

**70 Great Russell Street
London
WC1B 3BN**

**Proposed Change of Use
of the
Basement and Ground Floor
to a
Dental Surgery**

Design, Access, Heritage & Planning Statement



February 2012

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1. Background

No 70 Great Russell Street forms part of a terrace of 6 former houses (Nos 66-71) by John Nash that has a Grade 2 statutory Listing (List entry Number: 1330369). It represents Nash's first work and is one of the earliest examples of developments of stuccoed houses in London. The terrace is located within the designated Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The main features of historic interest are external on the front façade, including the railings. The building has been much altered at the rear and also internally, although a few interesting original details do remain inside.

The building fronts Great Russell Street and backs on to Pied Bull Yard (sometimes called Place), a pedestrianised precinct linked to Bury Place and Bloomsbury Square.

The ground and basement floors have been in office use (B1a) since the late 1980's when the building was put back into use following the abandonment of the British Library comprehensive redevelopment proposal for the area south of the British Museum and Pied Bull Yard was formed.

The rear room on the ground floor is currently let on short preferential terms to an artist and is accessed direct from Pied Bull Place.

The upper floors of the building are in residential use and are not affected by the proposal.

All the uses share the original main building entrance on Great Russell Street and there is a secondary ground floor entrance to the offices at the rear from Pied Bull Yard.

Escape from the basement level is via an external stairway at the rear leading to Pied Bull Yard. The building's original secondary access/escape route from the basement in the front light well on Great Russell Street has been removed, although the gate in the railings remains.

The existing owners of the ground floor and basement, who have been in occupation since the late 1980s, are moving and selling their interest in the property. The prospective purchasers wish to convert, refurbish and use the entire ground floor and basement area as a dental surgery (D1 use) to serve the local community.

2. Proposal

The proposal is to change the use of the ground floor and basement areas with a combined total area of c.89sm from B1a to D1 to allow their use as a dental surgery .

The reception with public access to the surgery would be from Pied Bull Yard utilising the existing glazed frontage and doorway currently shared by the artist.

Internally, the space would be reconfigured on both levels to provide consulting rooms and ancillary facilities and accommodation. (please refer to submitted drawings) No demolition or structural alterations are proposed to the existing structure or fabric of the building.

3. Heritage Assets

The proposed change of use would have no impact on the external appearance of the building and no external changes or alterations would be required save for signage which would be subject to a separate planning application.

Internally the change of use would provide an opportunity to restore and save the remaining historic features and details of the space and exploit and display these as part of an attractive and sympathetic interior design.

4. External Signage

On the Great Russell Street elevation there are a number of existing signs which are not particularly in keeping with the building's Listed status nor the character of the area.

The existing signs would be removed and replaced with a more appropriate professional services plaque and a hanging sign displaying the name of the surgery and providing details such as opening hours.

On Pied Bull Place the existing sign would be replaced with the surgery's name above the doorway in a sympathetic manner matching the character of the surrounding heritage signage.

5. Use

The existing ground floor and basement space has office use with a single room on the ground floor used occasionally by an artist as a studio. Evidence is provided that there is an ample supply of such space in the area with little or no long term demand for it.

Evidence is also provided that Camden is deficient in dental care facilities and the proposed use would provide a much needed health facility in the area. It would also be in keeping with the character of the area and would contribute to the activity in and vitality of Pied Bull Yard which the current use fails to do. It would also increase employment on the site and provide training opportunities.

6. Access

The site is highly accessible with excellent tube and bus links all within a sort walking distance.

There is a level access to the ground floor space from Pied Bull Yard which would be used by visitors and patients.

7. Planning

The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the application site the relevant development plan comprises the CLG National Planning Policy Framework and the LB Camden's Local Development Framework

NPPF — Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Section 14 of the **NPPF** assert that:

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

For decision-taking this means:

...approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

LDF — Policy DP13 Employment Premises

Although there is a presumption in Policy DP13 against the loss of business sites and uses, it goes on to state that on sites suitable only for office (B1a) use '...the Council may allow a change to permanent residential uses or community uses....'

The commentary goes on to state that where a change to a non-business use is proposed, the applicant must demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that there is no realistic prospect of demand to use the site for an employment use.

Conclusions

The existing office space is under utilised by the owner and now provides minimal employment.

The existing owner has been unable to dispose of the space for employment use as there is no demand and an over supply of similar accommodation in the area.

The artist occupies the studio room occasionally on a short term tenancy basis on a non-commercial rent and this is not a viable long term use. It also restricts beneficial use of the space as a whole.

The applicant proposes to put the space back into long term beneficial use as a dental surgery which is much needed in the area. Although not a defined 'business' use, it will nevertheless create employment with eight jobs and provide opportunities for training.

Such a proposal complies fully with the aims and aspirations of both National and Local planning policy.

7. Site Identification

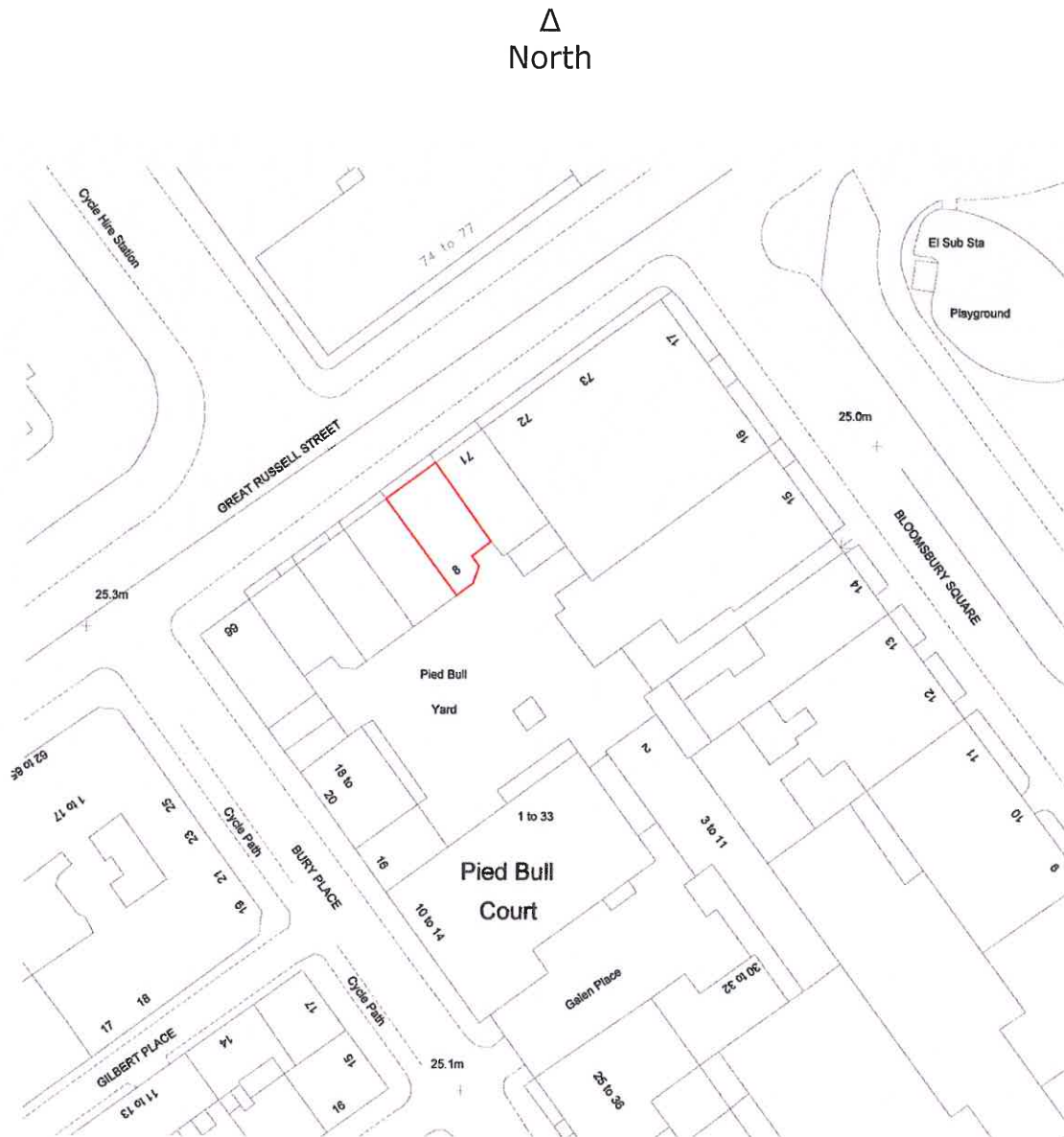


Fig. 1 Site Location Plan
(NB No 70 Great Russell Street outlined in red)

8. Existing Building Floor Plans

GREAT RUSSELL STREET

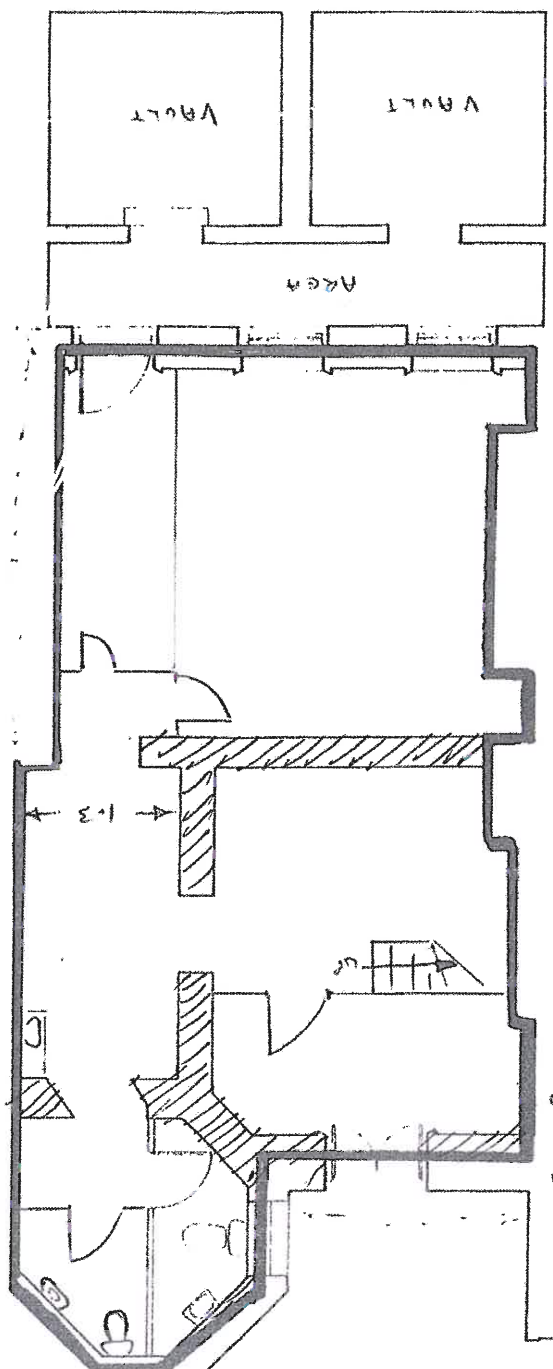


Fig 2. Basement Plan
Internal Area: c.47sm

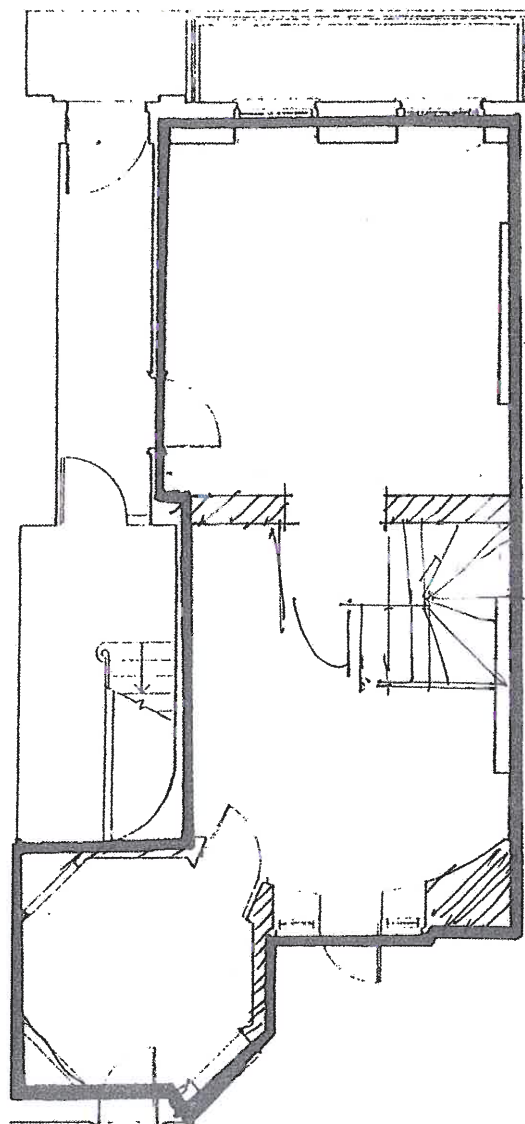


Fig 3. Ground Floor Plan
Internal Area: c.42sm

PIED BULL YARD

9. Proposed Building Floor Plans

GREAT RUSSELL STREET

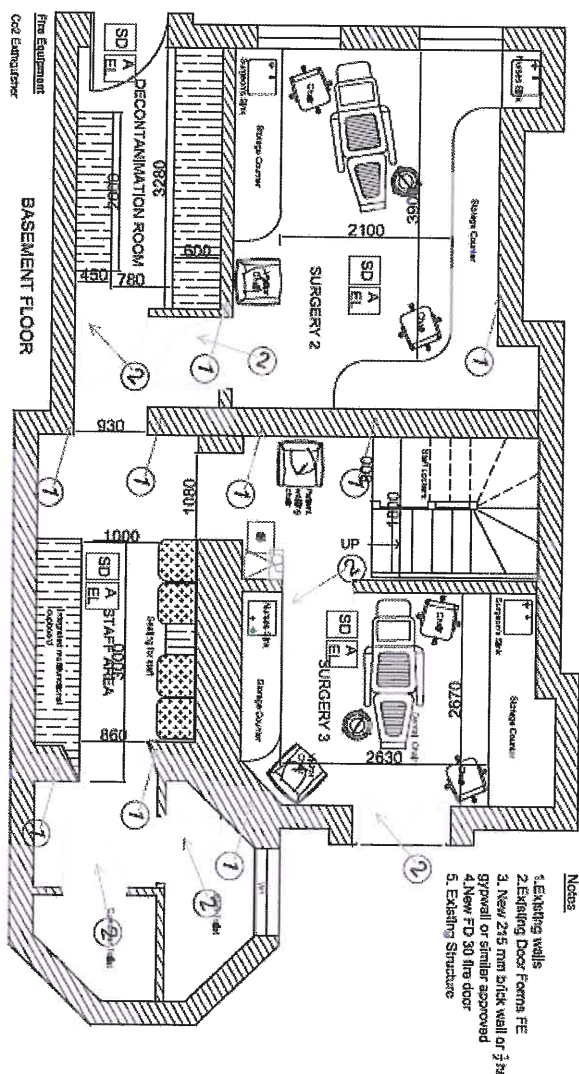


Fig 4. Basement Plan

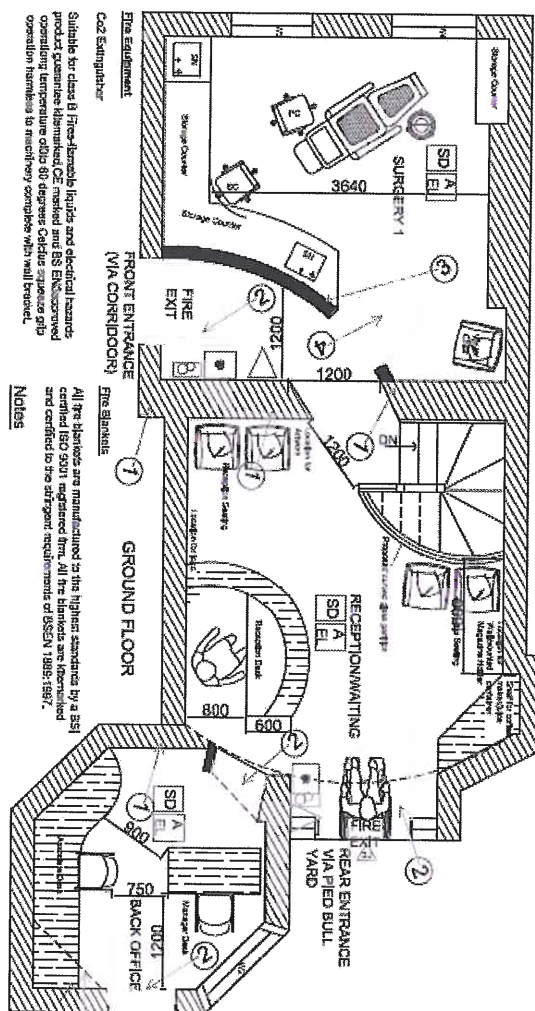


Fig 5. Ground Floor Plan

NB Please refer to application drawings for full details & specifications.

PIED BULL YARD

10. Site Context



Fig 6. View of Listed terrace from Great Russell Street
(NB No. 70 has 'blue' plaque displayed on it)



Fig 7. View at street level of ground floor frontage, entrance door, basement access light well and railings to No 70 Great Russell Street.
(NB Note existing signage including hanging sign)

10. Site Context (cont.)



Fig. 8 Rear of building onto Pied Bull Yard
(NB No 70 Russell Square centre of picture)



Fig. 9 General view of Pied Bull Yard
(NB Entrance to No 70 recessed towards rear of picture)

11. Internal Views



Fig. 10 Ground floor front office space



Fig. 11 Basement office space

11. Internal Views (cont)



Fig. 12 Ground floor rear artist's studio space
(NB Entrance looking out to Pied Bull Yard)

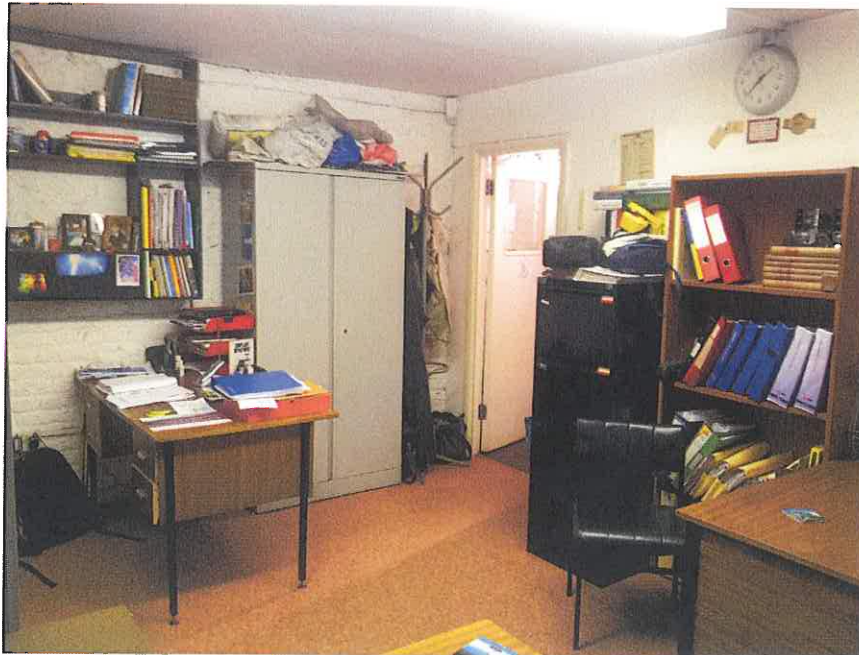


Fig. 13 Basement office space