



20 Mecklenburgh Square is a five storey Georgian mansion house built between 1806 and 1812. It is a Grade II* listed building located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and forms part of a terrace of 24 houses constituting the east side of the square. The frontage of the property is characterised by multi-coloured stock brickwork on the upper floors, and stucco to the basement and upper ground floors. The doorway is round-arched with fluted pilaster-jambs and cornice-heads, fanlights and panelled double doors. There is a lightwell to the basement and arched coal-holes under the pavement. In the rear enclosed courtyard, there is a two-storey painted brick extension, likely to date from the late 19th century.

29 February 2012

**20 Mecklenburgh Square
Heritage Statement.**

220_HS_120229

All external timber work is painted black, in common with the other properties in the terrace.

Although 20 Mecklenburgh Square was constructed as a single dwelling house, it is currently split into two maisonettes inhabited by separate leaseholders. Our clients inhabit the lower and upper ground floors and the first floor of the building. The other leaseholder inhabits the second and third floors.

At present the only connection between the upper ground floor and the first floor is by means of the main staircase which, as a common part of the property, also provides the unique means of access to the second floor. This presents significant privacy problems for both leaseholders.

Whilst it would be preferable, from a conservation standpoint, for the house to be returned to single occupancy, it has not been used as a single dwelling house since before 1949.

This application seeks to provide access between the first floor and the ground floors of the house in a manner that creates the minimum disturbance to the original building fabric.

Pre-planning advice from Charles Rose at LBC indicated that the unique point of connection with the existing building should be through the side of the rear bay at first floor level. This can be achieved by dropping the cill to the side window at first floor level. The position of existing openings into the rear extension below this will remain unchanged.

The existing 2 storey rear extension is of no particular architectural merit. Internally it is devoid of original detail or content and at roof level, the felted flat roof is at end of life. Its demolition would not deprive the main house of any of its special architectural and historic interest. The rear extension is only peripherally visible from the neighbouring properties.

Removal and replacement of this extension by a sympathetic modern alternative could resolve many of the organisational problems of the lower maisonette, creating circulation between the three floors that is internal to the leaseholding. The present proposals are shaped and scaled to be clearly subsidiary to the main building, to remain legible as a modern insertion and detailed to minimise impact on the main

body of the house and on the amenity of the neighbouring property at 19 Mecklenburgh Square.

Separately, this application seeks retrospective approval for internal alterations made during the execution of the works approved in 2010.

In particular, emergency structural works have been carried out in the area immediately beneath the main stone staircase.

The stone staircase at 20 Mecklenburgh square, whilst formed by a series of apparently cantilevering stone treads is not a true cantilever. In reality each tread bears structurally on the ones below it, transferring much of the vertical load from the self weight of the stair and any live loads through into the bottom most tread.

The base of the stair was originally borne on timber joists and trimmers which were insufficient to take the weight of the stair. Further load had been added by the creation of partition when the house was subdivided. The overloaded joists had deflected causing gaps to open up between the stone treads.

The structural engineer's report by Price and Myers (19876/DD) recommended immediate propping of the ground floor landing followed by the insertion of a steel channel and support angles. These works would necessarily reduce the headroom over the stairs into the lower ground floor, making it impracticable as a means of access into the lower ground floor. These recommendations were made to ensure the protection of a significant part of the listed building fabric at the expense, however, of retaining use of the internal staircase.