

## **Heritage Statement**

### **2 NEW SQUARE, LINCOLN'S INN, LONDON WC2A 3RS**

The information in this Heritage Statement is taken from the historic records of the Inn and from the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy.

A Design and Access Statement addresses mobility; a Planning Statement details and justifies the proposed works. The proposal in this application supplements the permissions granted under applications 2012/2034/P and 2012/2264/L and arises from further development of the design.

This application seeks listed building consent:

- i) Creation of an opening and door from the north side of the internal entrance corridor into the reception room on the ground floor north of No. 2 New Square
- ii) Insertion of a raised floor in the reception room adjacent to and north of the internal ground floor entrance corridor of No. 2 New Square.

The design of the approved refurbishment of 2 New Square has evolved in consultation with Camden Conservation Officers and English Heritage. Their combined input into the design process has been much appreciated and has assisted in the evaluation of options.

The creation of an opening in the internal entrance corridor to provide entry to the reception room on the ground floor north of No. 2 New Square was discussed in the earlier consultations but the necessary investigations, identification of new occupier and resulting design were not completed in time for submission as part of the original and approved applications.

The approved applications are based on the minimum interventions or changes to the existing historic fabric necessary to provide modern accommodation which will both ensure that the property is maintained in its original intended use, and secure the continuation of that use for the future. The minor internal change to the entrance to one ground floor room that is now proposed continues that approach. Permission is sought for good practical and operational reasons and after careful consideration and consultation with the Council and with English Heritage. The entrance arrangement proposed is a requirement of the set of Chambers who will occupy the building and mirrors the arrangement in that Tenant's existing and retained premises at No. 4 New Square.

It is possible to meet this requirement without affecting or making any material change to the identified or listed historic features of the building and Square and without compromising the character or special historic interest of the building.

### **Brief History of the building**

2 New Square was constructed along with the other development around three sides of the Square between 1693 and 1697 (also then known as Serle's Court). No. 2 was built in 1693 initially as a double fronted building on basement, ground, first and second floors. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century individual buildings around the square were extended upwards and new roofs were constructed on a piecemeal basis. No. 2 was not so extended.

In 1849 2 New Square was substantially destroyed by fire leaving very little of the original late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century fabric. The building was rebuilt to a similar layout on basement and ground to second floors but with the addition of a third floor to tie in with the adjoining buildings. The new building has a central brick spine wall running parallel to the front and rear elevations.

As part of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century re-build, cast-iron beams were introduced to support the floors and spanning between the elevations and the central spine wall. No. 2 therefore differs from the other buildings in the Square where floors were supported on timber bressummers, many of which have since required works to strengthen them or to provide additional support.

One such cast-iron beam supports the northern wall of the entrance corridor.

The cast-iron beams in No 2 also support primary timber joists that span between the beams with secondary joists notched into the primary timber and floorboards laid on the secondary joists.

Prior to the 1849 fire the building from ground floor upwards had a timber staircase. This was replaced with a stone staircase in the re-built structure. The basement was separately accessed and there was no staircase between basement and ground floors in either the original or in the re-built building.

### **Historic significance of 2 New Square**

As part of one of the terraces to New Square, enclosing three sides, the building and attached railings were listed Grade II\* on 24 October 1951. The listing particulars describe:

The Square as a whole:

"...Brown brick with red dressings, basements now stuccoed. Slated roofs behind parapets. Exterior: 4 storeys and basements, the top storey being added in C18. Stone, architraved doorcases with pulvinated frieze, console-bracketed cornice and curved, broken pediment with ball in centre, with the exception of No.10 with a triangular pediment and No.11 without a ball."

"Subsidiary features: attached cast-iron railings to areas with urn finials."

"Historical Note: New Square is important as a very well preserved and early example of a set of early legal chambers, remarkably spacious and with good panelled interiors not seen. It is also one of the most complete surviving C17 set pieces in London."

No. 2 New Square (text extracted):

"No.2: red brick band at 2nd floor level. 9 windows. Gauged red brick segmental arches to slightly recessed sash windows. Ground floor and 5 windows of 1st floor with shutters. Interior: with some panelling. Round iron balusters to stone stairs. RCHM (West London) suggests that No.2 was rebuilt during the C18 and C19."

As a group, the buildings in New Square mainly date from the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century and are important to the overall setting of Lincoln's Inn. Although refurbished at different times, many retain some original internal features from that period.

However, 2 New Square is a Victorian re-build. The façade and interior was re-built from the ground floor up. A contemporary engraving from the Illustrated London News of January 1850 depicts the building in flames and shows the extent of the damage and confirms that the previous building was one storey lower than the neighbouring No.3. Whilst the re-built interior is of interest, it does not contain any 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> Century fabric. The re-built façade seeks to echo the townscape of the adjoining, original facades within what is predominantly a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Square.

Having been rebuilt in Victorian times, No.2 does not have the antiquity and history of the remainder of the buildings in New Square, but it does form an important part of the setting of the Square. In this regard the building is more important from the outside than the inside.

The Conservation Area document states, in respect of Lincoln's Inn, that:

*"The high quality of public realm is reinforced by numerous elements of historic interest including York stone paving, decorative railings and gates, 19th century lamp-posts and other items of street furniture".*

The original exterior elevations of the Square are highly significant for their townscape value and the reconstructed façade of No.2 contributes to that townscape value. There are no proposals with the current application to alter or affect that façade in any way.

## **Context**

In order to establish the historical context in which the interior of 2 New Square is to be considered it is relevant to compare No.2 with the other buildings. As a result of the fire, the value of the interior of No.2 is as 19<sup>th</sup> Century rebuild and not as 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> Century barristers chambers. There is no original 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> Century fabric. It all dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Within the building, the detailing is not uniform either across or between the floors. This suggests that there have been a number of changes to the interior during the last 160 years. The detailing is a mix of fairly simple Victorian finishes or relatively modern work.

That is not to belittle the significance or the historical importance of such later work, merely to place it in a comparative framework.

Nevertheless, intervention into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century fabric or alterations to the layout has been kept to the minimum commensurate with ensuring that the building will be fit for its original purpose for the foreseeable future.

The aim of this and the previous applications is to refurbish the accommodation to keep the premises attractive for their traditional role as Chambers for Barristers and to allow them to continue to evolve and to fulfil that use. Continued use for the original intended purpose will help conserve the 19<sup>th</sup> Century historic character of the interior layout and fabric of the building. Continued use for its original purposes will also ensure that its contribution to the townscape value of the Square will remain unaltered.

## **Proposed Works**

The proposed new entrance way is identified on the plans and photograph submitted with the application.

**i) The creation of an opening and door from the internal entrance corridor to the new reception room on the ground floor north**

The wood panelling to the entrance corridor is modern. The position of the opening has been located between joints in the panelling sections to minimise the impact on the remaining panelling and the overall panelled effect. The panelling will be extended to the internal surfaces of the new opening.

The door will be an automatically operated, fire-rated glass sliding door. It will be located on the inside of the reception room and so would be recessed and not visible in views from the Square, whether open or closed. The door will be on runners placed on/in the raised reversible floor and will not impact on the existing floorboards which are to be retained. The open doors will be encased when fully open. The casement will conceal the operating system, will be skimmed and skirted to match the existing walls as approved in the previous application, will scribe around the existing cornice leaving the existing cornice in place with a new cornice on the casement to match the original and thus will be reversible development except for the small loss of skirting in the opening.

The masonry and 1<sup>st</sup> floor beams above the opening will be temporarily supported by props and needles to enable installation of a precast concrete lintel over. The temporary props will also be extended to the basement while work is undertaken.

**ii) The raised floor in the Reception room**

A cast-iron beam runs under the northern wall of the entrance corridor. It would be disproportionate and inappropriate to seek to replace that post-fire 19<sup>th</sup> century cast-iron beam. Its retention is preferable to the insertion of new and slightly lower fabric. As a result a 100mm step up from the entrance corridor level is proposed. A reversible development comprising a raised floor within the Reception room is necessary to avoid any impairment of mobility within that room and to avoid any visual impact that would otherwise be caused by a step up and a step down at the point of entry.

The new skirtings in the Reception room will cover the existing plaster skirting and will apply the approved details in drawing 5655/400 B (applications 2012/2034/P and 2012/2264/L). Consequently, there will be no damage to the skirtings due to the raised floor.

The hearth in the existing front room north of the entrance to No. 2 New Square has a simple concrete hearth in poor condition which will be retained under the raised floor. A new stone hearth will be laid at the new level.

The existing door from the reception to the waiting room was granted consent to be replaced by a new timber door under the original applications. In this application the newly approved door GD7 is to be omitted.

**Langley-Taylor**  
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