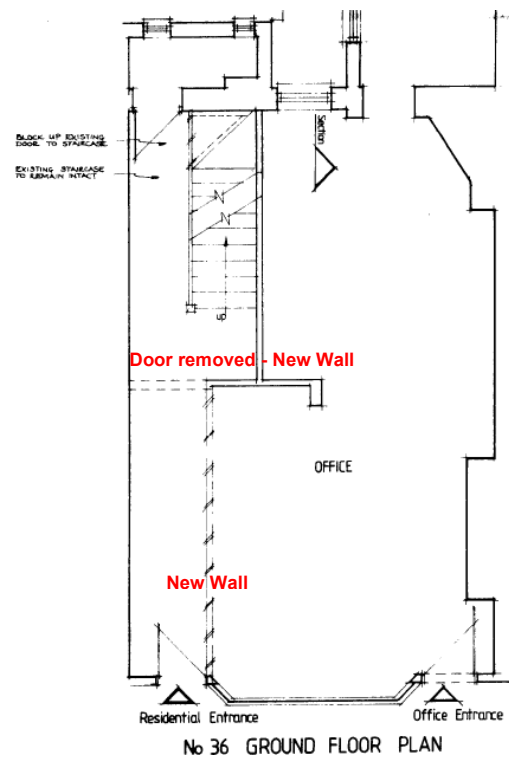
- 3.6 Unfortunately the online records do not include copies of the approved plans. However a set of ‘as existing’ drawings dated November 1993 are present.
- 3.7 These demonstrate (as highlighted on the following page) that at that time Nos. 36 and 38 were internally connected (amalgamated through the party wall) at first and second floor levels with a door provided off the landings at these levels to allow direct access between the two. As the application approved the creation of separate self contained dwellings it seems likely that the approved plans showed the connecting doors to be removed and the openings blocked as is the case on site today.
- 3.8 The applications forms are available to view and note that some existing partitions were proposed to be removed and that there was also to be “Alterations to the internal partitions layout”. If the 1993 existing plans are compared to the current plans this suggests that the changes were relatively minor including the provision of a door between the rear room and bathroom at second floor level and some partition changes at third floor level associated with the creation of the bathroom at this level.



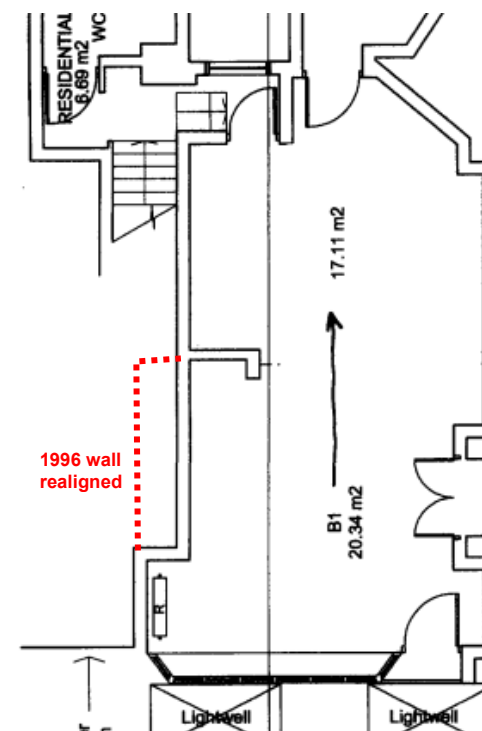
- 3.9 Following this 1994 permission, in 1996 a further consent was granted enabling the separation of the ground floor unit from the upper floor residential dwelling. The available online records include a proposed plan but no existing. A comparison is therefore provided between the 1993 existing plan and the 1996 approved 'proposed' plan. As will be noted this effectively created the existing corridor from the frontage entrance to the stairs. Stairs to the lower ground were blocked and new stairs provided at the rear of the commercial unit. A door from the commercial unit to the foot of the stairs was removed and infilled.



Ground floor as existing in 1993



Ground floor as approved in 1996



Ground floor 2009

- 3.10 However then in 2009 a further permission was granted and this shows (above right) a slightly amended (wider) entrance hall. It is clear therefore that the entrance hallway to No.36 is of modern origin (1996 and / or 2009) but the stairs to the first floor level appear to be original and were noted as retained as part of the works.
- 3.11 There are no other obvious planning records available to view in respect of No.36 other than alterations and extension works associated with the commercial unit at lower ground and ground floor levels. These are not of relevance to this application.

The Heritage Significance of No.36

- 3.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applicants to demonstrate an understanding of the significance of any 'heritage asset' which may be affected by a proposed development. The level of detail of the description should be appropriate to the significance of the asset and adequate to understand the potential impact of the proposal. English Heritage's (now Historic England) document Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) provides guidance on how to assess the significance of heritage assets as part of an understanding of a range of heritage values.
- 3.13 These values are *evidential*, the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity; *historical*, the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present; *aesthetic*, the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place and *communal*, the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory. Each of the values is considered below in the context of the site appraisal undertaken and the analysis provided in Section 2 and the first part of this section.

Evidential Value

- 3.14 No.36 was constructed, alongside No.34 and as part of the terrace around 1710. Whilst the commercial / shop frontage has been updated over time and the separate entrance to the upper floor residence created in 1996, the plan form at the first and second floor levels is retained generally intact. As part of the works approved in 1994 including the separation of No.36 from No.38 to create a self-contained dwelling there have been refurbishment works including the installation of modern kitchen and bathroom fixtures and fittings, cupboards and joinery which are clearly of little or no merit.
- 3.15 The listing description references the potential for houses in the terrace to include panelling. Some panelling exists within this property. That at the ground floor entrance level is clearly new / replicated as part of the 1996 works. The age of the panelling within the front room at second floor level is unclear.

- 3.16 Given the age of the building and its presence with an Archaeological Priority area there is potential for the property to hold archaeological significance. This is not investigated in this case as the works relate purely to the first floor and above.

Historical Value

- 3.17 Historical value tends to be illustrative or associative. Illustrative is the historical value that is the perception of a place as a link between past and present people. Lambs Conduit Street is an integral part of the Conservation Area and wider Bloomsbury townscape.
- 3.17 The classical simplicity of the architecture is a distinguishing feature of the period and the well preserved front elevations, particularly Nos 34 and 36 illustrate the architectural taste of the time.
- 3.18 The property also derives historical value from its association with the development of the Bedford Estate, its planning by Nicholas Barbon and the link to builder John Richbell who undertook the detailed building design.

Aesthetic Value

- 3.19 The aesthetic value derives from the prominent appearance of the building within the wider terraced group. It is a very well preserved example of an early eighteenth-century building incorporating a traditional ground floor shop

Communal Value

- 3.20 As it is a private residence the communal value of the upper floors of building which are not open to the public is low. However, Lambs Conduit Street occupies a prominent location in Bloomsbury and is part of the familiar street scene and contributes to the setting and quality of the Georgian Townscape.

Summary:

- 3.21 In summary, it is considered that the heritage significance of the property derives principally from the contribution of the front façade to the listed group and street scene, its surviving eighteenth century fabric, the original plan form that survives at first and second floor levels and its association with the Bedford Estate, Barbon and Richbell.
- 3.22 The third floor (roof) level is of lesser significance having been the subject of greater intervention and alterations to the plan form and the ground floor entrance way / hall is of very minimal significance due to its modern origin. The modern fixtures and fitting, joinery and cupboards installed as part of the 1994 refurbishment are of no heritage value.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023

4.1 The NPPF provides the governments guidance on the way in which the planning system should approach the delivery of sustainable new development. We highlight the following aspects.

- The purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development (p.7)
- Planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. (p.9)
- Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way so that application for sustainable development can be approved wherever possible. (p.38)
- Planning conditions should be used in order to enable permission to be granted where possible rather than simply seeking to refuse development which could be made acceptable. (p.55 & 56)

4.2 Chapter 16 is entitled “Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment”. It advises:

*200. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require **an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting**. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.....*

201. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any

necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

203. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

205. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

208. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The London Borough of Camden Development Plan (2017)

- 4.2 **Policy D2 Heritage** states that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

4.3 It explains that designed heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings and that the Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use. The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

4.4 It notes that in order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas. The Council will:

- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;
- f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;
- g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and
- h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

5.0 **ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS**

5.1 As set out in Section 1, Listed Building Consent is sought to enable:

- The replacement of modern joinery cupboards and the installation of new joinery at all levels of the property.
- The provision of a gas fire within the existing fireplace at ground floor level.
- Installation of new window shutters at second floor level
- Installation of an extract vent to the second floor rear bathroom
- Provision of an opening within the partition between the front rooms at third floor level.
- Minor alterations to the corridor, including an increased opening and varied door positions at third floor level.

5.2 This section of the statement considers the impact of these changes upon the building and its identified significance

Removal and replacement of modern joinery and new joinery cupboards

5.3 As explained in this statement with reference to photographs and the planning history records, there are a number of elements of existing non-original built in joinery at all levels that is likely to have been installed when the dwelling was created and the floors refurbished in 1994 / 1995. It is proposed that the existing joinery within the rear room at first floor level and the front room at third floor level is removed and replaced as shown on the submitted plans.

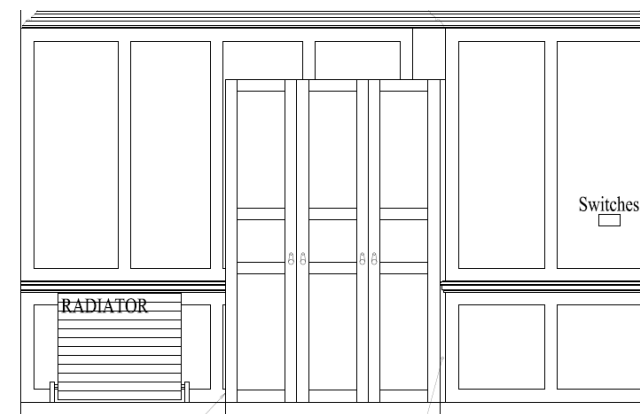
5.4 Joinery is also proposed in two new areas, the entrance hall at ground floor level and within the second floor front bedroom.

5.5 In terms of the replacement element within the first floor dining room this would have no adverse impact upon the fabric or significance of the building as it is simply renewing / replacing what is already there. (An internal elevation is however provided to demonstrate this in terms of the design and height etc. The replacement at third floor level moves the joinery from the south to north wall. There are no features on this wall as demonstrated on the accompanying internal elevations. This element would preserve the buildings character.

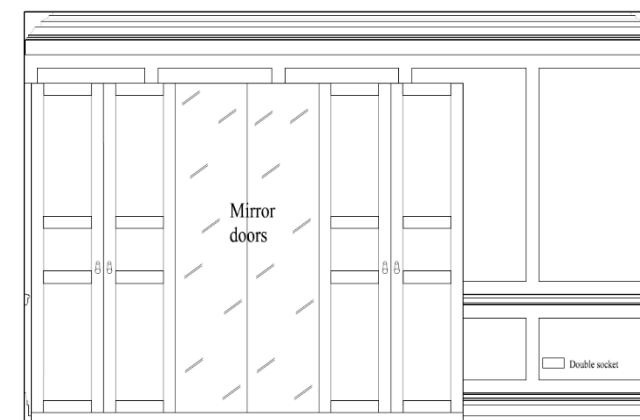
5.6 The new joinery to the ground floor entrance will be set against the new (1994 / 2009) internal wall that was erected to separate the residential access hall from the ground floor commercial unit. Notwithstanding this, as the new wall has been detailed with panelling, the cupboard has been designed to work with this with scribed fillets to enable the retention of the panelling and dado rail unaltered as shown in the extract opposite. It is also retained below ceiling height.

5.7 At second floor level the new cupboard is proposed to the north wall in the front room. As discussed in Sections 2 and 3 whilst it is clear that the ground floor entrance panelling is modern and it seems likely that this is also modern, installed as part of the refurbishment in 1994/1995 it has not been possible to categorically date this. Therefore care has been taken to design the joinery with scribed fillets around the panelling and dado rail to ensure no adverse impacts.

5.8 The joinery is again maintained well below the ceiling and cornice level ensuring no physical impacts and no impact upon the appreciation of the original form or proportions of the room.



Proposed new cupboard within the ground floor hallway



Proposed new joinery / cupboard to second floor front room

- 5.9 It is considered that these elements are minor, have no impact upon original fabric or plan form and would have a neutral impact upon the building and its significance.

Provision of new gas fire

- 5.10 There is an existing open fireplace within the front room at first floor level as shown opposite.
- 5.11 The existing grate is a non-original decorative piece again understood as being likely to date from the 1994 / 1995 refurbishment. It is not 'attached' to the fireplace in any way but rather simply stands within it as shown.
- 5.12 The applicant proposes to locate a gas fire in place of the grate as shown on the submitted plan and elevation drawings. Again this would be a freestanding element and in that sense unlikely to be seen as requiring listed building consent. However, it is proposed to connect the fire to an existing gas supply which runs beneath the floor in front of the fireplace. This will require a minor intervention (single hole) in the existing hearth to allow the connection.



View showing existing fire surround and opening

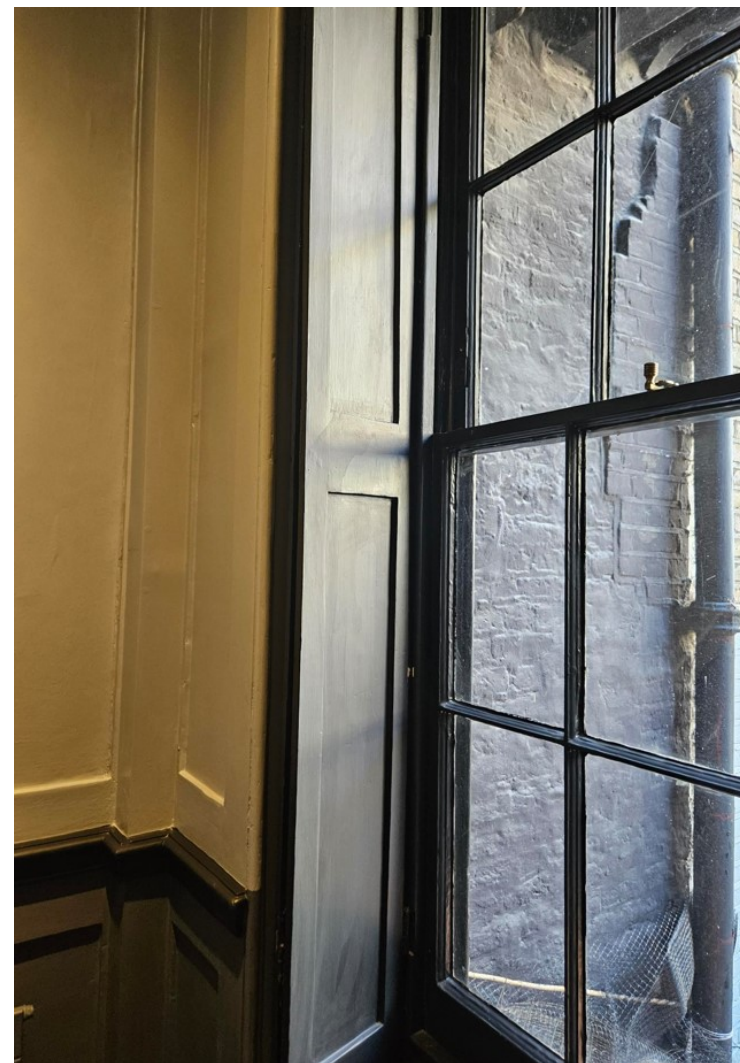
- 5.13 This is a de-minims aspect of work which again would have no impact upon the character or appearance of the room and so the overall significance of the building.

New Window Shutters

- 5.14 Window shutters are characteristic of the houses within the listed terrace but have been largely lost over time. There is an existing set of shutters at No.36 located on the half landing between the first and second floor levels at the rear.
- 5.15 It is proposed to replicate these existing shutters at second floor level at the rear to the proposed new dressing room area.
- 5.16 It is noted that as part of similar refurbishment works at No.34 in 1995 / 1996 permission was granted for the repair and reinstatement of shutters to a number of the windows confirming their appropriateness in principle.
- 5.17 It is considered that this element of the work represents a small heritage benefit of the scheme and would make a positive contribution to the overall significance of the property.

Rear Bathroom Extract Vent

- 5.18 The Applicants have recently purchased No.36 and as part of this process a full building survey was undertaken. Concern has been raised that the existing bathroom at second floor level is not properly vented i.e. it does not comply with recommended building regulations. The bathroom sits within the rear wing extension adjoining a similar matching wing at No.34. It is proposed that a vent is fitted to the left side of the bathroom window similar to that at No.34.



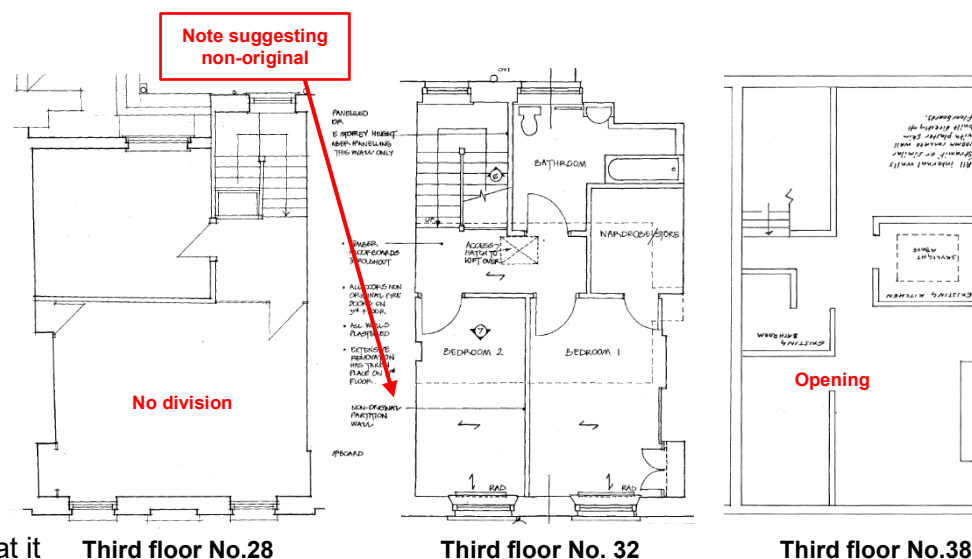
View showing the existing shutters at first floor level

- 5.19 This would be approximately 6 inches square and a black colour to minimise its visual presence. Vents of this nature are characteristic on all of the rear elevations within the terraced group. It is submitted that the proposal would have a de-minims, neutral impact.

Provision of an opening within the partition between the front rooms at third floor level

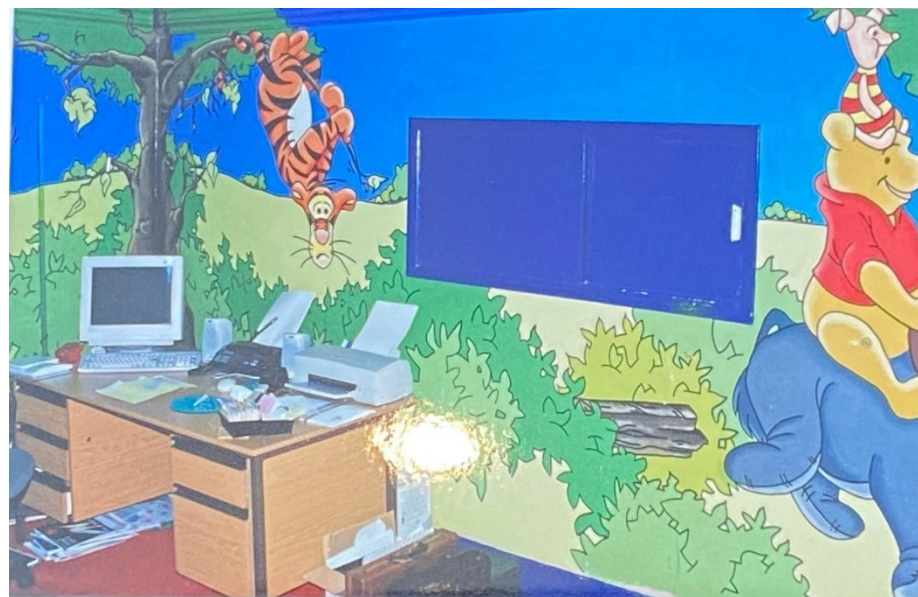
- 5.20 The Applicants propose to utilise the third floor level of the property as a master bedroom suite. The larger right side room will be used as a bedroom with the smaller left side room as a walk in cupboard / dressing room. To assist the functionality of the space it is proposed to provide an opening between the rooms as shown on the accompanying plans. The plan form on the first and second floors comprise one front and one rear room with the front room being a single space benefiting from two windows. The wall that divides the front space at third floor level is of a lightweight timber partition construction. It is offset to the north side of the third floor plan, close to the edge of the northern window i.e. it does not split the space symmetrically and as a result the windows within the rooms do not appear proportionate to the rooms.

- 5.22 Given these factors it is considered that the wall is unlikely to be part of the original plan form but rather a later addition, potentially to suit the occupants at a particular point in time requiring an additional small box bedroom space. A review of available records for neighbouring properties within the listed group shows that there is a similar subdivision at No.34. The space at No.28 is not subdivided but there is an opening between the two rooms at No. 38. The third floor plan taken from the online file for No.32 includes a dividing wall but with a note suggesting that it is “non-original.”



5.23 As part of the applicants purchase of the house a photograph has been provided by the previous owners which we are advised shows the wall between the two third floor rooms. There is no firm date for this picture but it is understood that it may date to the early 1980's. Certainly the word processor and fax machine visible on the desk suggest that the picture is of some age.

5.24 It is highlighted as it includes a double hatch opening in the wall approximately in the location where the opening proposed by this application would be located. It appears that the hatch may have been infilled and the room redecorated (possibly in the 1994/1995 refurbishment) and is no longer present.



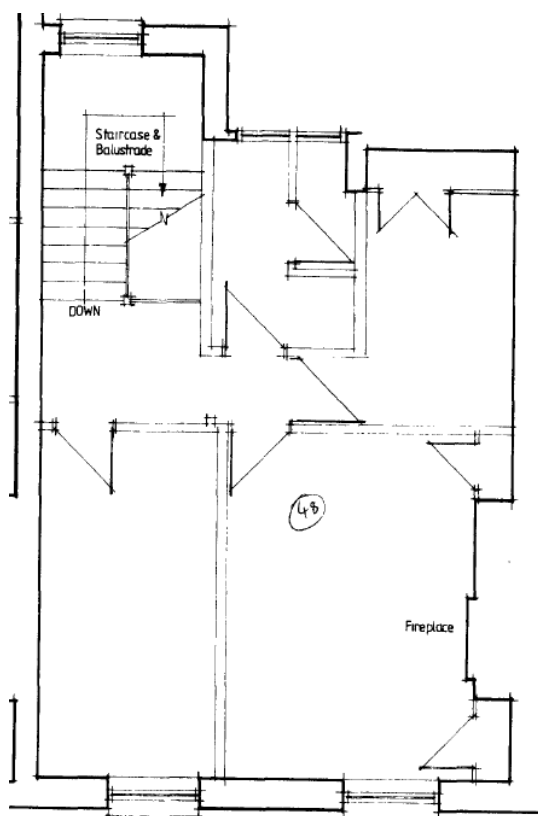
Historic view of the internal dividing wall at third floor level

5.25 This third floor level of the house is considered to be of less significance than the principle first and second floor spaces. It is considered unlikely that the partition is original given the open plan form on the floors below and variations in the position at neighbouring properties. However, the Applicant does not seek the removal of this wall but rather an opening within it to reflect the position of the former hatch such that if the plan form was deemed to be of significance by the Council it would not be lost as a result of this proposal.

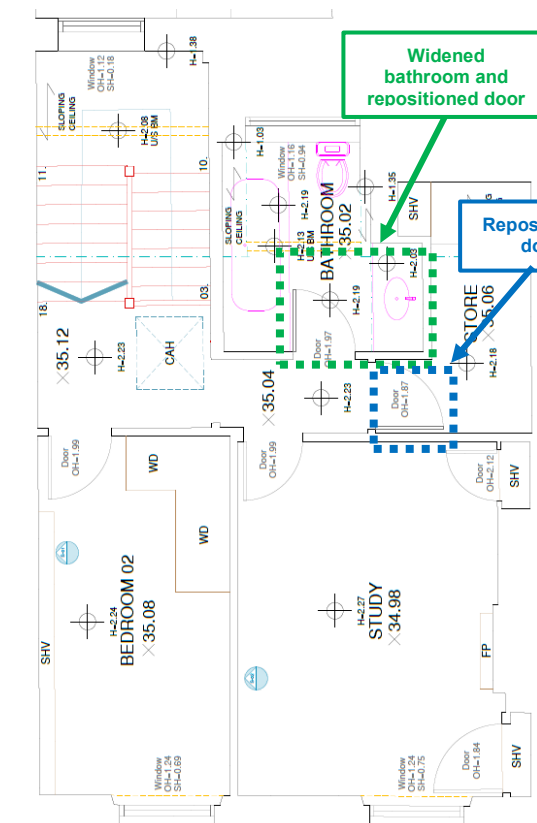
5.26 It is respectfully our submission that this aspect would have a neutral impact on the identified significance of the building whilst providing a very clear functional benefit for the owners.

Minor alterations to the corridor, layout and door positions between the front room and rear bathroom at third floor level.

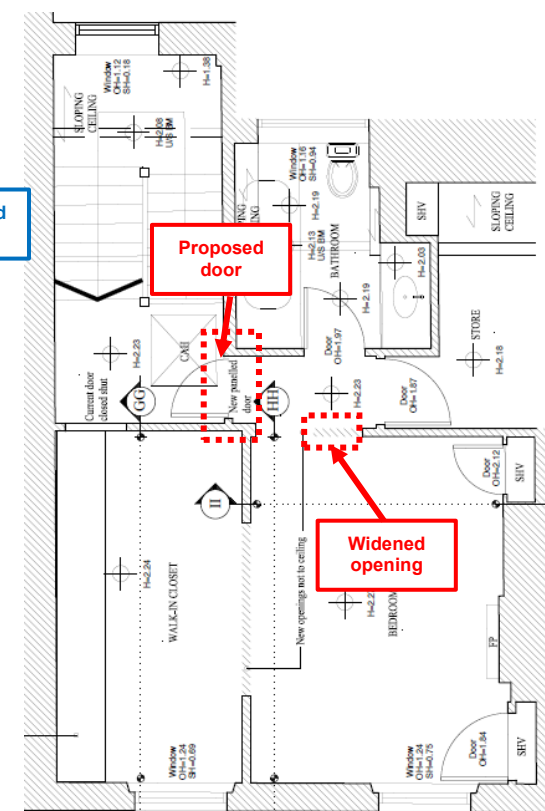
- 5.27 As shown below there has been a minor alteration to the rear bathroom as part of the 1994 / 1995 works. This resulted in an increase in the size of the bathroom and a repositioning of the door into the bathroom to enable a bath to be provided.



Third floor 1993



Existing third floor following 1994/1995 works



Third floor as now proposed

- 5.28 The current proposal seeks to install a door to the landing and provide a larger opening between the front bedroom and the corridor / rear bathroom.
- 5.29 These are small changes to a part of the building which has already been the subject of alteration and at roof level where there are no original or high quality features of note.
- 5.30 The changes introduce a small degree of flexibility in terms of the use of the third floor as a master suite without any material harm to any important fabric or plan form.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This application seeks listed building consent to enable minor, primarily internal, alteration and improvement works at No.36 Lambs Conduit Street. The main elements are the replacement of existing modern joinery and the provision of some new joinery, the provision of an opening at third floor level and other minor alterations at that level alongside new shutters, an extract vent and installation of a gas fire.
- 6.2 The proposals generally involve the removal and replacement of modern fabric, partitions and fixtures and fittings and do not impact historic fabric or important elements of original plan form.
- 6.3 It is considered that the works would at least preserve, if not enhance, the overall heritage significance of the property and preserve the wider conservation area in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan.
- 6.4 Officers support for this application is requested.