



HERITAGE STATEMENT

No. 28 John Street, London WC1N 2BL

THA Ref: 2021/5474
April 2021

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Regulatory Framework**
- 3.0 Historic Background**
- 4.0 The Heritage Asset(s)**
- 5.0 Assessment of Proposals**
- 6.0 Summary**
- 7.0 Sources**
- 8.0 Appendix**

Cover: No. 28 John Street

Figures

Figure 1: 28 John Street

Figure 2: Location of the Site, Google Maps

Figure 3: Bloomsbury Conservation Area – Camden (2011)

Figure 4: Sub Area 10 – Camden (2011)

Figure 5: Extract from John Rocque's Map, 1746 – Layers of London

Figure 6: Locale as shown by the 1720s Map of St Andrews

Figure 7: Harwood Map 1799 – Layers of London

Figure 8: Greenwood Map 1828 – Layers of London

Figure 9: OS Map 1874-75 - old-maps.co.uk

Figure 10 OS Map 1916 – old-maps.co.uk

Figure 11: OS Map 1937 – old-maps.co.uk

Figure 12: OS Map 1952-58 – old-maps.co.uk

Figure 13: Bomb Damage Map, 1965 – Layers of London

Figure 14: OS Map 1874-75 - old-maps.co.uk

Figure 15: OS Map 1952-58 – old-maps.co.uk

Figure 16: Proposed Conversion of the Pavement Vaults to Functional Spaces

Figure 17: Proposed Section of the Vaults' Excavation

Figure 18: Proposed Section of the Pavement Vaults

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been commissioned by Gideon Barnett to address alterations proposed for lower ground floor level and the pavement vaults of 28 John Street, London WC1N 2BL ('the application site,' **Figure 1 & 2**). The document first considers the regulatory framework specific to the site and surrounding area. It then outlines the historic evolution of the site and locale before discussing the built environment of each. It then considers proposals in relation to relevant heritage assets, and against national and local policy before addressing the potential for impacts upon said designations.



Figure 1: 28 John Street



Figure 2: Location of the Site

- 1.2 The application site comprises of a four storey townhouse with basement and attics on John Street and provides subdivided into self-contained apartments. No. 28 John Street is statutorily listed Grade II. It was first designated on 24th of October 1951, together with nos. 22-27 John Street. The list description may be summarised as follows:

'Terrace of 7 houses. c1800-19. Yellow and multi-coloured stock brick with stucco bands at 1st floor levels. Nos 27 & 28 with slated mansard roofs and dormers. 4 storeys and basements; Nos 27 & 28 with attics. 2 windows each; Nos 26 & 27, 3 windows each; No.28 double fronted with 5 windows. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars; 1st floors with cast-iron balconies, except No.28. Parapets. No.22: square-headed, architraved doorway with patterned rectangular fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on ground and 1st floors. Stairs with square balusters. No. 23: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on 1st and 2nd floors (original centres covered in). No.24: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces with original centres on ground floor. No.25: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces on ground floor. Good marble fireplace 1st floor front room with bas relief on front panel, reeded and with rosettes; original iron centre. Nos 26 & 27: round-arched doorways with reeded doorframes, lion mask stops, mutule cornice-heads, patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. No.27 with lamp-holder incorporated in fanlight. No.26 with fluted lead rainwater head. No.28: round-arched doorway with attached Doric columns carrying entablature; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Cornice and blocking course. Wrought-iron overthrow lamp-holder. Return to Northington Street with 1 window and mid C19 entrance with stucco surround and console-bracketed cornice. Dentilled cornices. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.'

- 1.3 No. 28 John Street also lies within the *Bloomsbury Conservation Area* (**Figure 3**), which was first designated in 1968. However, the boundaries of the conservation area have been altered on several occasions and with its last audit in 2011, 17 new areas were added to the designation. An *Appraisal and Management Strategy* for this was adopted in 2011, which replaced a *Conservation Area Statement* adopted in 1998. The appraisal described the locale as '*an internationally significant example of town planning.*'

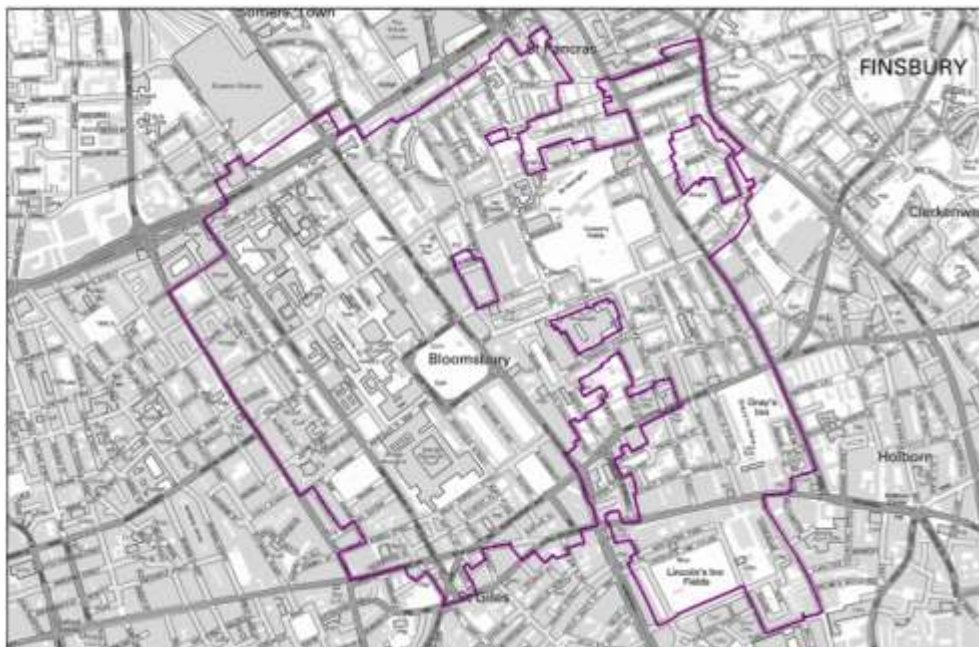


Figure 3: Bloomsbury Conservation Area

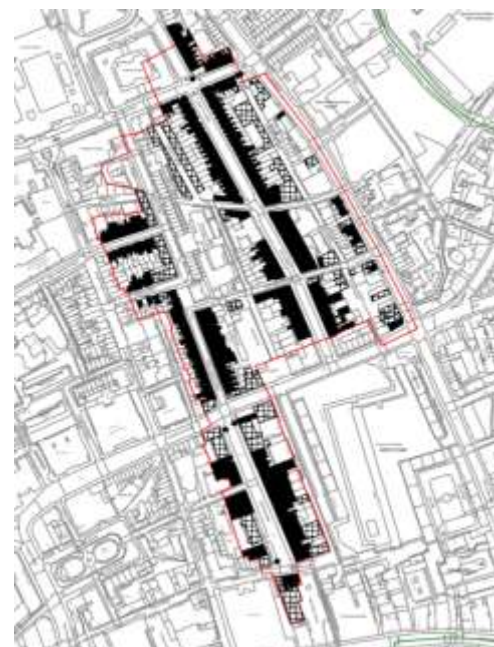


Figure 4: Sub-Area 10

- 1.4 Proposals seeks listed building consent for alterations concerning the opening and consequent accessibility of the pavement vaults at lower ground floor level, along with minor internal alterations to these. This would improve the practical functioning of the pavement vaults as usable space, and in turn enable the ongoing use, maintenance and, ultimately, the preservation of these features commensurate with the *special interest* found to reside with this Grade II listed application site. Such an approach accords with Camden's *Local Plan (July, 2017)*, which contains a strategic objective to preserve Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets.

- 1.5 In accordance with *paragraph 189* of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)*, this Heritage Statement describes the significance of those heritage assets with potential to be affected in a manner proportionate to both the assets' importance, and an understanding of the potential impact of proposals, upon that significance.

2.0 Regulatory Framework

Legislation

- 2.1 Legislation relating to the historic environment is contained in the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act)*. Of particular relevance are sections 16, 66 and 72, summarised as follows:

66 (1) Concerning a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

72 (1) Concerning conservation areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

National Guidance

- 2.2 The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)* emphasises a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' defined by the document as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'
- 2.3 This 'presumption in favour' has been implemented to speed up decision making and encourage more development. As regards heritage assets, it is emphasised that their conservation under such circumstances is to be achieved 'in a manner appropriate to their significance'. Key paragraphs from the document are summarised below.
- 2.4 *Paragraph 185 states that: plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- *opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*

2.5 *Paragraph 192 set out that in determining applications, local authorities should take account of:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

2.6 *Paragraph 200 outlines that 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the assets (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'* Additionally, *paragraph 201 identified that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to significance.*

The London Plan

2.7 The overarching strategies and policies for the whole of the Greater London area are contained within the existing *London Plan of the Greater London Authority* (GLA, March 2021). Relevant policies are summarised as follows.

2.8 *Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth:*

C. Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings, should also be actively managed. Development proposals should seek to avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

2.9 *Policy D3 optimising site capacity through the design-led approach:*

Quality and character:

...respond to the existing character of a place by identifying the special and valued features and characteristics that are unique to the locality and respect, enhance and utilise the heritage assets and architectural features that contribute towards the local character

...Developments that show a clear understanding of, and relationship with, the distinctive features of a place are more likely to be successful. These features include buildings, structures, open spaces, public realm and the underlying landscape. Development should be designed to respond to the special characteristics of these features which can include: predominant architectural styles and/or building materials; architectural rhythm; distribution of building forms and heights; and heritage, architectural or cultural

value.

Local Policy

2.10 *Camden's Local Plan was adopted on the 3rd July 2017 and has replaced the Core Strategy and Camden Development Policies (adopted 2010) as the basis for planning decisions and future development in the borough. Relevant policies from the local plan are set out below*

2.11 Policy D2 Heritage

The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

2.12 Policy D2: Designated heritage assets

Designed heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings.

The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*

- c) *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

2.13 *Policy D2: Conservation Area*

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas.

The Council will:

- a) *require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*
- b) *resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;*
- c) *resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and*

- d) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage*

2.14 *Policy D2: Listed Buildings*

Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- a) resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;*
- b) resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and*
- c) resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.*

2.15 *Policy D2: Archaeology*

The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

Other Relevant Guidance

- 2.16 Of equal relevance is English Heritage's (now Historic England) 2008 document *Conservation Principles: Policy and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (English Heritage, April 2008). At paragraph 140, p.58, this states

that *'The greater the range and strength of heritage values attached to a place, the less opportunity there may be for change, but few places are so sensitive that they, or their settings present no opportunities for change'.*

- 2.17 *On the subject of listing, Historic England's website further reiterates that: 'Listing is not a preservation order, preventing change. It does not freeze a building in time . . .'*

3.0 Historic Background

- 3.1 The district of Bloomsbury is a mixed-use neighbourhood located in the London Borough of Camden. It is situated to the north of the 17th century area of Soho; to the northeast of Finsbury; to the south of national and international train links in Kings Cross, St Pancras and Euston; and to the west of Westminster.
- 3.2 Bloomsbury was originally called Lomsbury, or Lomesbury and the earliest written record of this is from the Domesday book of 1086, which recorded it as an area of vineyards and '*wood for 100 pigs*'. It was a medieval village with several manors and associated agricultural or pastoral lands. In 1201, the area was given the name Bloomsbury after Norman landowner William De Blemond, who owned the Manor of Tames in the vicinity of Bloomsbury Square.
- 3.2 Following the Dissolution of the monasteries, Bloomsbury was assigned to the 1st Earl of Southampton, Thomas Wriothesley, in 1550. In 1640, the 4th Earl of Southampton obtained a royal license to build a residence along Theobald's Road and known as Southampton House. Construction was not completed until 1660 due to the outbreak of Civil War. Following the Restoration, widespread development ensued throughout the area.
- 3.3 The development of Bloomsbury took inspiration from the success of Inigo Jones's Covent Garden (from the 1630s) and his introduction of Palladian architecture into England. Early development includes Bloomsbury Square, which was constructed in 1661 by the 4th Earl of Southampton - with terraced housing to the east and west - and Great Russell Street, constructed in 1670.
- 3.4 The mid-18th century Map of St. Andrews (**Figure 6**) shows that the area remained an open space, and to the south of the application site is a garden annotated as the 'Bowling Greens.' There is a dominant east-west thoroughfare illustrated by the

map and in turn annotated as Theobald's Road (subsequently widened in 1877-78). It is also annotated as the Kings Way; presumably because it was 'originally built as a royal route to James I's mansion of Theobalds in Hertfordshire.'

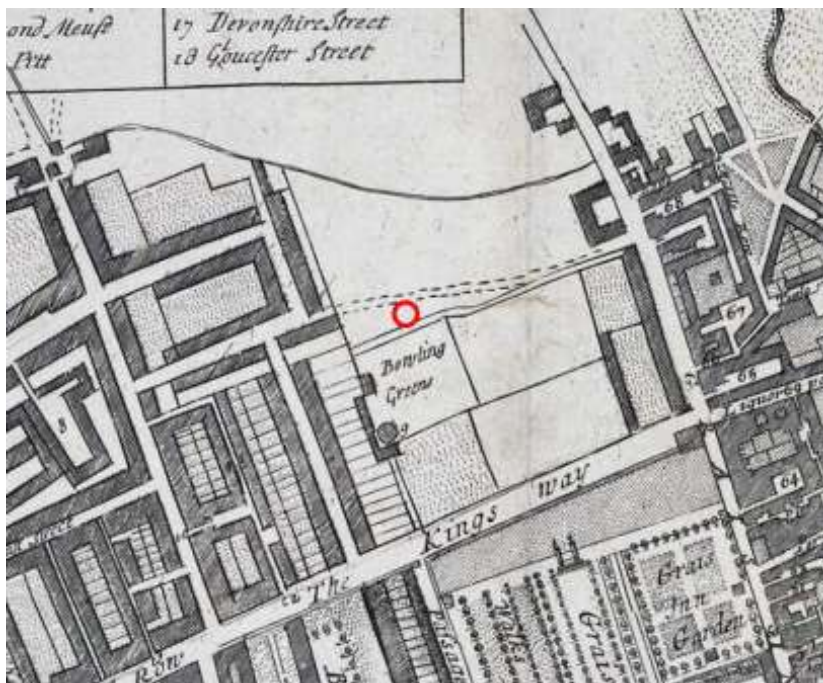


Figure 5: Locale as shown by the 1720s Map of St. Andrews



Figure 6: Extract from Rocque's Map, 1746

- 3.4 Rocque's Map of 1756 (**Figure 5**) shows that John Street is not yet developed and remains a large garden at this time. The area is nevertheless bisected east to west by an unnamed street (later referred to as Little James Street on the Harwood Map of 1799). The completion of Bedford Square in 1775-76 subsequently marked the systematic development of the area.
- 3.5 John Street is noted by the *Conservation Area Appraisal* (2011) to date from the mid 18th century. In 1792, twelve houses were built by Henry Doughty, which served to instigate the south end of Guilford Street. A map of 1799 (**Figure 7**) shows the early development of terraced townhouses on John Street. The application site is illustrated as one of the first buildings constructed to the north of the intersection with Little James Street (now Northington Street).



Figure 7: Harwood Map 1799



Figure 8: Greenwood Map 1828

- 3.6 By 1800, Bloomsbury was established as a residential area between the cities of Westminster and London. However, it had been developed to accommodate the aspiring middle-class and as such, was not as fashionable as St. James' or Mayfair. Notable developments include Montague Place and Keppel Street in 1800-1810, and Euston Square from 1800-1805.
- 3.7 The construction of Euston, King's Cross and St. Pancras stations along Bloomsbury's northern border helped further populate the area. By the Victorian period, the area was transformed from an inherently '*light and airy*' place to that of a significantly polluted locale. The rise in population also resulted in an increased number of religious buildings over the 19th century.
- 3.8 Much of the locale was built speculatively, albeit a substantial proportion of this development failed to attract buyers. Following the completion of Belsize Park and St. John's Wood, as a residential area, Bloomsbury decreased in desirability. As a result, the 19th century saw non-residential uses such as UCL, the British Museum, and Hospitals occupy former dwellings.
- 3.9 A historic map from 1828 (**Figure 8**) indicates an increase in development, wherein John Street is now entirely enclosed with terraced housing. It is categorised as a '*main street*' and a '*secondary thoroughfare*' by the *Conservation Area Appraisal* (2011). The street is distinctively wider than those that surround it, whilst hosting larger properties.
- 3.10 The growth of a number of aforementioned institutions transformed the locale into more of a mixed-use area than was originally intended. In the Victorian era, Bloomsbury therefore assumed more of an institutional and/or intellectual emphasis by accommodating institutions such as the British Museum and University College London.
- 3.11 With respect to the application site, the width of the terrace house is greater than its neighbours and there is a long extension running to the rear of the property, which in turn creates a more direct relationship with Little James Street (subsequently Northington Street), as illustrated on the OS Map of 1874-75 (**Figure 9**).



Figure 9: OS Map 1874-75

- 3.12 With the help of the Kyrle Society, former houses had also begun to be redeveloped to accommodate specialist hospitals around Queen Square and Great Ormond Street. In 1882, Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, the National Hospital, Italian Hospital and burial ground of St. George's Bloomsbury were transformed into a public garden.
- 3.13 At the turn of the century, the continual decline of residential properties resulted in the emergence of more commercial development. Purpose-built hotels and offices started to appear, these being further boosted by the arrival of the railways. The most notable of these is the Russell Hotel built in 1898 by Charles Fitzroy Doll.



Figure 10: OS Map 1916



Figure 11: OS Map 1937

- 3.14 The footprint of the application site (**see 3.11**) persisted into the 20th century. In 1916 (**Figure 10**), the rear of the application site has been extended with an adjacent property on Little James Street and there is no longer a garden. No plot boundaries indicate whether or not this property is independent or connected to the application site at this stage.
- 3.15 In 1937, this footprint persists (**Figure 11**) and in 1937 remains as such by 1952-1953 (**Figure 12**). This OS map sees Little James Street renamed to Northington Street, however there are no property numbers. Addresses on Northington Street jump from 14 to 10 and it may therefore be assumed that the extension behind the application site is 12 and 10 Northington Street.



Figure 12: Bomb Damage Map 1945



Figure 13: OS Map 1952-53

- 3.16 In the mid 20th century, Bloomsbury continued to be redeveloped for the needs of institutional uses, in addition to redevelopment following bomb damage. Although the application site itself remained unaffected, Bomb Damage mapping demonstrates the impact of this throughout the locale, specifically in terms of its relationship with Theobald's Road (**Figure 13**).
- 3.17 A change in building typology is also evident throughout the mid to late 20th century, wherein the local authority and private developers erected blocks of flats, whilst social housing was introduced to the area. The area gained international recognition with estates such as the Brunswick Centre and Lasdun Faculty of Education.
- 3.18 Euston Square was developed in the late 1960s as part of the station's redevelopment (only two lodges of the original station buildings survive), although slightly later plans for expansion of the British Museum to create a new British Library were thwarted by substantial local opposition.
- 3.19 The locale of the application site has grown substantially since development began in the 1660s. Notably, the presence of institutions such as UCL, the British Museum, hospitals, and Euston Road have redeveloped former dwellings in order to accommodate their institutional functions.
- 3.20 Otherwise, an overarching trend toward growth and redevelopment has persisted up until the present day. As a result, the uniformity envisioned for the area has been subsequently fragmented, whilst institutional and cultural uses have eroded the significance of earlier residential accommodation, which can be now seen to be relatively intermittent.
- 3.21 Whilst the application site has remained a residence and its original use therefore remains intact, the growth and evolution of Bloomsbury has been subject to continual change. 28 John Street has not remained unaffected by such intensification and has not merely been connected with Northington Street, but been further subdivided into self-contained apartments.

4.0 The Heritage Asset(s)

The Listed Building

- 4.1 It is demonstrated above that Bloomsbury is an inherently historic settlement exhibiting continuous evolution; as are the immediate surroundings of the application site, which forms part of a wider terrace designated Grade II on the 24th of October 1951. The list description for Nos. 22-28 John Street with Attached Railings may be summarised as follows:

'Terrace of 7 houses. c1800-19. Yellow and multi-coloured stock brick with stucco bands at 1st floor levels. Nos 27 & 28 with slated mansard roofs and dormers. 4 storeys and basements; Nos 27 & 28 with attics. 2 windows each; Nos 26 & 27, 3 windows each; No.28 double fronted with 5 windows. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars; 1st floors with cast-iron balconies, except No.28. Parapets. No.22: square-headed, architraved doorway with patterned rectangular fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on ground and 1st floors. Stairs with square balusters. No. 23: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on 1st and 2nd floors (original centres covered in). No.24: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces with original centres on ground floor. No.25: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces on ground floor. Good marble fireplace 1st floor front room with bas relief on front panel, reeded and with rosettes; original iron centre. Nos 26 & 27: round-arched doorways with reeded doorframes, lion mask stops, mutule cornice-heads, patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. No.27 with lamp-holder incorporated in fanlight. No.26 with fluted lead rainwater head. No.28: round-arched doorway with attached Doric columns carrying entablature; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Cornice and blocking course. Wrought-iron overthrow lamp-holder. Return to Northington Street with 1 window and mid C19 entrance with stucco surround and console-bracketed cornice. Dentilled cornices. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.'

Bloomsbury Conservation Area

- 4.2 The application site is located on the eastern edge of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, first designated in 1968 to '*protect elements of development from the Georgian and earlier eras.*' The *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy* was adopted in 2011 and supersedes the *Conservation Area Statement* from 1998.
- 4.3 Due to the size and complexity of the conservation area, it has been further sub-divided into fourteen sub-character areas. The application site lies within *sub-area 10: Great James Street/Bedford Row*.
- 4.4 Concerning the *character and appearance* of this sub-area, the appraisal summarises this as follows:
- 'The Great James Street and Bedford Row sub area was developed during the Georgian and Regency periods under various ownerships, although part of the street pattern was laid out earlier by Nicholas Barbon. The area has a clear street hierarchy structured on a grid layout. Bedford Row, Doughty Street and John Street are wide thoroughfares characterised by larger properties. There is no planned open space in the sub area, although the more formal streets are characterised by regularly spaced street trees, planted at regular intervals in the pavement.'*
- 4.5 With respect to the built environment more generally, the appraisal states:
- 'The historic built form comprises townhouses built in long terraces with rear mews. This fine grain remains an important characteristic, and the continuous building frontage created by the terraces creates a strong sense of enclosure. The townhouses, dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, are either of three or four storeys raised in basements fronted by cast-iron railings. Their vertically proportioned frontages adhere to classical architectural principles.'*
- 4.6 Turning specifically to John Street, the appraisal regards this as a '*main street*' and '*most of the buildings on these streets are listed, reflecting the high quality of the built environment. The streets are wide and grand, comprising mainly three- and four-storey*

Georgian terraced houses. A number of the corner plots were refaced in the 19th century and these alterations provide greater architectural emphasis on the street junctions ... Buildings on John Street are generally of four storeys with basements, some are stuccoed at ground floor and some have mansard roofs with dormer windows. A number of townhouses are of particular architectural significance and are thus listed grade II. The postwar buildings at No 1 and Nos 37-38 are of consistent scale and proportions and have classically influenced detailing. The later 19th century public house (No 11a) is more decorative and retains its traditional wooden ground-floor front. Whilst the office building at No 21a is significantly larger than its neighbours, rising to eight storeys. It has fine Art Deco influenced 1930s detailing, particularly around the main entrance and at roof level. It was listed grade II in September 2010 because it is "a stylish design characteristic of the 1930s, which responds in scale and materials to the streetscape of Georgian Bloomsbury, the quality of its sculptural embellishment and brickwork and its planning interest as an early mixed use development of commercial offices, flats and a public house which was particularly forward-looking for its time."*

- 4.7 Within this context, the application site is not explicitly recognised as a contributor towards the conservation area. Although no specific guidance or character analysis is found for the site itself, when considered in its totality, the terrace conforms to the more general aspects of its character and appearance.

28 John Street

- 4.8 Given the account set out above, the application site maintains a number of characteristics recognised as contributing toward the significance of the listed building. For instance, this includes the '*round-arched doorway with attached Doric columns carrying entablature; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Cornice and blocking course.*' However, there is no longer a lamp-holder, some brickwork has patently been rebuilt at upper levels, whilst the list description omits to note the property's integral and therefore important relationship with Nos. 12-14 Northington Street.
- 4.9 As noted in **Section 3.0**, the application site was the first of all townhouses encompassed by the listing to be completed. This is best demonstrated by the Harwood map of 1799 (**Figure 7**). Evidence concerning the completion of this terrace of housing is provided by the Greenwood map of 1828 (**Figure 8**).

- 4.10 By 1875, the OS map shows a small, narrow, rear extension added to the application site of which the south elevation fronts onto Little James Street (now Northington Street). The remainder of the property remained a rear garden. This layout remained intact up until the end of the 19th century.



Figure 14: OS Map 1874-75



Figure 15: OS Map 1952

- 4.11 The aforementioned extension evolved to become a physically attached property, yet one that nevertheless remained independent from No. 28 John Street. This was then converted to two separate houses. Evidence of this phasing can still be observed on the southwest corner of the application site, where brickwork patently changes between ground and first floor,

and that at second floor level. This is further confirmed by fenestration, where windows to the Northington Street elevation are also later, with arches being cambered rather than of a flat/splayed/gauged configuration.

4.12 The application site and adjoining properties have therefore been subject to ongoing change that can be seen to have eroded and impinge upon both the Grade II listed building and its setting. This is best confirmed by the recent planning history of these properties, as set out below.

4.13 Relevant planning applications for the site include the following:

1. *12 Northington Street and 28 John Street*
Installation of single storey glass conservatory at ground floor level in rear lightwell of 12 Northington Street together with partial infill at first floor level, following removal of existing external staircase and first floor balcony, in addition to various internal alterations and new access door from 28 John Street at roof level to the existing roof terrace of single dwelling house (Class C3). Planning Application No: 2013/0469/L. Date Granted: 24/04/2013
2. *Flat 5, 28 John Street & 12-14 Northington Street*
Internal alterations to No. 28 John Street to include 2x partitions at Flat 5 and external alterations at 12-14 Northington Street to include erection of mansard roof, erection of metal balustrades, replacement of windows to match existing timber windows at front elevation and relocation and creation of window opening to the rear. Planning application No:2015/6518/L. Date Granted: 07/06/2016
3. *12 Northington Street and 28 John Street*
Installation of single storey glass conservatory at ground floor level in rear lightwell of 12 Northington Street together with partial infill at first floor level, following removal of existing external staircase and first floor balcony, in addition to various internal alterations and new access door from 28 John Street at roof level to the existing roof terrace of single dwelling house (Class C3). Planning Application No: 2013/0964/P. Date Granted: 24/04/2013
4. *12-14 Northington Street & Flat 5, 28 John Street*

- Erection of mansard roof extension to include dormer windows and inset roof terraces at second floor level, erection of metal balustrades at second floor level and alterations to front and rear elevations of adjoining dwellings and internal alterations to Flat 5, 28 John Street. Planning Application No: 2016/7064/L. Date Granted: 24/02/2017*
5. 12-14 Northington Street
Partial infill of rear lightwell with single storey suspended extension following removal of external existing staircase and first floor balcony and removal of 2x rear windows at ground floor level. Planning Application No: 2017/0391/L. Date Granted: 27/02/2017
 6. 12-14 Northington Street
Erection of mansard roof extension to include dormer windows and inset roof terraces at second floor level, erection of metal balustrades at second floor level and alterations to front and rear elevation of adjoining dwellings. Planning Application No: 2016/6499/P. Date Granted: 24/02/2017
 7. 12-14 Northington Street
Partial infill of rear lightwell with single storey suspended extension following removal of external existing staircase and first floor balcony and removal of 2x rear windows at ground floor level. Planning Application No: 2016/6500/P. Date Granted: 27/02/2017
 8. Flat 2 28 John Street
Internal Alterations. Planning Application No: 2018/3082/L. Date Granted: 03/09/2018
 9. 28 John Street
Internal Alterations to Flat 1 at Lower Ground Floor level. Planning Application No: 2019/3146/L. Date Granted: 22/07/2019
 10. Flat 5 28 John Street
Internal alterations to Flat 5. Planning Application No: 2020/5684/L. Date Granted: 19/01/2021
 11. 28 John Street
Internal Alterations at basement and ground floor level. Planning Application No: 2015/3784/L. Date Approved: 11/08/2015

12. 28 John Street

Internal alterations at ground floor level including re-positioning the kitchen and new entrance internal doors and walls.

Planning Application No:2017/4316/L. Date Granted: 02/11/2017

13. Others: 2012/5565/P

- 4.14 Although the application site can in general terms be seen to still accord with the list description and the character and appearance of the locale as this is outlined in the Conservation Area Appraisal, it is made clear by both fabric and documentary evidence that the building has been subject to prolonged periods of alteration and/or reconfiguration since its original construction. Further to this, the planning history of individual apartments at 28 John Street shows that the former townhouse has been subdivided in recent history. Notable changes include subdivision and other more peripheral phasing to the rear and/or Northington Street aspect of the site.
- 4.15 Therefore, when considered in totality the site is not without incremental change that is understood to have departed the property from the overarching character, appearance and heritage value of the terrace and wider locale. However, its contribution toward the terrace as a whole and the consequent role of this as an architectural set piece is not disputed. Therefore - with references to *paragraphs 131 & 196* of the *NPPF* (2019) - there exists the opportunity for new development at the site to enable optimum viable use consistent with its conservation, and that will in turn assist a positive contribution to the wider designated historic environment.

5.0 Assessment of Proposals

- 5.1 Proposals for 28 John Street seek to obtain planning and listed building consent for the adaptive reuse of the pavement vaults at lower ground floor level of no. 28 John Street. In light of these proposals, the building's history and/or architecture has been considered against the relevant regulatory framework in order to propose appropriate design solutions that seek the preservation and/or enhancement of all aforementioned heritage assets.
- 5.2 The scheme currently being proposed would provide additional useable space at lower ground floor level via the repurposing of existing, redundant pavement vaults - currently tending toward continuing deterioration - to functional, useable space. In this respect, it is widely recognised that the use of fabric – particularly vacant, deteriorating fabric – and their associated maintenance and upkeep is a matter of best conservation practice.
- 5.3 With current proposals, the vaults are intended to act as an annex to the ground and **lower ground level apartment** of 28 John Street. To achieve this, the scheme proposes the excavation of floor levels currently serving the existing pavement vaults in order to render the space usable via comfortable and credibly functioning floor to ceiling heights. Access into the pavement vaults would be enabled via a staircase and door in the end vault that currently accommodates a stair.
- 5.4 By means of a considered and therefore high-quality design, the more distinctive aspects of the vaults in the form of their internal arches will be made explicit and/or legible via the replacement of their existing brick elevations with glazed sections. This will enable their internal arches to be visible from not only lower ground floor level, but also in glimpsed views from the wider streetscape via the lightwell, which will more explicitly showcase these unique historic features to passing pedestrians.
- 5.5 As a result, the listed building, the immediate setting of this, and the overarching conservation area will assume far greater visual interest, both intrinsically and in terms of their contribution toward the wider built and/or historic environment. This will encourage the observer to engage more directly with what are otherwise relatively obscure lower levels and/or features.

Via the use of glazing - which will assist said visual interest and/or greater legibility - this high quality design measure will not only preserve but enhance and better reveal the pavement vaults and, in turn, the significance and/or heritage value of the historic environment comprising this particular locale.

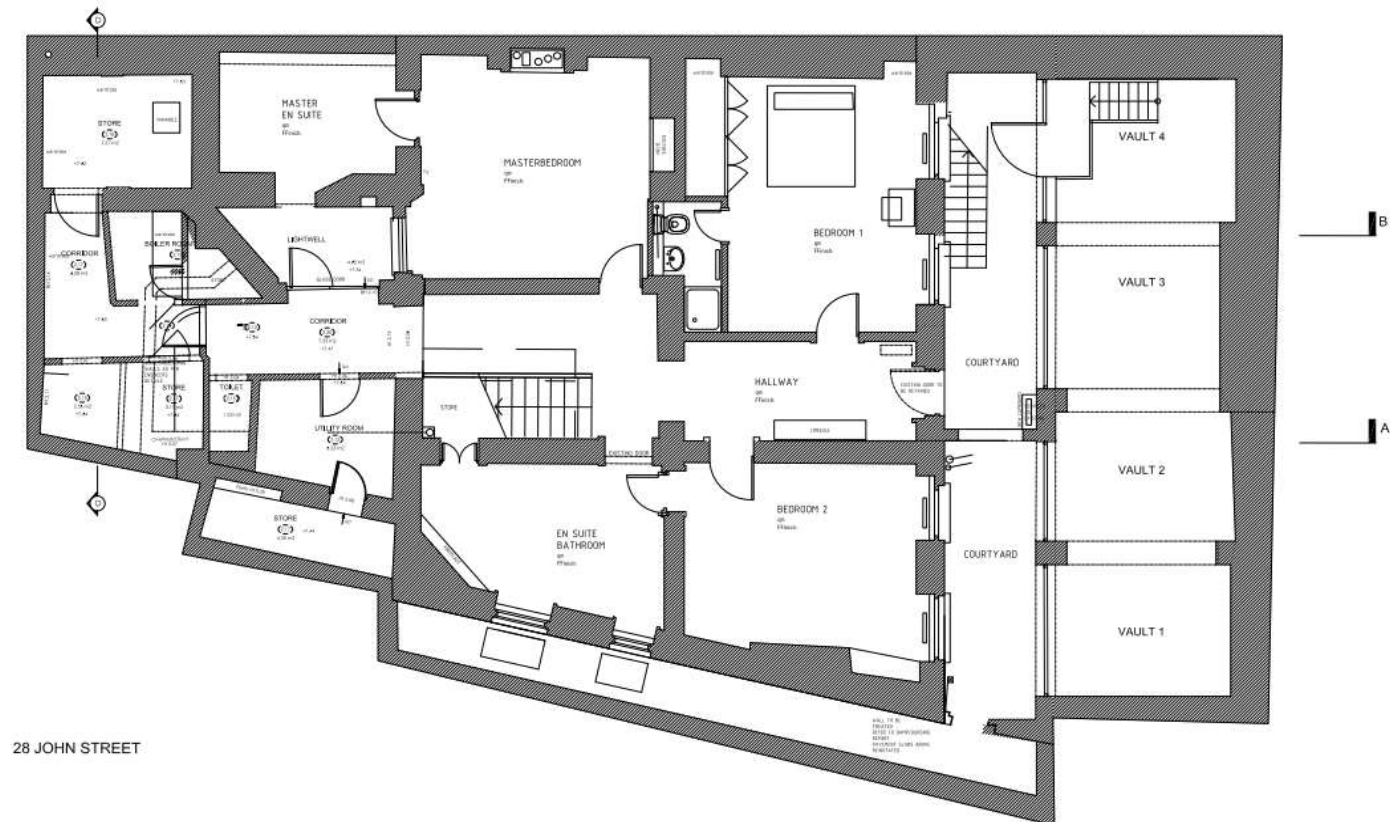


Figure 16: Proposed Conversion of the Pavement Vaults to Functional Spaces

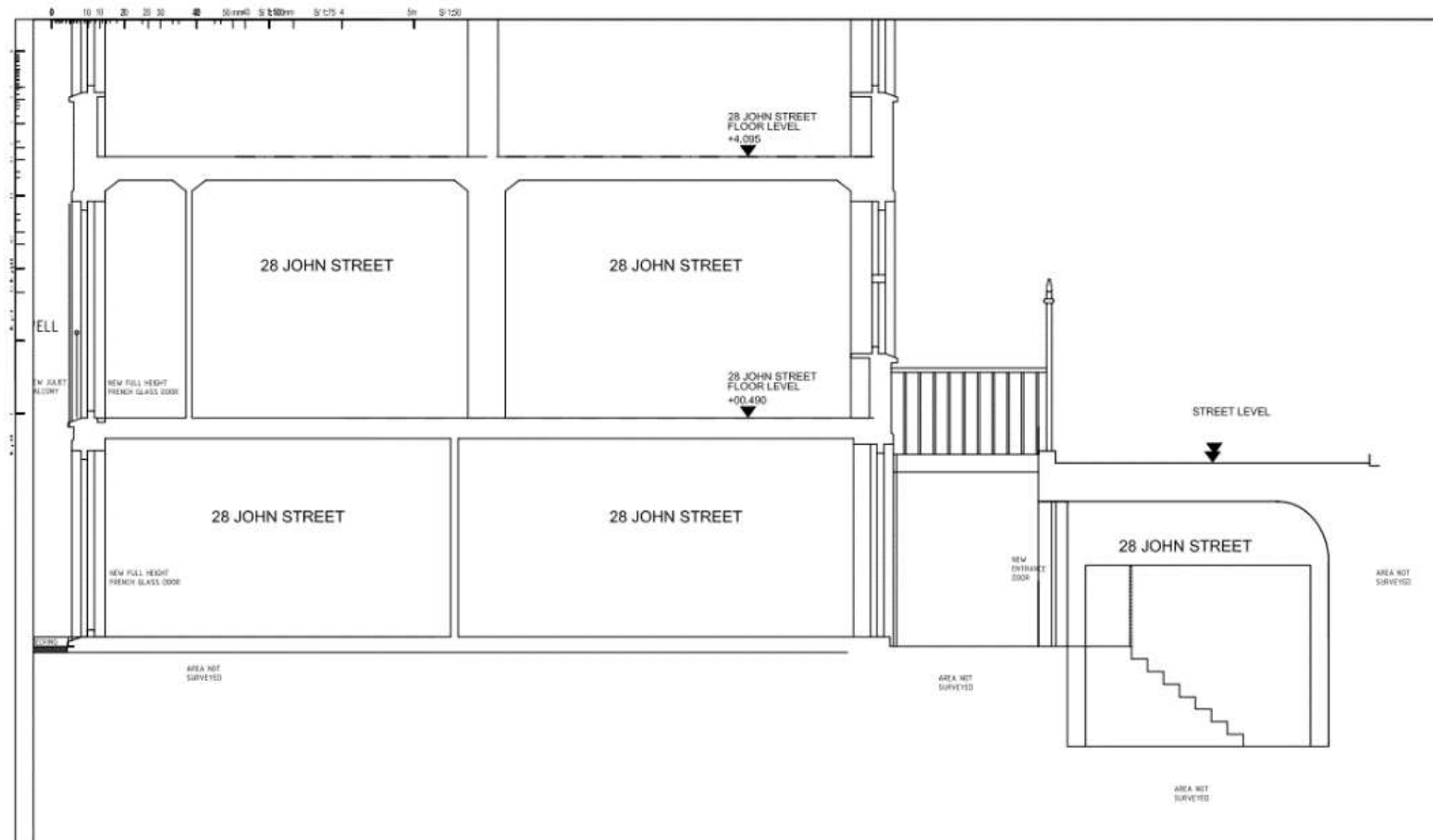


Figure 17: Proposed Section of the Vaults' Excavation

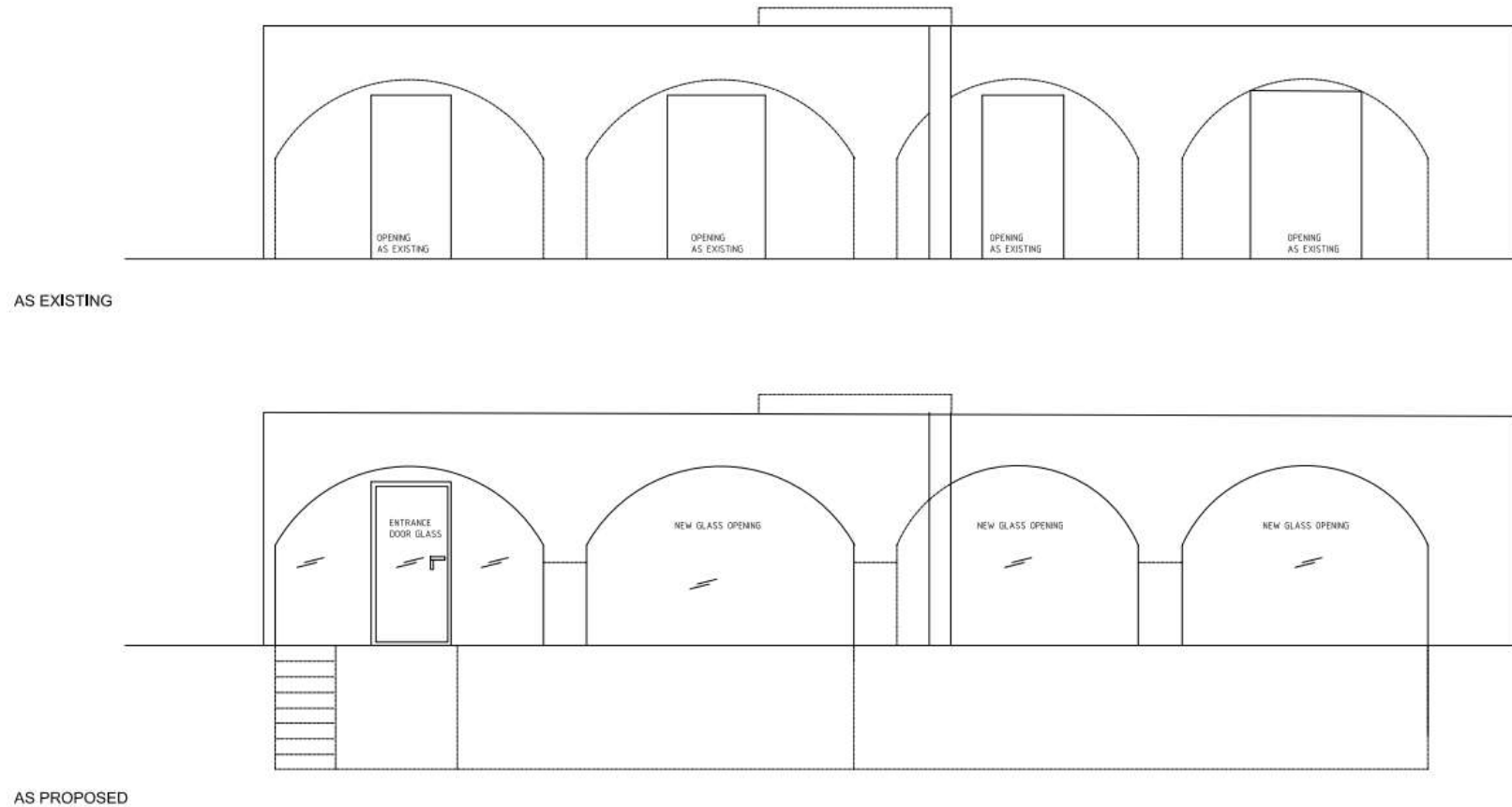


Figure 18: Proposed Section of the Vaults

- 5.5 Due to the concealed nature of the vaults - when considered in conjunction with the settings of adjoining and/or surrounding listed buildings and the wider character and appearance of the *Bloomsbury Conservation Area* more generally - the high-quality design measures here being proposed ensure that the heritage assets and their special interest or significance are safeguarded. As such, proposals both respond to and respect these national designations and would not form a dominant feature within either the site or throughout the wider locale.
- 5.6 Whilst it is acknowledged that proposals would affect the original fabric of the pavement vaults, as a result of their more utilitarian function and/or role at the site, said fabric and its constituent parts are not considered to be of an interest or significance equal to that of their host, the principal building comprising no. 28 John Street. They are not included in the relevant list description (being relatively unnoteworthy more generally) and neither are they remarked upon by the relevant *Conservation Area Appraisal* (2011). They are of a comparatively low value to any identifiable hierarchy of significance.
- 5.7 The pavement vaults do not therefore contribute in any meaningful way toward the overarching significance of the listed building as a designated - and as such - nationally acknowledged heritage asset. Nevertheless, the intention of the proposal is to showcase the vaults as a significant (if lesser) feature, whilst adapting these to render a further, useable, functioning space, whilst creating a more dynamic experience both within the listed building, and from the wider streetscape of the conservation area.
- 5.8 From a policy perspective, the use of the pavement vaults accords with the requirements of *Policy D3* of the *London Plan* where proposals '*respond to the existing character of a place by identifying the special and valued features and characteristics that are unique to the locality and respect, enhance and utilise the heritage assets and architectural features that contribute towards the local character (quality and character)*'.
- 5.9 With respect to relevant guidance contained within the *NPPF* (re: *paragraph 185*), proposals have also taken account of the '*desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset*', as has the '*desirability for new development to*

make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.' It is further considered that full opportunity has also been taken to *'make a positive contribution to and better reveal the significance of the asset'* (NPPF, para 200). Furthermore, merely negligible physical works or impacts would occur to the listed building, whilst the setting of this and other nearby/overarching assets would be enhanced, where proposals would make a positive contribution toward local character and distinctiveness via a considered design.

- 5.10 In further accordance with *Policy D3* of the *London Plan*, the proposals have taken into account development that will *'make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites...'* The proposal presented therefore seeks to *'enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape.'* Furthermore, the proposed legibility of the pavement vaults will ensure a *'positive reciprocal relationships between what happens inside the buildings and outside in the public realm to generate liveliness and interest.'*
- 5.11 Given the account set out above, proposals utilise high quality design measures that can be seen to have drawn upon principles of sustainability and as such seek the long-term preservation of the structure via not merely the vaults' conversion and reuse, but also via encouragement of the property's long-term, committed ownership; particularly where no harm would result to either Grade II listed 28 John Street or the wider conservation area. As a result, proposals ensure that the redevelopment of the pavement vaults will not merely respect but both preserve and enhance the wider historic environment.

7.0 Summary

- 7.1 No. 28 John Street was constructed in the late 18th century and forms one component part of a row of terraced townhouses situated within Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The properties' intrinsic value and further contribution toward the wider historic environment is recognised via its national listing (Grade II) and therefore protection in accordance with the *Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.
- 7.2 The account given above has discussed and established the nature and/or extent of those changes that have occurred both to the locale and interior of the application site. This demonstrates that the application site has persisted in residential use, although the growth and associated evolution of wider Bloomsbury has been subject to considerable overriding change. At the application site, the intensification of development in the area more generally is best evidenced by both no. 28's relationship with Northington Street and the property's subdivision and conversion to self-contained flats.
- 7.3 The nature and/or extent of change at the application site and throughout the local is not merely illustrated by documentary evidence, but can be seen to be further confirmed by the physical fabric of the property and its immediate locale. This shows that although the application site still accords with both the list description and the character and appearance outlined by the Conservation Area Appraisal, it is nevertheless clear that the building has been subject to prolonged periods of alteration and/or reconfiguration since its original construction.
- 7.4 Whilst the pavement vaults themselves are understood to occupy a relatively low position in any hierarchy of significance in relation to either the listed building or conservation area, via the high-quality design of proposals, these features may nevertheless serve to enhance the listed building and its conservation area setting by placing visual emphasis upon a historic feature that would otherwise remain hidden and continue to decay.
- 7.5 Through the use of glazing, the pavement vaults may be exhibited and therefore result in a far more dynamic and visually

interesting contribution toward the historic and/or built environment of the locale than at present, thus enabling the direct enhancement of all relevant heritage assets, whilst preserving the significance of these by means of the vaults retention coupled with negligible physical impacts more generally. As such the proposals would both preserve and enhance the character and appearance of these designations whilst not adversely affecting any special interest inherent to these.

- 7.6 Proposals may therefore be seen to respond to both the *Act* and wider regulatory framework by both preserving and enhancing relevant designations; specifically by means of enabling the continued and optimum viable use of the building, whilst effecting both visual and physical improvements there. This where *Paragraph 185* of the *NPPF* sets out that the relevant local authority should take account of '*the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*'.
- 7.7 In sum, proposals have responded positively to the site, its locale and historic context, by seeking to preserve and enhance the listed property and the contribution this makes toward the wider conservation area designation. For this reason, the principle of works are not considered to be at odds with the significance inherent there.

8.o Sources

BHO. (2020, May 6). Bloomsbury. Retrieved from British History Online: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol4/pp480-489>

Camden. (2011). Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy. London: Camden Council.

English Heritage. (April 2008). Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance For Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment. English Heritage, now Historic England.

GLA. (2021). The London Plan. London: Greater London Authority.

Historic England. (2016). Making Changes to Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 2. Historic England.

Historic England. (2017). The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition). Historic England.

MHCLG. (February 2019). National Planning Policy Framework. London: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (1990).

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

TBE. (2020, May 6). THE HISTORY OF THE BLOOMSBURY AREA. Retrieved from The Bedford Estates: <https://www.bedfordstates.com/bloomsbury/history/>

Appendix 1: List Summary

Number 22 to 28 and Attached Railings.

Heritage Category: Listed Building

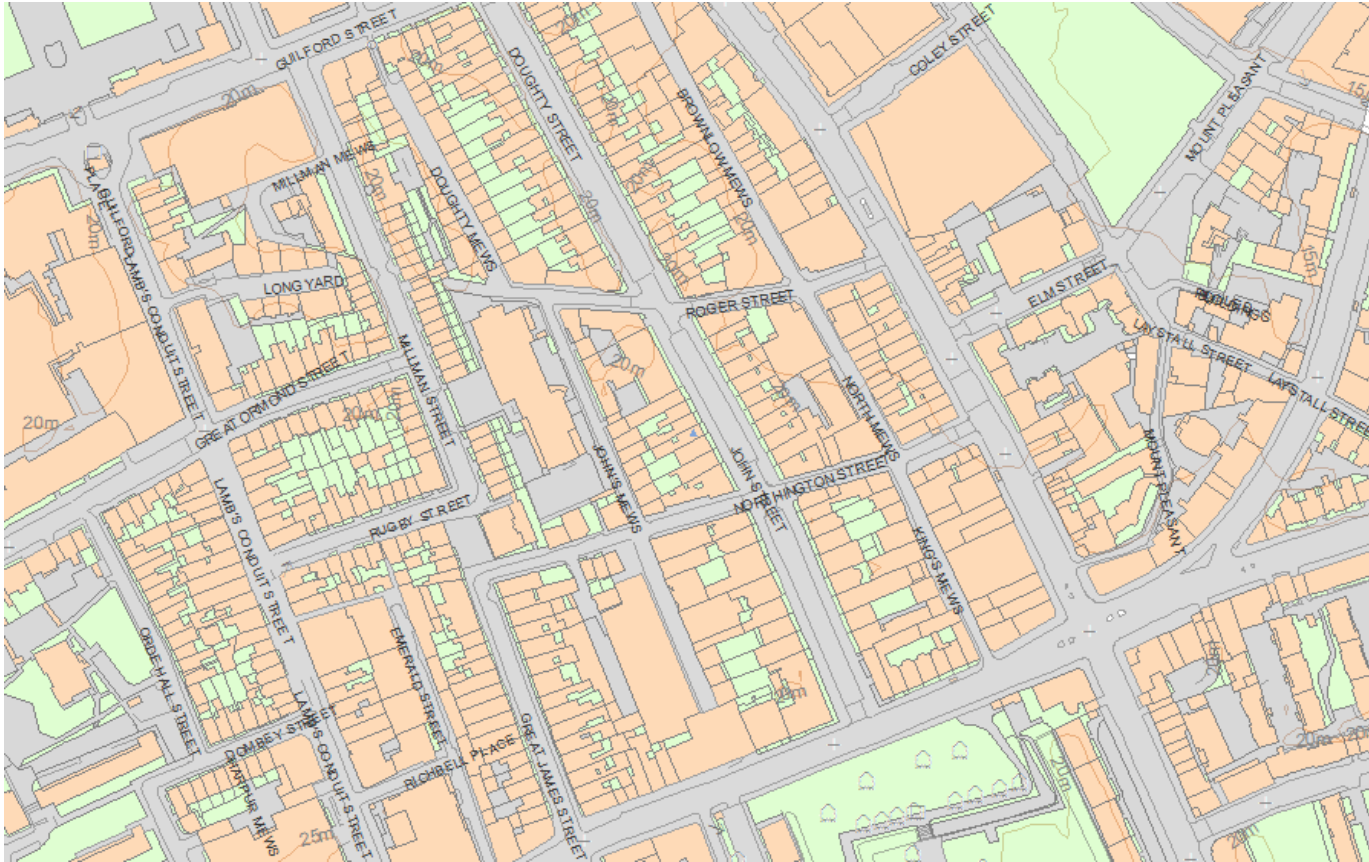
Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1379157

Date first listed: 24-Oct-1951

Statutory Address: NUMBERS 22 TO 28 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 22-28, JOHN STREET

Map



© Crown Copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.
© British Crown and SeaZone Solutions Limited 2021. All rights reserved. Licence number 102006.006.
Use of this data is subject to [Terms and Conditions](#).

Location

Statutory Address: NUMBERS 22 TO 28 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 22-28, JOHN STREET

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden (London Borough)

National Grid Reference: TQ 30821 82061

Details

CAMDEN TQ3082SE JOHN STREET 798-1/96/944 (West side) 24/10/51 Nos.22-28 (Consecutive) and attached railings

GV II

Terrace of 7 houses. c1800-19. Yellow and multi-coloured stock brick with stucco bands at 1st floor levels. Nos 27 & 28 with slated mansard roofs and dormers. 4 storeys and basements; Nos 27 & 28 with attics. 2 windows each; Nos 26 & 27, 3 windows each; No.28 double fronted with 5 windows. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars; 1st floors with cast-iron balconies, except No.28. Parapets. No.22: square-headed, architraved doorway with patterned rectangular fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on ground and 1st floors. Stairs with square balusters. No.23: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on 1st and 2nd floors (original centres covered in). No.24: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces with original centres on ground floor. No.25: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces on ground floor. Good marble fireplace 1st floor front room with bas relief on front panel, reeded and with rosettes; original iron centre. Nos 26 & 27: round-arched doorways with reeded doorframes, lion mask stops, mutule cornice-heads, patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. No.27 with lamp-holder incorporated in fanlight. No.26 with fluted lead rainwater head. No.28: round-arched doorway with attached Doric columns carrying entablature; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Cornice and blocking course. Wrought-iron overthrow lamp-holder. Return to Northington Street with 1 window and mid C19 entrance with stucco surround and console-bracketed cornice.

Dentilled cornices. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

Listing NGR: TQ3082582055

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 478524

Legacy System: LBS

Legal This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

End of official listing

© The Heritage Advisory Ltd. / m. 07951 926869 / e. msanderson@theheritageadvisory.co.uk