

# **Design and Access Statement**

**For**

**University of London**

**Proposed Change of Use from D1 to B1 Business**

**2 Gower Street, London WC1**

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

**Highcroft Planning**

## Contents

INTRODUCTION - Design and Access	i
1. Policy Background	1

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background:**

No. 2 Gower Street is a mid-terrace property, originally constructed as a dwelling, but currently occupied by Royal Holloway for D1 and ancillary purposes. However, the University propose that the property should be marketed at the end of the current lease on a flexible basis, so as to permit its future use as either a continuation of the current D1 use or as B1 Business use including general office accommodation or for research and development. These latter uses are defined in the GPDO as *"a use which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit"*.

### **Design and Access**

The application for planning permission and listed building consent to which this Statement refers relates specifically to the proposed change of use of the entire property from its current D1 use to B1 Business use.

As far as this proposal is concerned, no alterations to the building are envisaged and thus there are no specific D&A requirements. However, the means of access to the property will remain as existing and as far as possible with a listed building of this type will adhere to current Health and Safety best practice standards.

### **Existing and proposed access arrangements**

#### **Basement Level:**

- Access from street level in Gower Street by way of a metal staircase; and,
- Access from Montague Gardens at the rear via a private courtyard.

#### **Ground Floor:**

- Access from street level in Gower street by way of a short flight of stone steps and access to all other floors by way of timber staircases;

**First Floor:**

- Access to all other floors by way of timber staircases.

**Second Floor:**

- As First Floor.

**Third Floor:**

- As first and second floors.

**Services Infrastructure:**

- No changes.

The following section of this Statement provides the generic Design and Access (D&A) arrangements that are adhered to for all of the refurbishment work at the University.

## 1. Policy Background

### Equal Opportunities Policy

1.1 The following is an extract from the University's Equal Opportunities Policy:

*"The policy of the central University is that in all its dealings with actual or potential students, staff, those to whom it seeks to offer a service, or those from whom it seeks to require a service, the primary consideration should be that the individual/organisation meets or is likely to meet the requirements of the programme, course, post, contract or service agreement. Such assessments must be made on merit and judged by reference to the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and potential of the individual/organisation.*

*On this basis, the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no actual or potential student, employee, or other contact or visitor will suffer unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, caring responsibilities, age, social origins, political opinion or association, trade union membership and activities, religious or similar philosophical beliefs, or other beliefs/lawful preferences privately held on any matter".*

### University Disability Statement

1.2 The following is an extract from the Overview of the University's Disability Statement on the University web site:

*"Potential students who have a disability are encouraged to apply to the University of London. The University and its constituent Colleges and Institutes are all committed to providing first-class educational opportunities to anyone who could benefit from them.*

*... the University is striving to ensure that all of its premises and facilities are accessible in the widest sense. A programme prioritizing any building work has been established, with appropriate funding provision, to enable the central University to meet its responsibilities under the DDA".*

## Inclusive Environments

1.3 The University of London is committed to the principles of inclusive design and to achieving an inclusive environment for its students, staff and visitors.

1.4 An inclusive environment has been defined as:

*"...one that can be used by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability. It is made up of many elements such as society's and individual's attitudes, the design of products and communications and the design of the built environment itself. It recognises and accommodates differences in the way people use the built environment and provides solutions that enable all of us to participate in mainstream activities equally, independently, with choice and with dignity".<sup>1</sup>*

1.3.3 The Mayor of London supports the creation of inclusive environments. The London Plan states:

*"The Mayor will require all future development to meet the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion. UDP policies should integrate and adopt the following principles of inclusive design that will require that developments:*

*can be used safely and easily by as many people as possible without undue effort, separation or special treatment  
offer the freedom to choose and the ability to participate equally in the development's mainstream activities  
value diversity and difference".<sup>2</sup>*

1.5 The Mayor favours the "social model of disability" as a means of achieving inclusive environments: Accessible London, (London Plan supplementary guidance) observes:

*"Society is organised in a way that takes little or no account of people who have impairments. Barriers such as poor design, inadequate information or discriminatory attitudes can exclude people who have impairments. If disabled people are to participate in mainstream society, which is their human right, the way society is organised must be changed. Removing these externally imposed barriers will bring about this change".<sup>3</sup>*

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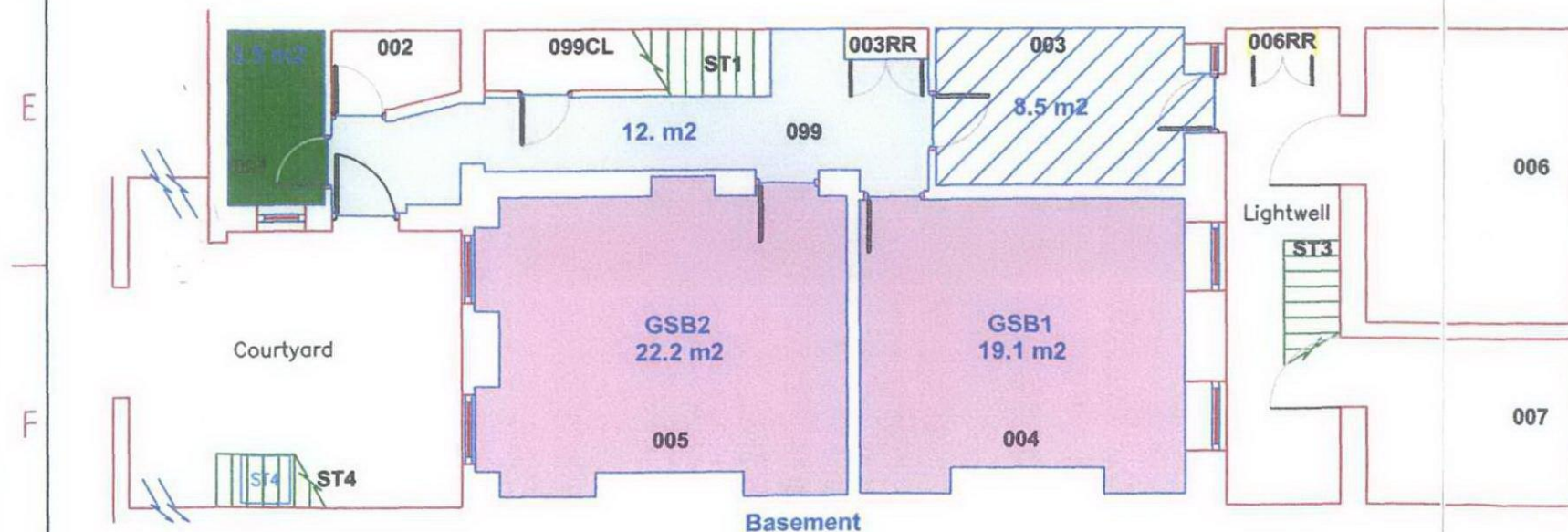
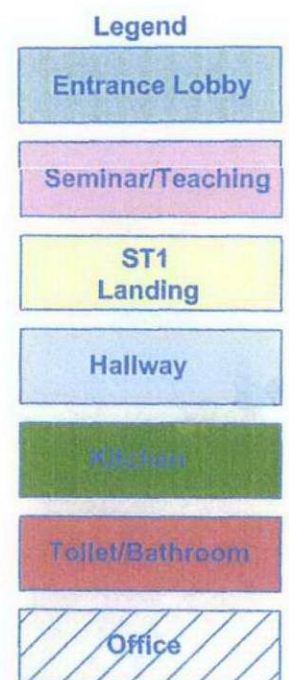
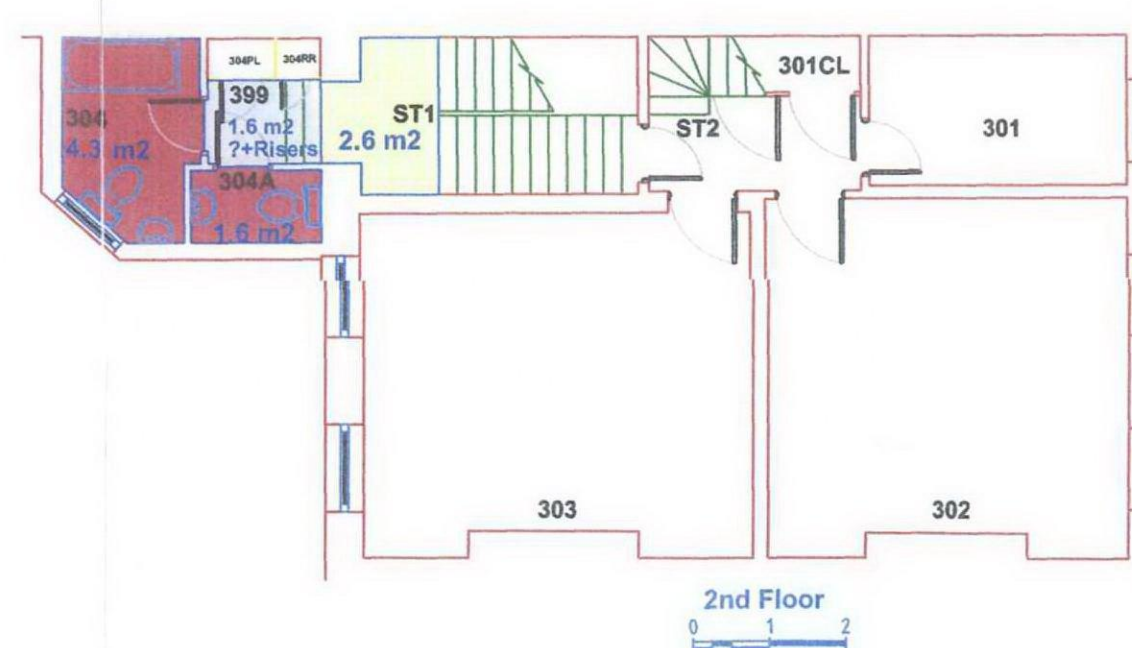
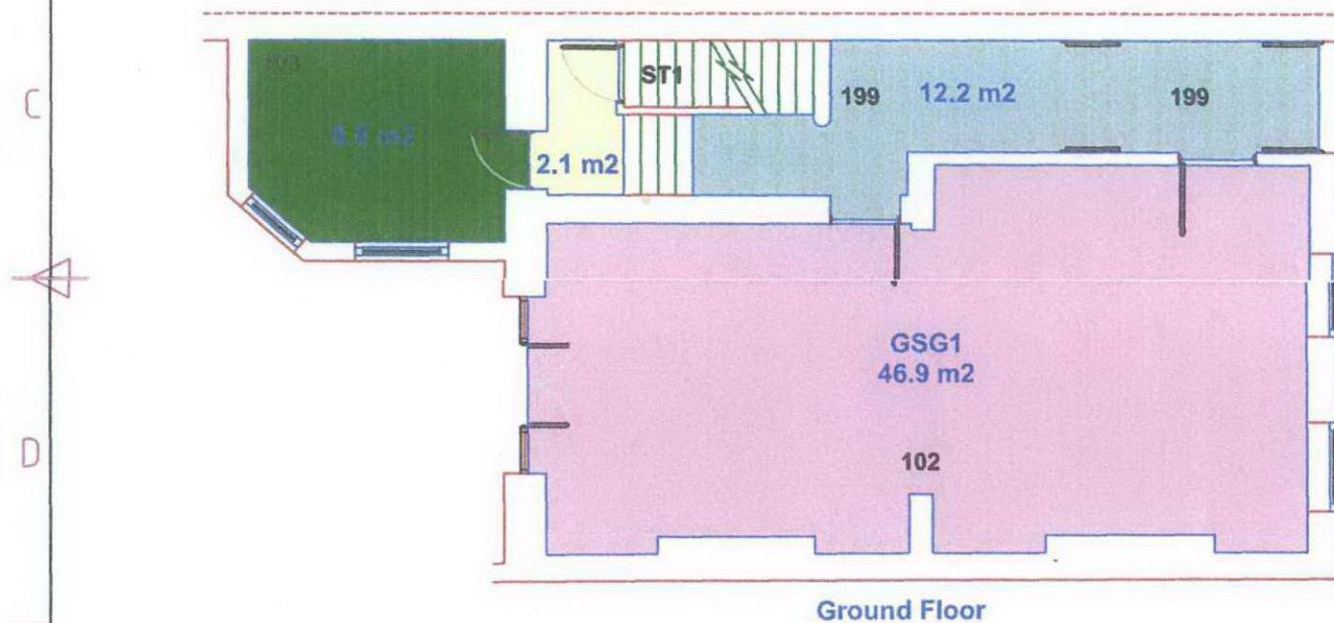
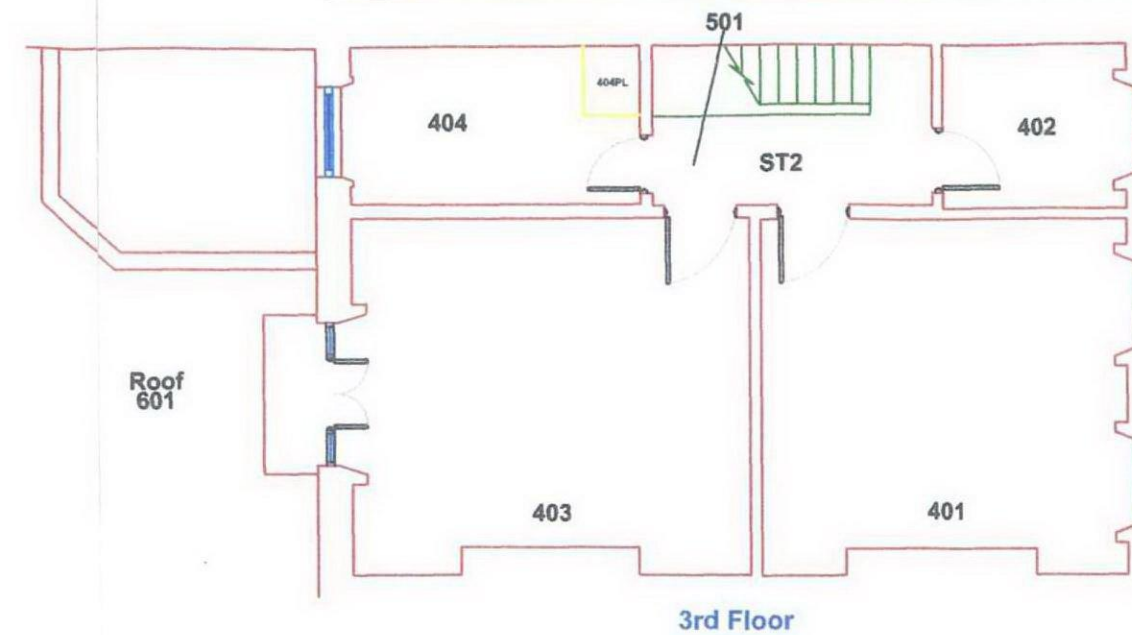
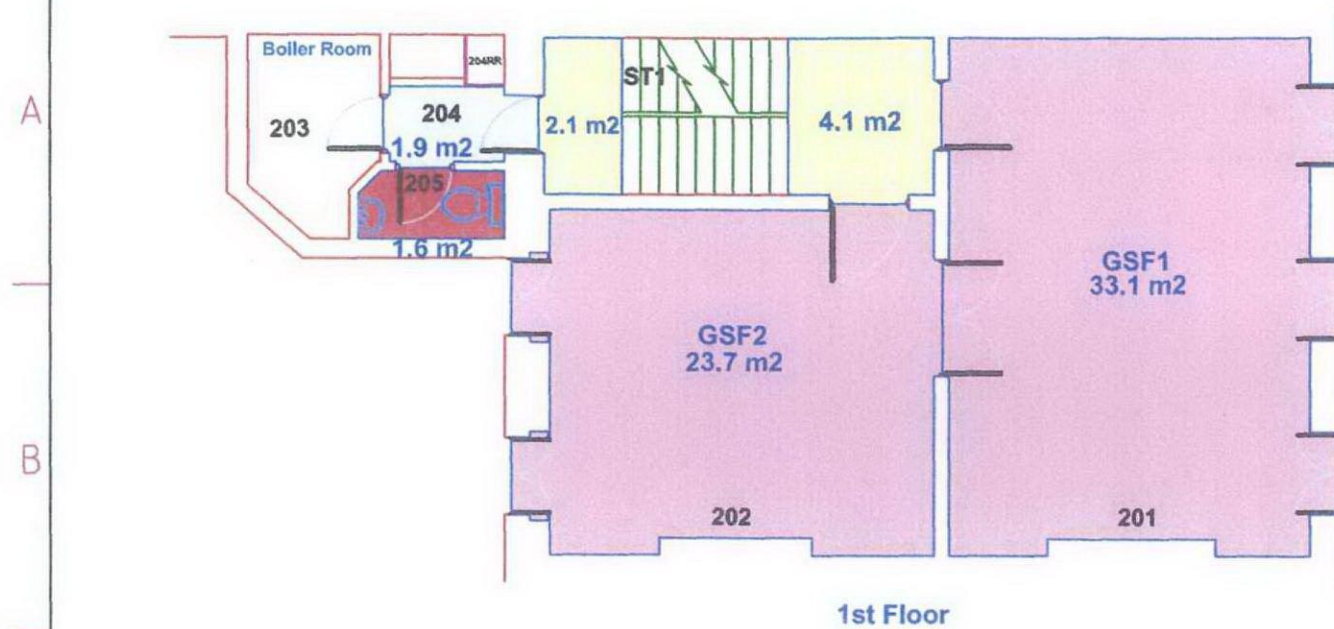
<sup>1</sup> ODPM Planning and access for disabled people: a good practice guide, 2004, para 3.1.1

<sup>2</sup> London Plan, Policy 4B.5 Creating an inclusive environment.

<sup>3</sup> Greater London Authority; Accessible London, para 1.1.1

- 1.6 It can be seen therefore that the design of buildings is moving away from the separate provision for people with disabilities, to a more inclusive model. This document aims to demonstrate how inclusive design principles have been taken account of in the design of the refurbishment of Senate House, and how inclusion will be maintained and managed when the building is in use.





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