



ENGLISH  
HERITAGE

Listed Building Application

29 November 2024

## LBC - DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**LBC APPLICATION – for installation of one ceramic blue plaque to:  
Rhoda Garrett (1841-1882) and Agnes Garrett (1845-1935)**

**SITE ADDRESS – 2 Gower Street, WC1E 6DP**

Listed Grade II, listed entry 1322171; in Bloomsbury Conservation Area, (sub area 5. Bedford Square/Gower Street)

### Site Analysis

#### The current building history:

Number 2 Gower Street lies within a Grade II listed terrace of 10 houses (2-20 evens, east side). The terrace built in about 1780 on land owned by the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford (1765-1802). Built of brick it is distinct from the other three-bay, mansard-roofed, houses in the terrace, being plain painted render fronted and taller than the rest, with four storeys and basement. A square-headed paneled double entrance doorway set to the right with rectangular overdoor window; the ground floor sash windows set in shallow curve arch recesses; first floor of three French windows with console-bracketed cornices, a continuous cast-iron balcony; 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor with plain recessed sash windows; a plain running band at third and parapet level.

Gower Street, a long wide street, runs northwards from Bedford Square to join Euston Road, named after Lady Gertrude Leveson-Gower (d.1794), second wife of Lord John Russell, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford (1710-1771), his grandson Francis Russell, 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford began the transformation of the family Bloomsbury estates. Gower Street conceived as terraces of residences for wealthy middle-class owners and followed the completion of the grand houses nearby in Bedford Square (completed by 1783). The first house on the east side of Gower Street was designed and numbered (11 on the Horwood map of 1792-99 ) to be part of the Bedford Square plan, the building of the following Gower Street terraced houses were built moving northwards, the design controlled by the Bedford Estate and built mainly by speculative developers. The terrace houses of 2-20 are shown as completed on the Horwood 1792-99 map, with long individual rear gardens; (numbered 1-10 consecutively).

The long street as it developed was named in three parts, to include Upper Gower Street, Gower Street North; in the 1860s the street renumbered in one continuous sequence, evens on the east side (2-142), odds on the west (1-161), and the whole road called Gower Street. Due to the proximity of the British Museum, medical and academic institutions – the residents were principally professional and intellectual middle-classes, and the institutions continued to expand and build upon Gower Street, replacing blocks of the original houses. The new railway stations at Euston (1837),



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Step into  
Fanny's story



Kings Cross (1852) and St Pancras (1868), partly led in the twentieth-century to a downward slide of status to the area and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many of the single residential houses were converted for institution, offices and hotels use. The long rear gardens of number 2-20 terrace houses were conjoined into communal landscaped gardens in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, to which the residents had individual access from the rear of their home, with a through access gate on Malet Street.

Parts of Gower Street suffered devastating bomb damage in World War II, however number 2 and its immediate neighbours survived unscathed. Pevsner in 1998 describes the street as ‘..even, soothing, dignified, and a sense of overall planning, although certainly without much imagination’. (London North, Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, pg 325). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is a busy main traffic route, the terrace a good survival in original frontage form, number 2 bears a London County Council blue plaque installed in 1954 to Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett; the building currently in the University of London ownership.

### **Plaque details**

It is proposed that English Heritage erect a blue ceramic inset mounted plaque, inset into the brickwork and stucco. The size of the proposed ceramic circular plaque is the standard 495mm (19.5-inch) diameter, depth 50mm; inset into the stucco and brickwork by a maximum depth of 50mm, so that it rests flush with the surface of the elevation.

Manufacture of English Heritage blue plaques is undertaken by specialist artisans, created from a white stoneware body, handcrafted, after firing and glazing they are extremely hard, nonporous, frost proof and the glaze does not fade, or change colour. Plaques have been found to be extremely durable, similar plaques under the scheme have lasted for over 150 years. Due to their slightly domed design, modern plaques are self-cleaned by rain-water and require little maintenance.

### **Proposed position of the new blue plaque: front elevation of 2 Gower Street**

It is recommended that the best position for a second plaque on the front elevation would be located directly aligned horizontally on the existing plaque to Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett; for houses with double plaques, of which there are a reasonable number for comparison, a horizontal line-up has been shown to fit sympathetically within the architecture.

The proposed location of the new plaque to be at ground floor level; centred horizontally on the brick and render pier between the two windows; the painted stucco render of the ground floor is lined with shallow channel lines, we usually try to straddle the plaque symmetrically across decorative panels, however, the channel lines are so faint they have a secondary role to the placement.



The significance of the architecture and context with the terrace has been carefully considered; the Historic England Conservation Architect consulted and has agreed with the proposed location.

Located as shown on the attached document surveyor orthophotos, scaled 1:50, and oblique views; **the submitted surveyor orthophotos take the role of architect drawings and the square-on view at 1:50 scale will print to scale at A1.**

### **Existing and proposed elevations submitted – technical description**

The metric survey images submitted with the application do, we believe, take the role of existing and proposed elevations, the square-on image shows to scale 1:50, and are within +/- 5mm accuracy.

A description of these survey elevations to note are that they are geometrically correct orthophotos derived from accurate photogrammetric models using a professional DSLR camera, focus lens, tripod/telescopic mast. The DSLR imagery spatially controlled and coordinated on architectural features referenced to a site grid of control/tie points. Specialist photogrammetric processing software generates the photogrammetric model and extraction of the orthophotos, therefore are accurate existing elevations. The blue plaque design is scaled and superimposed onto the elevation views using Adobe Photoshop; and therefore give both the existing and proposed elevation.

### **Plaque installation methodology;**

The exterior elevation of the building will be slightly adapted to accommodate the blue plaque. Detail individual installation instructions are advised on by Historic England, Conservation Architect, who has approved that the proposed location brickwork will be of solid brickwork of at least 13.5-inches. This is more than suitable to take a recessed plaque; the technical advice submitted to the contractor prior to installation to include the below English Heritage instructions.

1. Surveyor scale geospatial ortho images (see attached documents) are provided to the contractor for preparation of the positioning of the plaque; the contractor to measure on site before work commences, to ensure horizontal and vertical dimensions are correct and the plaque site is prepared to ensure the layout is set symmetrically within the architectural features and directly in horizontal line of the existing plaque.
2. Notwithstanding Building Regulation 7 - Instruction BS 8000 : Workmanship on building sites - Code of Practice; and BS 8000-3 Workmanship code of practice for masonry; the removal of masonry to accommodate the plaque is not deemed to affect the strength, stability and sound resistance of the extant construction.
3. For ceramic inset plaque; Contractor to mark positioning; cut circular recess into the fabric of the building of sufficient depth to allow 'flush' accommodation of the plaque and its mortar bedding, allowing 6mm (1/4inch, no greater than 1/2-inch outer rim).



4. Drill and cut the circle carefully and neatly through the render which may be cement based, care should be taken when cutting through the render not to detach the stucco from the brickwork in the surrounding area. This can be achieved by drilling through the stucco with close-spaced holes and gently breaking out the circular panel, working towards the centre.
5. Especial care taken to ensure the surrounding brick is not damaged or dislodged.
6. Key and well wet recess and render – mortar mix advised to be of lime mortar for bedding and filling the reverse void in the plaque.
7. Set in position, completely fill space leaving no gaps and point flush with the surrounding masonry; colour and texture is to be best possible match to existing painted stucco.
8. The inscription to be set level and true; the outer edge of the white glazed perimeter of the plaque to be positioned flush with the surface of the surrounding stucco; finish neatly and remove all residue.

There will be no change to the use of the building, no floor space will be added or subtracted, and no new homes will be built on the site. The layout of the building will not be changed, nor will the scale of the building be affected. There will be no landscaping undertaken.

#### **Access**

No new access points and routes are proposed. No changes are proposed in relation to pedestrian and cycle routes, road layout, local services and public transport provision. The blue plaque will be visible from the public highway and therefore no new access is required. There is no new need for provision of access for emergency services.

#### **Impact to the heritage asset and design solution**

The installation of the blue plaque will have a minor impact on the appearance of the property. It will entail a minor loss of surface brickwork to accommodate the depth of the plaque only. The English Heritage blue plaque design has been developed over 150 years in sympathy with the character of London buildings, the location and positioning of the plaque chosen so as to be as appropriate as possible to the design of the façade of the building, and to be visible to the average passer-by. The ceramic plaque is hand crafted and is thought to respond positively to most local contexts. The above information has explained the proposed development, and the lack of necessity for good access into and through the site in relation to the proposed works.

The freehold owners of the building have approved the project and given their consent; the Historic England Conservation Architect has approved the proposal. The architectural character of this listed building will only be affected in a minor way, and the historical and cultural interest of the property and area will be enhanced within the local and wider community.

Cathy Power  
Blue Plaques Manager