

HERITAGE STATEMENT



TO

London Borough of Camden Council

FROM

Montagu Evans LLP

DATE

January 2025

SUBJECT

Victoria House, 37-63 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4DA

Montagu Evans have been instructed by Wates Group (the 'Applicant') to produce this Heritage Statement in support of the application to discharge Condition 4 attached to Listed Building Consent ref. 2023/0973/L, which was approved by London Borough of Camden on June 13th 2023. Condition 4 states:

'Should any additional historic features or fabric be discovered during the strip out of units 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9 at lower ground level, details shall be submitted for assessment and approval by the LPA prior to their alteration.'

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the building in accordance with the requirements of policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.'

This Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with the Cover Letter and supporting documents submitted by Gerald Eve as part of this application. The application pertains to three elements which were uncovered during the strip out works associated with Planning Permission ref. 2023/0926/P and Listed Building Consent ref. 2023/0973/L, namely parquet flooring, plaster ceiling and a door at lower ground floor level.

Parquet Floor

During the strip out works to the former banking hall (consented under LPA Ref.: 2023/0926/P and 2023/0973/L), historic parquet flooring was uncovered beneath the modern floor covering at lower ground floor level. The initial approach to the uncovered fabric was to retain as much as possible by over boarding the parquet flooring with plywood on a flexible adhesive to create a suitable substrate for a contemporary finish. However, following further investigative works, the condition of the parquet was found to be in very poor condition, including disintegration and delaminated as a result of the original bitumen fixative (see the Lloyds Parquet Flooring Report submitted as part of this application). The parquet flooring was also found to be incomplete, with areas having previously been removed historically. To facilitate the consented use for this area of the listed building, it is proposed to remove the deteriorated parquet flooring at lower ground floor and apply a new levelling screed.

We identify a degree of less than substantial harm deriving from the removal of the parquet flooring due to the loss of historic fabric. This harm would be at the very low end of the scale owing to: the small area of the listed building affected; the limited architectural interest of this type of parquet flooring, which appears utilitarian and was relatively common in inter-war office buildings; and its deteriorated condition. Furthermore, the photograph at Figure 1, which dates from the circa 1930s, shows the banking unit originally featured a stone tile floor. This would suggest that the parquet flooring was either not original to the listed building or it has always been covered over. On balance, it is considered that the harm is justified to facilitate the completion of the consented works, particularly when the benefits associated with the wider refurbishment of the former banking hall are taken into account.

Plaster ceiling

The ceiling of the former Lloyds banking unit is in two parts: the lower portion on the west side, beneath the mezzanine; and the higher decorative plaster ceiling on the east side over the double-height main hall (see Figure 1). The decorative ceiling is in a fair condition but incomplete and the lower ceiling is in very poor condition.

It is proposed to repair and make good the higher decorative plaster ceiling and make safe and cover the lower ceiling. The decorative plaster ceiling contributes to the special interest of the listed building as a remnant of the original internal finish to the former Lloyds Bank. Through securing and repairing the ceilings in the manner proposed, the works would facilitate an enhancement to the appearance of the former banking hall, thus delivering on one of the heritage benefits associated with the consented scheme.



Figure 1) Lloyds Bank, c.1930s (source: Lloyds Banking Archive)

Uncovered Door

The uncovered door on the south side of the former Lloyds bank unit appears to be original to the listed building and would have provided access from the bank to the southern stairwell and circulation space of Victoria House, as shown in Figure 2 below. The door contributes to the special interest of the listed building as evidence of the original planform and fit out. A similar style was used on doors throughout the building. It is proposed to leave the door as found and re-enclose it, thus preserving it in situ. We identify no harm arising from these works.

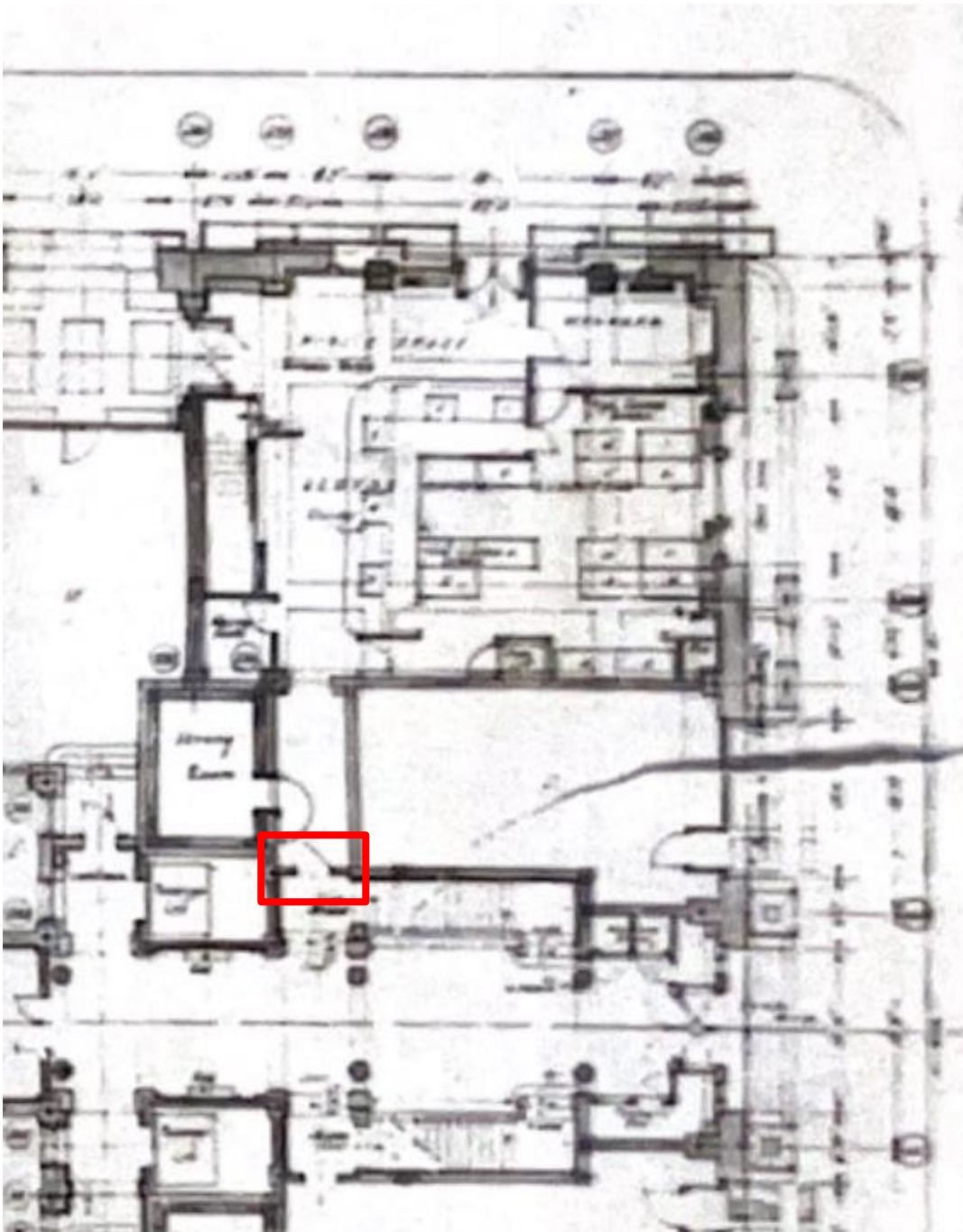


Figure 2) Victoria House Plans, c.1920s (source: Camden Archive)