



20 February 2012

**20 Mecklenburgh Square**  
**London WC1N 2AD**

220\_DA\_120220



### Assessment

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 a two-storey painted brick extension, likely to date from the late 19th century.

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

The property has been divided into two dwellings; our clients own and occupy the basement, ground and first floors [Flat 1]. There is a self-contained maisonette on the 2nd and 3rd floors accessed via a shared hallway and stair.

### Relevant Planning History

In July 2010, planning permission [2010/3428/P] and listed building consent [2010/3452/L] was granted for external and internal and external alterations to the basement, ground

and first floors of the non self-contained maisonette (Class C3).

### Internal Works

Most of these modifications have been implemented, including the creation of a link between the front and rear reception rooms at ground floor level, replacement of the front door to the maisonette, the removal of the partition separating off the main stair, the addition of an elliptical timber partition at first floor landing level and the replacement of the first floor rear window with French doors.

Prior to the commencement of these works, gaps were noticed at the base of the stone stair between the ground and first floors. Investigation by the structural engineers Price and Myers revealed that works were urgently needed to prevent collapse of this flight of stairs. Their report 19876/DD is appended to this document. The works they recommended were carried out following notification by email to Charles Rose on 18 February 2011.

Concrete slabs in the hallway were replaced with lighter weight limestone slabs in accordance with structural engineer's recommendations.

The non-original stair from the ground floor to the lower ground floor was removed during the course of these works and the handrail and rounded posts set aside for reuse, as

required by the conditions attached to the earlier planning approval. During the course of the works an existing opening between the stair landing and front drawing room at ground floor level was uncovered with a low-lying lintel, presumably installed after fire damage in the 1970s. As a consequence, the landing has been lowered by 250mm to achieve sufficient headroom, shifting the steps that mediate the change in level into the drawing room.

At the rear of the house, cracking was identified around the bay at second and third floor levels. Investigation of the wall in the lower ground floor revealed dry rot. Under instruction from Price and Myers, rotten timber has been removed from the rear wall and damaged masonry repaired. A ventilated damp proof membrane has been installed.



rotten timber removed from wall to rear bay



limestone slabs replacing concrete in hallway at base of stairs

A temporary external store has been erected in the rear of the garden





This application seeks retroactive permission for these modifications in addition to the replacement extension and associated works.

### Design Brief

We have been approached by our clients to design a rear extension to replace the existing two-storey closet wing of their maisonette that provides limited functional space. This would provide accommodation on two floors and access to the first floor through a connection into the southern flank of the rear bay. Additionally, the proposed extension should provide vertical circulation between ground and basement levels.

### Policy

The proposals were developed in consideration of the Camden Local Development Framework [LDF] and supplementary planning guidance, in particular: Core Strategy

CS1 – Distribution of growth;  
CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development;  
CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving heritage  
Development Policies  
DP24 – Securing high quality design;  
DP25 - Conserving Camden's Heritage  
DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours  
Camden Planning Guidance  
CPG1 Design Section 3: Heritage, Section 4: Extensions, alterations + conservatories  
CPG6 Amenity

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

### Evaluation



Externally, the existing closet wing extension offers little with regard to architectural merit, is poorly insulated, and its configuration results in circulation occupying a large proportion of its usable area. The basement floor is currently used as a storage and utility space, the upper floor as a bathroom. By adopting a triangular plan, it would be possible to accommodate a reception room, a bedroom and en-suite shower, and stair serving three levels, all occupying a footprint that is not excessively larger than the building it would be replacing.

The site of the proposed extension is positioned within an enclosed rear courtyard, concealed from private view. To safeguard the privacy of No. 19 Mecklenburgh Square, it is proposed that the boundary wall between the two properties be raised to form the flank of the stair link up to the first floor of the host building. The top of the wall would be raked to provide sufficient internal headroom whilst minimising the volume of the structure and effect on neighbouring amenity.



To the north, the property is bounded by the Goodenough Club [Nos. 21-25]. The height of the proposed extension does not extend above the existing party wall.



### Amount

The existing two-storey conservatory extension has a net internal area of 26.6m<sup>2</sup>. The proposed extension would enclose 36.9m<sup>2</sup> of accommodation, a net increase of 10.3m<sup>2</sup> spread over two floors. The volume of the extension is approximately 156m<sup>3</sup>, replacing a volume of 87m<sup>3</sup>, a net increase of 69m<sup>3</sup>.

### Involvement + Consultation

Further to a number of planning applications that had been previously submitted and withdrawn prior to our involvement, we met with Charlie Rose on site in February 2011 to discuss what scale of development might be appropriate. The following is a summary of the informal without prejudice comments:

- 1 Demolition of the existing closet wing would be acceptable.



2 Construction of a 2 storey new rear extension would be acceptable, provided that it leaves an area of external courtyard. There is no specific requirement in terms of footprint but adequate breathing space at the rear should be retained.

3 Connection into the first floor in the location of the existing window to the south cheek of the rear bay would be acceptable. This would necessarily require the dropping of the window sill. A glazed link would be seen as an appropriate kind of connection - ideally this should be as small as practical. The area of window above the link would need careful detailing.

4 Connection on the north cheek of the bay is unlikely to be acceptable since there is no existing opening in this part of the bay.

5 The stepped door/window assembly at the rear of the lower ground floor and the original kitchen details are features that Camden would want to see retained. English heritage guidance in relation to buildings of this period seeks retention of these kinds of details which are far from commonplace.

6 A draft proposal was tabled, exploring the scale and location of the rear extension and the difficulties of making connections between the ground and first floor. The extension was configured in a roughly triangular shape with the narrower end forming the connection into the house. At first floor level, stairs from the ground floor emerged through the roof as a glazed wedge. This kind of arrangement, subject to detailing/materials etc, would be acceptable.

Draft proposals were presented to John and Dorothy Edgington, neighbouring owners at 19 Mecklenburgh Square in December 2011 and these were revised in the light of their observations.

The revised proposals were also discussed in February 2012 with Lorne and Catherine Campbell, owners of the flat on the second and third floors of 20 Mecklenburgh Square.

The scheme that is the subject of this application reflects the changes that had been required by both parties.

#### Layout and scale

The proposed rear extension occupies the southeast triangular corner of the walled courtyard with a 900mm wide link to the host building, together taking up approximately 65% of the rear garden. It is two stories high, in keeping with

the pattern of adjacent structures, and the stair link to the first floor level takes up the minimum volume required.



In the basement of the host building, an ensuite bathroom and a shower room are planned in the former stair location. A water closet is also proposed on the ground floor in the area beneath the upper stair ramp. This will be constructed to be structurally independent of the stairs and will be detailed to ensure that it can be removed with no damage to the original building fabric.

#### Appearance

The highly glazed rear extension is designed in a modern idiom that distinguishes itself from the main house in terms of materiality and construction but is at the same time subsidiary and respectful to the host building. The location of the new structure at the back of the courtyard, separated from the host building via a slender glazed link, allows the original facade to remain largely untouched.

The materials and detailing of the glazed stair link extending to the first floor of the main house are designed to be as insubstantial as possible, maximising natural light into the building whilst reducing the perceived massing. Proposed materials are as follows:

**glazed screens:** double glazed toughened glass with ceramic frit to perimeter and edges of floor slabs

**glazed doors:** triple glazed sliding doors with powder-coated aluminium frames

**flank wall to No.19:** multi stock facing brickwork to match existing

**balustrading:** clear toughened glass

**main roof to extension :** single-ply roofing membrane + reclaimed marble tiles

**roof to stair link:** double glazed toughened glass

#### Landscaping

No changes to the landscaping are proposed.

#### Access

The new stair within the proposed extension connecting the basement and ground floors would replace the stair in the main building. The upper floor of the extension, level with the ground floor of the main house, will house a bedroom and ensuite shower, easily accessible by an elderly and infirm member of the family. Otherwise, access arrangements to and within the property would remain unchanged.