

**ADDRESS: FLAT 10, 23-26 GREAT JAMES STREET, LONDON, EC1V 2QA**  
**NOTE: THE SITE INCLUDES 25&26 GREAT JAMES STREET**

**PROPOSAL: EXTENSION TO EXISTING RESIDENTIAL UNIT**

## **HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**407A-HS-APRIL2013**

### 1.0 Summary

The flat is addressed 23-24 Great James Street, which is a grade 2 listed building, but the flat extends over the roof of 25 and 26 Great James Street. Number 25 is part of the same listing as 23 and 24 and is grade 2, however number 26 forms part of a terrace of houses (26-37 and 39-40) that are grade 2\* listed. The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation area. The details cited within the listed building reports for 23-25 relate to the front elevations and attached railings, which are not effected by the proposals. The listed building report for number 26 notes the interior details of the 'fine panelling' and 'staircases with mostly twisted balusters, column newels and carved brackets to treads'. There are no changes to the communal areas within the application and the only external changes relate to an area at the rear of the building on the roof.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy report sets out details of the important aspects of the area, which it describes as 'Sub Area 10'. There are no specific details given in relation to the rear elements of the properties along Great James Street and the extension, as proposed in the application, does not adversely effect the details described within the document.

This document should be read alongside the Design and Access Statement and Drawings submitted as part of the Planning Application and further detailing the proposals.

This statement provides an assessment of the proposed development in terms of its effects on the architectural and historical significance of the building. It demonstrates that the proposed external and internal alterations are based on a full analysis of the architectural and historic interest of the listed building in compliance with paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).

Please note that this application follows a previously approved scheme, reference 2013/1773, which is essentially the same except for the introduction of a roof terrace. This is explained further in the application documents and design and access statement.

## 2.0 Policy Context

The following provides an overview of policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of the design and heritage aspects of the proposal.

### **Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest over and above that provided by development control. Section 7 of the Act states that *“no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised”*.

Section 16 of the Act places a statutory requirement on local planning authorities to *“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”*.

Under Section 72 of the Act local planning authorities are required to pay special attention to *“the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance”* of conservation areas.

### **National Planning Guidance**

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) sets out central government's guidance on the conservation of the historic environment. The NPPF is a material consideration that must be taken into account in development management decisions. Conservation areas and listed buildings are defined as "heritage assets". The NPPF sets out a number of "core planning principles" including that planning should: conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require an applicant to *“describe of the significance of the heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting”*. It notes that *“the level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”*.

In determining planning applications, local planning 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;

- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. [para 131]

## **The London Plan**

Policy 7.8 of the London Plan (2011), Heritage Assets and Archaeology, states at parts C and D: Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate. Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

## **Summary**

Based on the above, the heritage aspects of the proposal need to be assessed against the following "tests".

- i) What is the significance of the listed building in terms of its physical fabric and historical interest;
- ii) What is the significance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area;
- iii) Would the proposal preserve or enhance the special interest of the listed building. Will internal features of significance be retained, protected during building works, and reinstated where possible?
- iv) Would the proposed alterations preserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area?

### 3.0 Significance of Heritage Assets

The application property is formed of part of a grade II listed building and part of a grade 2\* listed building and is situated in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. There are therefore two heritage assets that need to be considered in this instance.

#### Listed building

The application property is located on the western side of Great James Street towards the northern end of the road and the junction with Northington Street. The application site straddles two separately listed rows of terraced properties, 23-25 Great James Street and 26-37, 39-40 Great James Street. There are a number of listed buildings on the road. 23, 24 and 25, with attached railings, was listed as a group on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1951. The listed description states:

*Formerly 3 terraced houses, now 2. C20 reconstruction in early C18 manner. Nos 23/24 now converted into one with a central doorcase.*

*Yellow stock brick with red brick dressings. Tiled mansard roofs, No.23/24 with dormers.*

*EXTERIOR: 4 storeys, attic and basements. Nos 23/24 5 windows; No.25, 3 windows. Gauged red brick flat arches to flush frame 2-pane sash windows. Frames reeded with roundels. Parapets. No.23/24 doorway with rusticated stucco surround and reused wooden doorcase with attached Ionic columns carrying open segmental pediment with pulvinated frieze and modillion cornice with phoenix in relief in tympanum, round-arched doorway with panelled jambs, fanlight and panelled door. Doorcase originally from No.40 Great Ormond Street (not included). No.25, reused early C18 wooden doorcase with architraves, enriched carved brackets carrying dentil hood with panelled soffit, patterned fanlight and panelled door.*

*INTERIORS: not inspected.*

*SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with spike finials to areas. Included for group value and doorcases. Nos 23 and 24 were listed on 14/05/74.*

26-37 and 39-40 Great James Street, with attached railings, was listed as a group on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1957. The listed description states:

14 terraced houses. 1720-24. For J Metcalfe.

*Brown brick, upper storeys with some refacing in multi-coloured, yellow (Nos 28, 34 & 40) and brown stock brick (1st floor and above of No.30). 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Nos 27-38 and 40, good wood architraved doorcases with enriched, carved brackets carrying hoods with panelled soffits, most with patterned fanlights and panelled doors. No.27, C20 hood with shaped brackets; No.39, architraved doorcase with pilasters, plain cornice, radial fanlight and panelled door. Red segmental arches and dressings to flush framed windows, No.35 upper storeys with glazing bars.*

*Some frames reeded with roundels. Parapets. Some original lead rainwater heads with lion masks.*

*INTERIORS: mostly having fine panelling. Staircases mostly with twisted balusters, column newels and carved brackets to treads.*

*SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with turn or torch flambe finials to areas.*

The listings refer to items of the front elevation and railings but does not offer anything of note in relation to the rear of the property which is much more plain and built in a more cost effective manner. This is the same as the roof areas and the property on which the proposals are based.

The proposals, as detailed within the Design and Access Statement and further on the application drawings detail the extent of the additions proposed as being situated solely to the rear of the property and not effecting anything on the front elevation. The pitched roof to one side of the property is also maintained and the proposed extension is set back from the facades.

No interior features of note are mentioned within the listing referring to 23-25 Great James Street and none were noticed when a survey of the interior of the property was carried out. It may be advantageous to carry out a survey with the Conservation Area to confirm this at some point. The interior of the flat forming the proposal site appeared to have developed over time and does not appear to have original features or anything of note. All floors were carpeted and walls have been painted recently.

The plan form of the building is maintained in terms of scale and openings and none of the features of merit are altered or effected by the proposals

### **Bloomsbury Conservation Area**

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and has been extended extensively at various times. The area is approximately 160 hectares, which extends from Lincoln's Inn Fields and High Holbrun to Euston Road and from King's Cross Road to Tottenham Court Road. It was primarily introduced to protect elements of development from the Georgian and earlier eras. The Council's appraisal states:

*"The progression of development across the Conservation Area illustrates the subtle changes in taste and style in domestic architecture that occurred throughout the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries".*

The appraisal details areas with specific reference to the important features. Sub Area 10 relates to Great James Street and Bedford Row and 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 document also makes reference to materials, railings and the grain of the street pattern as important features.

#### 4.0 The Proposal

As detailed in the application drawings and the Design and Access Statement, the proposal comprises extending the residential unit over the flat roof to create a two bed flat with a larger kitchen and living space and a rear terrace area.

The extension is not visible from the front of the building and so does not affect the details cited in the listed building or conservation area appraisal. The scale of the building as viewed from the rear is maintained, with the extension set below the existing parapet line and approximately the same as the roof line of the neighbouring property. This can be seen on drawing 407-PA.14.

#### 5.0 Conclusion

Physical changes to the building are limited to the rear of the property and are limited in nature and no alterations are proposed to the street-facing façade.

Minor internal changes are proposed, but no features of merit were discovered during the survey or are noted within the listed building description referring to 23-25 Great James Street.

Overall the proposal would improve the residential unit for our client whilst not affecting the character and features of note that relate to the building. For those reasons it complies with relevant policies.