

# Heritage Statement

**Site Address:** 42 Museum Street, London, WC1A 1LY

**Conservation Area:** Bloomsbury Conservation Area

## 1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement accompanies the listed building consent application for 42 Museum Street, a ground-floor shop known as Organic Botanist, located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The property, a small retail unit, has been operating as a gift shop under the current ownership for eight years.

The proposed works seek to address security concerns by installing internal retractable grilles on the shop windows and a fixed diamond mesh grille on the glazed section of the door. These security measures are designed to protect the building while preserving its historical and architectural significance.

## 2. Site and Heritage Context

42-47 Museum Street is a Grade II listed building (1322091), which means it is of special architectural or historic interest. The property lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, which is characterised by its rich architectural history, Georgian and Victorian buildings, and proximity to the British Museum. Museum Street forms part of a historically significant area that contributes to the cultural and architectural heritage of Bloomsbury and London as a whole.

The terrace comprises predominantly brick construction, often featuring stucco finishes at the ground floor and large sash windows. The original shopfronts, with timber frames and large display windows, are integral to the building's character.

The architectural elements of the building, particularly its traditional shopfront, contribute significantly to the area's overall character and are deemed essential for preserving the historical integrity of the street. Therefore, it is crucial that any alterations to the building are carefully designed to maintain its character and heritage significance.

## 3. Proposed Works

In recent years, Organic Botanist has been the target of multiple vandalism attacks, with repeated incidents of window-smashing. These attacks have created significant financial and emotional strain for the business owners, while also threatening the structural integrity of the building. Given the increasing frequency of these incidents, it has become essential to enhance the security of the shop in a manner that protects both the business and the fabric of the building.

The proposed security measures include:

- **Retractable Grilles on Windows:** These will be installed on the interior and can be retracted when the shop is open, allowing them to be discreetly tucked away. This design minimizes the visual impact on the building's façade and the surrounding streetscape.
- **Fixed Diamond Mesh Grille on the Glazed Door:** This grille will also be installed internally, preserving the original features of the shopfront. This approach maintains the architectural detailing of the door while ensuring the necessary security measures are in place.

#### **4. Impact on Heritage Assets**

The proposed works have been designed with the utmost sensitivity to the listed status of the building and its location within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The retractable nature of the window grilles ensures that there will be no permanent visual intrusion when the shop is open for business, maintaining the traditional shopfront appearance. When the grilles are in use, their internal placement reduces any impact on the external aesthetic of the building and the street scene.

Similarly, the internal installation of the diamond mesh grille on the door ensures that the architectural and visual integrity of the door is preserved, while the mesh itself remains unobtrusive.

In this way, the proposed security measures strike a balance between the practical necessity of protecting the building and maintaining its historical significance.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The proposed security enhancements at Organic Botanist are essential for protecting both the business and the listed building from further damage. The installation of retractable grilles and a discreet internal door mesh will provide necessary security while honoring the heritage significance of the building and the broader Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Careful attention has been paid to ensure that the building's external appearance remains unchanged during operational hours, thereby preserving its character while offering vital protection during closed periods.

We believe that these proposed measures represent a thoughtful and proportionate response to the genuine need for enhanced security and respectfully request approval for the application.