

ROGER MEARS ARCHITECTS

Union Chapel, Compton Avenue, London N1 2XD
www.rmears.co.uk

tel: 020 7359 8222
email: rma@rmears.co.uk

Refurbishment and repairs at
Kelley House
18-20 Royal College Street
LONDON
NW1 0TH

Design and Access Statement



1.0 Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Roger Mears Architects in support of the proposals for listed building consent and planning application for remedial works at Kelley House, 18-20 Royal College Street in the London Borough of Camden.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the proposed drawings and other documents which accompany the pre-application submission.

Kelley House is a three-storey plus basement terraced Grade II listed house dating from the late 18th century. The property consists of two joined terraces and has been extensively altered and extended in the last 40 years to allow for its use as a bail hostel and has been vacant for many years. At the time of purchase by our client, all the interiors were in poor condition and in need of an overall refurbishment.

The plan form within both buildings was altered in the past to provide multiple rooms. Each front room has been divided into two (at second and third floor level) and numerous openings had been opened up in the original partitions, leaving very limited to no surviving historic fabric. Access through the party wall between no.18 and 20 was provided at first and third floor level. Most of the bedrooms had their own shower and a basin, whilst toilets were located at the ends of the corridors and within the closet wing. One kitchen was located on the ground floor

Because of the numerous refurbishments and changes over the past 40 years, very little of the original interior details were preserved, including doors and architraves, cornices, skirting boards. All original interior features had previously been replaced with plain, off the shelf modern features of a design incongruous with the age and character of the listed building.

Listed building consent was granted in 2023 to carry out an overall refurbishment of the property and a sympathetic redevelopment of the interior layout in order to put back the asset into use. The main aim of the proposed development was:

- To demolish modern partitions, converting the front two rooms into a single studio and thereby restoring the historic layout;
- To re-shape the size of the existing shower rooms, converting them into en-suites. Most of the studio were also fitted with tea-points in similar locations as the existing basins;
- To refurbish the interior by stripping out the existing modern plasterboard on walls and ceilings and replacing it like for like, redecorating and laying new carpets throughout;
- To overhaul and repair existing windows and staircase.

At construction stage, non-consented works were unfortunately carried out, which resulted in the loss of the existing windows and staircase and a different internal layout. An enforcement notice has subsequently been served, which was appealed by the applicant. The appeal is currently live (also refer to Heritage Statement and other supporting documents for this application). At the same time, the applicant has since engaged with the local planning authority in order to agree a common plan to:

- rectify actions which resulted in a detrimental impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset by reinstating traditional features of historically appropriate design and further revising the proposed layout;

- retain the items which are considered to have a neutral or positive impact on the significance of the listed building or which enhance our understanding of Kelley House as a historic Georgian terraced house;
- limit the environmental impact derived from the demolitions required in order to reinstate the previously approved scheme, while still achieving an improved outcome.

The applicant intends to carry out the required remedial works to the building and put this heritage asset into its most viable use.

The current proposals have been carefully thought out to minimise further heritage harm to the building and enhance it as much as possible whilst also delivering a good quality experience and service.

2.0 Setting and building description



Aerial view, 2023

Kelley House is located at no. 18-20 Royal College Street, London, NW1 0TH.

The house is Listed Grade II (Historic England entry listing 1130407 from 18 March 1993; see Appendix A and Heritage Potential's Covering Letter). It is adjacent to the North boundary of Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation area. The house is not within a conservation area, and there are no TPO's on trees on the site.

The house is part of a terraced housing development and is set between no. 16 and 22 to the North and South, facing Royal College Street to the west. The back boundary faces Beaumont Court which is a 7-storey student accommodation.

The two buildings are typical for the period being two rooms deep with a single staircase opposite the entrance to each property at the rear of the buildings. The staircase provides access to each floor with access at second floor level onto the flat roof of the rear closest wing in each.

The front elevation is of brick construction with rendered ground floor and painted bricks at lower ground floor. The windows are painted timber sashes. The rear elevation features plain brickwork with painted timber sashes. The rear two-storey closet is a later addition to the building and is finished with a flat roof terrace accessed from the second floor half landing. The mansard roof is covered with slate tiles with dormers at the rear.

Internally, the building has been much altered over the last 40 years with the loss of most of its original features. Refurbishment works are currently being carried out.

The houses were in use as bail hostel over the 20th century and has been vacant for few years.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

Application ref.	Description	Decision	Date
2023/0285/L	Internal alterations and refurbishment	Granted	01-02-2023
2013/4485/P	Details of location, design and method of waste storage as required by condition 3 of planning permission granted 13/07/2010 (ref: 2010/2790/P) for continued use as probation hostel.	Granted	21-08-2013
2010/2793/L	Internal alterations to listed building in association with the continued use as a probation hostel (sui generis)	Granted	15-07-2010
2010/2790/P	Continued use as probation hostel (sui generis)	Granted	13-07-2010
2010/1926/L	Change of use from house of multiple occupation (Class C4) to probation hostel (sui generis) and associated alterations to listed building.	Withdrawn	
2010/1919/P	Change of use from house in multiple occupation (Class C4) to probation hostel (sui generis)	Withdrawn	
9401373	Construction of a boiler house at rear as shown on drawing no(s) 94019A and as revised by letter dated 3rd March 1994.	Grant Full or Outline Perm. with Condit.	11-11-1994
8903675	Change of use from buildings in residential multiple occupation to a hostel.	Grant Full or Outline Perm. with Condit	23-01-1990
8903674	Change of use from buildings in residential multiple occupation to a bail hostel	Grant Full or Outline Perm. with Condit.	23-01-1990
8802358	Change of use from residential to hotel as shown on drawing No. 1016	Refuse Full or Outline Permission	15-09-1988
8802186	Refurbishment including erection of new 3 storey rear extension and an extra 4th floor and conversion into 9 flats as shown on drawing nos:1 and 2.	Refuse Full or Outline Permission	29-11-1988
8802099	Conversion of two properties within existing shell and levels to form six self-contained flats and two self- contained maisonettes *(plans submitted)	Withdrawn after Reg'n (not used on PACIS	08-05-2003

4.0 Relevant Policies and Guidance

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Development Plan

The Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan 2021 and Camden Local Plan 2017. The following policies of the Development Plan are considered relevant to this application:

The London Plan 2021

Policy GC2 Making the best use of land

Policy GC4 Delivering the homes Londoners need
Policy D1 London forms, character and capacity for growth
Policy D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach
Policy D4 Delivering good design
Policy D5 Inclusive design

Camden Local Plan 2017

Policy D1 Design
Policy D2 Heritage
Policy CC1 Climate change mitigation
Policy CC2 Adapting to climate change

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) or Documents (SPD)

For ease of reference a list of the currently adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents (SPGs / SPDs) to the Development Plan and also council guidance notes which are relevant to this site is provided below:

- * Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)
- * Planning frameworks and briefs

5.0 Proposals

Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in everyday use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally, the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. Part of the public value of heritage assets is the contribution that they can make to understanding and interpreting our past.

The property is a Grade II listed building within the setting of Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation area. In considering whether to grant planning permission or listed building consent, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires decision-makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The proposed remedial works have been carefully considered in order to minimise any further harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and allow for a better understanding and experience of this significance. These include:

- **Windows:** it is proposed to replace the existing double glazed top and bottom sashes to the front and rear elevation with new timber frame single glazed sashes of more historically appropriate design. It is proposed to match details of the frame and glazing

bars of adjoining number 16 which are likely to be original. Existing sash boxes will be retained in order to minimise the increase of the carbon footprint due to the proposed remedial works. The existing sash boxes are timber and of traditional design and are not considered to have a detrimental impact on the significance of Kelley House as a designated heritage asset. Windows and doors to the modern rear extensions will be retained.



Pre-existing single glazed sashes and detail of the glazing bar and joinery profile to be reinstated

- **Doors to second floor rear terrace:** it is proposed to retain the as built double glazed doors. While the joinery details for this door are not historically accurate, the existing doors replace modern doors which were installed when the rear terrace was built.
- **Front lightwell:** replace the existing double glazed doors and picture windows with sets of doors and sash windows of traditional design within the existing opening. It is proposed to retain the existing access to the lightwell from the lower ground floor front rooms in order to provide an improved amenity space for these studios and, at the same time, facilitate access to the electric cupboard for maintenance. It is noted that having direct access to the front lightwell is not considered incongruous feature for a building of this type and age. Moreover, most of the terraces along Royal College Street have already been altered at some point in the past and have doors to the front lightwell of different age, design, size and materials. While it is recognised that each proposal should be considered on its merit and on a case-by-case scenario, retaining a door into the lightwell in this case would not be inappropriate.

It is proposed to replace the existing doors and windows with timber frame single glazed French doors and traditional sash windows aligned with the ground floor windows above, joinery detail to match the other windows at upper floor levels. The insertion of French doors might require a cut back to some of the brickwork to provide an enlarged opening, however this design is considered more in keeping with the character and age of the listed building.



- **Lower Ground Floor front rooms:** it is proposed to reinstate the original opening from these rooms to the storage/electric cupboard. A new door will be fitted and lock shut for safety reason to prevent unauthorized access to the electric cupboard. The existing kitchenettes/tea points will be sufficiently set back from the new door/access.
- **Boiler house/plant room:** it is proposed to retain the existing boiler house/plant room to the rear of the property, which replaced the outbuilding previously approved in 1994. The as-built plant room occupies a similar footprint to the two pre-existing outbuildings and is a lightweight structure of subtle and honest design, and subservient to the designated heritage asset. Moreover, a third shed at the rear of no20 has now been completely removed, allowing for a better appreciation of the rear elevation of Kelley House.
- **Staircase:** the existing modern handrail, spindles, newels, and risers of the two staircases of both properties will be replaced with new handrail, spindles, newels and risers to replicate in profile, materiality, and design of those that might have previously existed, and taking into account the building hierarchy. Most of the pre-existing newels and spindles had already been lost when the property was purchased. Of the two properties, the central staircase at no20 retained few original spindles, however these had already been replaced with simple newels at almost all levels. Almost all the features at no18 were lost.

The current proposal intends to reinstate a more traditional design spindles, newel posts and handrail in keeping with the pre-existing features. A simple square newel post will be used at basement and upper floor, in keeping with the historic hierarchy of these levels which were usually used as service spaces.



Pre-existing staircase at no20 at basement, ground, first, second and third floor



Example of repaired and redecorated staircase in a property of similar age (@Roger Mears Architects)

- **Lighting:** the contemporary recessed LED strip lights will be completely removed from all the studios, plasterboard ceiling made good and redecorated.
- **Kitchenettes/tea points:** it is proposed to retain the as-built kitchenettes and tea points in their current location or similar, with the exception of the basement front rooms, which

will be relocated to allow for the reinstatement of a pre-existing opening, and the rear rooms, where they will be designed and/or re-located to avoid any damage to the chimney breasts. Repair to the chimney breasts that have been previously cut out to allocate the tea- points will be carried out on a like for like basis. The as-built kitchenettes have generally been installed in the approximate location of the pre-existing basins and connected to the existing drainage. They consists of free-standing kitchen units of limited size and simple design which can be removed at any time without any further damage to the historic fabric.

- **Alcoves:** the alcoves at each side of the chimney breasts will be reinstated where previously infilled with modern plasterboard.
- **En-suites:** it is proposed to retain the current room layout and the location of the as-built en-suites. While the current layout might differ from the pre-existing and the approved, we believe this, together with the demolition of the modern partitions between rooms, allows for a better understanding of the original historic layout of the front and rear rooms. The en-suites replace the previously existing shower cubicles within each room, which already altered the original historic layout, and are connected to the existing drainage. As the pre-existing partitions were modern, their demolition did not result in any loss of historic fabric. Moreover, the as built layout allows for a more rational use of the floor space and would contribute to reinstate the building into its use as a hostel. At ground and first floor, where sufficient headroom is available, en-suites partitions and ceilings will be adapted to reinstate the originally approved 'pod' design.
- **Doorway between nos18 and 20:** this will be blocked as previously approved, and walls made good and redecorated.
- **Modern doors, architraves and skirting boards:** it is proposed to remove the previously installed modern joinery and reinstate traditional skirting boards and architraves within the hallway, stairwell and landings, in keeping with the historic character of the building and respecting the hierarchy of each level. Existing entrance doors to each room will be retained, grooves infilled, sanded and re-painted in white, in order to achieve a simple plain appearance similar to the pre-existing. Traditional skirting boards will also be fitted to all rooms.
- **Floors:** all existing floorboards have been retained in the entrance hallway and rooms. Acoustic panels were installed on the top in order to provide insulation and fire protection, support to the new floor finishes and, at the same time, preserve and protect the original floorboards underneath. New landings and half landings will be similarly finished with timber floorboard, acoustic panels and carpet.

6.0 Residential amenities

The proposals will not affect the neighbours residential amenities.

7.0 Privacy

The flat roofs at second floor are already in use as a terraces. No change is proposed to current arrangement.

8.0 Sustainability

Section 2 and 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 state that 'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

The proposal has been designed in order to minimise an increase of the carbon footprint of the overall development due to remedial works, complying with policies CC1 Climate change mitigation and CC2 Adapting to climate change of the Camden Local Plan.

- It is proposed to retain the existing sash boxes and replace the top and bottom sashes only with more appropriately designed features. The potential for inserting slimline double glazing or Histoglass will be discussed with the Conservation Officer.
- It is proposed to retain and redecorate the as-built doors in order to minimise waste.

The impact on significance of these measures is discussed within Heritage Potential cover letter.

9.0 Access Statement

No change is proposed to the current access to the building.

10.0 Planning Balance for proposed alterations

National Planning Policy Framework

In considering proposals, the local authority has a duty to take into account the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 and 66 require the local authority to have special regard to the preservation of listed buildings, including their settings.

The Courts have held that harm to listed buildings should be given great weight and importance in planning decisions. This is supported by national policy in the NPPF that requires that 'great weight' be given to the preservation of listed buildings, including their setting. Where harm is found to be caused by a development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, planning permission / listed building consent is granted if the development's public benefits would significantly and demonstrably outweigh that harm.

The NPPF differentiates between what is known as "substantial harm" (which would completely remove the reason for designation or come very close to doing so – paragraph 207) and "less than substantial harm" (any harm below the "substantial" threshold). Paragraph 208 relates to "less than substantial harm". This requires any harm identified to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Paragraph 212 of NPPF is also relevant because it encourages local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas to enhance or better reveal the significance of heritage assets.

Section 72 of the Act also requires that for development proposals within conservation areas, special attention be paid to the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of that conservation area. As the proposed development is within a conservation area, this statutory provision is engaged. The legislation and NPPF also require that 'great weight' be given to the preservation of conservation areas, including their setting.

A clear assessment of significance of each area undergoing change and the impact of proposals is included in the Heritage Impact statement.

Heritage Benefits

The proposal will contribute to retain the heritage asset in its consolidated use as a hostel/short term accommodation.

The proposed layout is more congruous with the original historic internal layout of Kelley House and allows for a better understanding of its historic significance. The en-suites are overall replacing the pre-existing shower cubicles and are not considered to result in any additional harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset. The as-built layout also provides an improved use of the existing floor space which is more suitable to modern living standards.

The proposal will reinstate historic features which were either recently removed without previous consent or lost over time. It should be noted that the pre-existing staircase had been previously much altered, the new railings, newel posts and spindles have therefore been carefully designed to provide a layout which is now more similar to the original.

The new shed provides a more efficient solution to the need of an extensive external boiler and plant room serving the two properties. It replaces three different sheds of different scale and design with a lightweight structure of simple design which is subservient to the rear elevation, does not have any direct impact on historic fabric and is completely reversible.

Cumulatively, therefore, the proposed remedial works can be seen to possess a number of benefits which are advantageous to the preservation and enjoyment of this historic building.

The Proposals and Heritage Balance

As set out above, any proposals that affect a building of special architectural and historic interest need to be approached with care to ensure that their cumulative impact is acceptable. They need to be weighed against the benefits and a conclusion reached as to whether they fall on the right side of the heritage balance.

The proposal would not result in any further loss of historic fabric and would not adversely impact the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Roger Mears Architects
August 2024

Appendix A: Listing Description

Heritage Category:	<i>Listed Building</i>
Grade:	<i>II</i>
List Entry Number:	<i>1130407</i>
Date first listed:	<i>18-March-1993</i>
Statutory Address	<i>NUMBERS 6-22 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS AND BOLLARD IN PEDESTRIAN WAY OF NUMBER 12, ROYAL COLLEGE STREET</i>
County:	<i>Greater London Authority</i>
District:	<i>Camden (London Borough)</i>
National Grid Reference:	<i>TQ 29462 83731</i>

Terrace of nine houses. Nos. 14-22: late C18, probably built by Joseph Kirkman and Alexander Hendy as part of the development of Lord Camden's Estate. Yellow stock brick with stuccoed ground floors and continuous second-floor sill band. Four storeys and cellar, two windows each. Round-arched entrances with later doors and fanlights. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, first floor having iron window guards. Parapet. Nos. 6-10: early C19. Yellow stock brick with stuccoed ground floor and first-floor band. Symmetrical design, the central house slightly projecting. Windows 1:2:1. Three storeys and basements; no. 8 with attic. Nos. 6 and 10 have round-arched ground floor openings; doorways have fanlights and later doors, sash windows with glazing bars. No. 8 has square-headed ground floor openings, doorway with overlight and later door and sash window with glazing bars.

Upper floors have gauged brick flat arches to later 2-pane sashes; no. 8 with an attic lunette sash. Stone-coped parapets of nos. 6 and 10, with brick modillions, sweep up to the higher parapet of no. 8 in the form of a pediment. Nos. 6-10 are not on a map of 1806 but appear by Greenwood's Map of 1827 flanking a lane known as Upper College Grove. No. 12: early C19. Built over the beginning of Upper College Grove and linking nos. 10 and 14 Royal College Street; pedestrian access only to the lane, now known as College Grove, via the round-arched right-hand passage-way with the original cast-iron bollard. Three storeys and basement, two windows. Round-arched entrance with rusticated keystone, fanlight and later door. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; ground floor with glazing bars; upper floors, 2-pane. Parapet.

INTERIORS: not inspected but noted to retain some original features.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Kirkman and Hendy were amongst the first speculative builders to take leases following Lord Camden's Estate Act passed in 1788 for the building of 1,400 houses for "industrious artisans" on the southern part of his Kentish Town Estate. Their first take was in June 1790 and the leases for the houses on Royal College Street all ran from Michaelmas 1790. Nos. 14-22 appear on the Stockdale Map of 1797. The French poets and partners Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud lived at 8 Royal College Street from May-July 1873.

Listing NGR: TQ2947383711