Report explaining how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site

21st July 2024

To whom it may concern

I am writing to request Listed Building consent for my mother's flat: Ground floor/basement 'flat B',26 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AN. For reasons explained below, this request comes after works have commenced.

BACKGROUND

My mother, who is now aged 95, has been resident there for 34 years. Sadly following a fall in May 2022, my mother was admitted to hospital and subsequently discharged to sheltered housing in Camden. It soon became clear that she would never be fit to return to Old Gloucester street. To finance her sheltered accommodation and extra care costs, it has become necessary for her to sell her flat and this decision was made about one year ago.

As is common with elderly people, very little repair or redecoration has happened latterly at Old Gloucester Street. She did however become aware of significant damp in some lower ground floor areas as long ago as 2012, however due to various issues, including deciding on the level of contribution from fellow freeholders and difficulty finding Damp contractors willing to work in central London, no remedial work was ever commenced.

Following my mother's departure I have been in intermittent contact with Mr Free about arranging damp treatment. Mr. Feakins and a party wall surveyor inspected the flat over a couple of hours on 14th September 2023 on another matter (examining party walls as significant works were about to commence next door), and on this occasion we also discussed an area of damp that appeared to be coming down from pipes above and what might be the best damp proofing systems for my mother's flat. I am not aware if Mr Feakins ever produced a report following the unscheduled damp inspection, but if he did I have been unable to obtain sight of it (despite requests). As it had been my intention to put the flat on the market in Spring 2024, this was disappointing. We therefore invited 3 contractors to inspect the property and offer advice and quotes for damp treatment and light redecoration (two other companies recommended by Mr Free had either gone out of business or were not interested in performing works at this time). As it was purely my aim to return the beautiful property to a liveable and saleable condition, with no structural changes, I did not realise that listed building consent was required for the works.

We chose "James Daniel Developments" to do the work as they seemed the contractor who would be most sympathetic to a building of this age and character, and they have shown great sensitively when working on my own Grade II listed home. They commenced work in June 2024 on 26 B Old Gloucester street. They were

contracted purely to remove damp damaged plaster, make good, replaster and redecorate.
When the old plaster was removed, a small number of the underlying bricks were found to be damaged on three window sills, but they were only superficial and were judged to be of no structural significance to the building. A few very damaged bricks were replaced with sympathetic materials and replastering was planned. At this point, in a spirit of collaboration I informed Mr Free of the nature of the findings. This is when the matter was reported to you.

AT THIS STAGE THE FOLLOWING HAS OCCURRED;

The Existing Render has mostly been hacked off:

1 Using suitable tools, a chisel, hammer, and power scraper, to remove the existing render from the wall

2 The render was broken into manageable sections, working from the top of the wall downwards

3 The builders took care to avoid damaging the underlying substrate, such as brick or blockwork, during the hacking-off process

4 They removed any loose debris and cleaned the wall surface thoroughly to ensure proper adhesion of the plaster

5 They assessed the condition of the brickwork behind the old render and replaced a small number of damaged bricks, in sympathetic materials, as used in the past after discussion

PLANS GOING FORWARD
Having taken advice from Gary Bakall (Camden Planning), an architect, by Ty-Mawr and “James Daniel Developments” it has been decided that the next step is to make good using a lime based plaster, having given plenty of time for the brickwork to dry

Process to Apply Lime Render-(lime render 3.5 nhl EWI-747)

1. *Preparation*

1. *Inspecting the Surface*:
   - Checking the brickwork for structural integrity. Replacing any damaged bricks and repoint any defective mortar joints with a compatible lime mortar.

2. *Cleaning the Surface*:
   - Removing any loose debris, dust, and dirt from the brickwork. This will be done using a wire brush. Ensuring the surface is clean and slightly damp but not saturated.

3. *Dampening*:
   - Pre-wetting the brickwork to reduce suction. Lime render adheres better to a damp surface. Wetting the wall the day before and again just before application if necessary, ensuring it's damp but not wet.

2. *Application of Base Coat (Scratch Coat)*

1. *Mixing*:
   - Preparing the lime render mix. A common ratio for the scratch coat is 1 part lime to 2.5–3 parts sand. Mixed thoroughly until there is a workable consistency.

2. *Applying the Scratch Coat*:
   - Applying the first coat of lime render to the dampened brickwork. This layer will be around 10-15 mm thick.
   - Using a trowel to spread the render evenly across the wall. Pressing the render firmly into the joints and across the surface to ensure good adhesion.
   - Scoring the surface of the scratch coat with a scratch comb or notched trowel to create a key for the next coat.
   - Allowing the scratch coat to cure slowly. This can take several days depending on the weather. Keeping the surface moist by misting it with water if necessary.

3. *Application of Intermediate Coat (Float Coat)*

1. *Mixing*:
   - Preparing a new batch of lime render mix with a similar ratio. A slightly finer sand is used for the float coat.

2. *Applying the Float Coat*:
   - Applying the second coat to the cured scratch coat. This layer will be about 8-12 mm thick.

- Smoothing the render with a trowel, ensuring an even application. This coat will be straightened using a darby or feather edge to achieve a flat surface.
- After the float coat has firmed up but is still green (not fully set), floating the surface with a wooden or plastic float to compact the render and close any surface pores.
- Again, allowing this coat to cure slowly, keeping it moist if necessary.

4. *Application of Finish Coat*

1. *Mixing*:
- Preparing the final coat of lime render. This mix will be 1 part lime to 3 parts fine sand for a smoother finish. Sometimes additives like fine fibers or pigments are included.

2. *Applying the Finish Coat*:
- Applying the finish coat thinly, around 5-7 mm thick.
- Using a trowel to spread the render evenly and achieve the desired smoothness or texture.
- Once the finish coat has set slightly, it will be worked with a float or trowel to achieve the final texture. For a polished finish, a steel trowel can be used.
- Allowing the finish coat to cure slowly, misting with water to prevent rapid drying.

5. *Curing and Protection*

1. *Curing*:
- Lime render cures through carbonation, which requires exposure to CO2 in the air. Ensure the render is protected from direct sunlight, wind, and frost during the curing process. This can be done by covering the area with damp hessian or plastic sheeting.

2. *Maintenance*:
- Inspect the render periodically for any cracks or damage. Small cracks can often be repaired with a fine lime putty or additional render.

3. *Finishing*:
- The render can be left natural or painted with breathable limewash or similar breathable paint finish. Avoid using non-breathable paints or sealers that can trap moisture.

- *Weather Conditions*: Applying lime render in moderate weather conditions. Avoiding extreme cold, heat, or wet weather.
- *Protective Gear*: Wearing appropriate protective gear, such as gloves and safety glasses, when handling lime products.

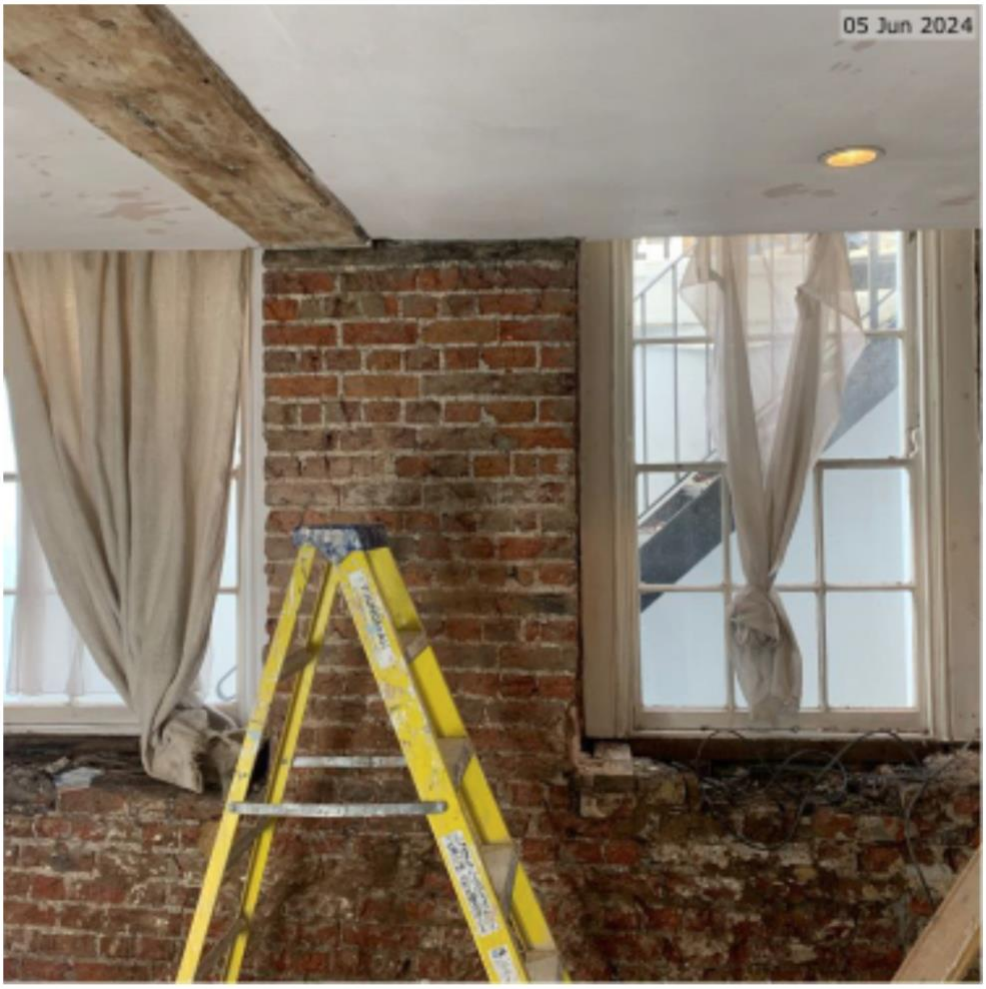
- *Patience*: Lime render takes time to cure properly. Patience during the curing process will ensure a durable and long-lasting finish

Following this all will be painted in a traditional neutral colour, but only after the plaster has fully dried.

In summary the overall effect of these works is to return the flat to its original condition, all in good order.

Large front bedroom 1,
2 sills before repair.

Bedroom



Large bedroom 1
One sill after repair-

Examples of other rooms, not needing any brick repair

Lower ground floor front door and bathroom

‘‘The walls are in an ok condition there is some unevenness but currently should not pose any problems”

The study at the back of the house in the courtyard. Built sometime after the main house.

Much repair in the past evident.

‘‘The walls are in an ok condition there is some unevenness but currently should not pose any problems”