



4-5 and 6 Bedford Square
Combined Planning & Listed Building Consent Application

Combined Planning, Heritage and Design & Access Statement
14457P-RT-005_D

November 2011

**SCOTT⁺
BROWNRIGG**
PLANNING

**Planning, Heritage and Design
and Access Statement**

Subject:
4-5 & 6 Bedford Square

Date:
November 2011

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Our ref:
14457-RT-005_D

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APPENDIX 1 - Photographs

APPENDIX 2 - VRV Manufacturers Details

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Amendment Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

Revision	Description	Date	Signed	Checked
D	Statement	Nov 11	GB	CT

Note:

This report, together with further reports accompanying the planning application relate to the present situation and may be subject to supplementary information as discussions progress with the Local Authority.

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**Planning, Heritage and Design and Access Statement to Accompany
a Combined Planning and Listed Building Consent Application for 4-
5 & 6 Bedford Square, Camden, WC1B 3RD**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This combined Historic Building and Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Scott Brownrigg in support of a Combined Listed Building Consent and Planning Application for works to 4-5 and 6 Bedford Square, which are Grade I Listed Buildings.
- 1.2 Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 substituted Section 62 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and amended Section 10 of the Listed Building Act. Under the new section, instead of the form used to apply for planning permission being left to the discretion of the authority, the Secretary of State is now given the power to prescribe by development order alone the content and form of applications and the manner in which they are to be handled.
- 1.3 Accordingly Article 4C of the General Permitted Development Order and regulation 3A of the Listed Building Regulations, set out the detailed requirements for a statement in relation to planning permissions and listed building consents respectively.
- 1.4 The statement should explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to particular aspects of the proposal, including the amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance of the development as well as access issues. This statement is commonly known as a Design and Access Statement (DAS).
- 1.5 Some of the standard requirements of a DAS are not required for listed building consent applications, for example information on use, amount and landscaping.
- 1.6 Therefore, the purpose of this statement is to clearly set out and consider all the relevant aspects of the proposed development, the justification for the works to the listed building, the national and local planning policy relevant to the application and an assessment of how the proposed development accords with those requirements.

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2.0 Application Details

2.1 This is combined listed building consent and planning application is for:

The instillation of 4 x air conditioning condenser units on the roof of No 6 Bedford Square following the removal of existing condenser unit, the provision of access ladders (with safety hoops) and new raised safety walkway.

2.2 The application comprises the following:

- RT-006: Completed One-App Forms and Certificates
- RT-005: Combined Heritage/Design & Access Statement
- Site Location Plan
- Fee in relation to Planning Application (£335)

2.3 The following drawings are also provided in relation to the air conditioning:

- 3110/M/07: Existing Roof Layout (approved)
- OD (10) 006 Rev H: Proposed Roof Layout

2.4 These drawings provide details of all the relevant aspects of the application, including the number, type and location of the condenser units.

2.5 The drawings should be considered in conjunction with the detailed analysis within the statement.

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3.0

Site Description

3.1

Between the latter half of the 17th and early years of the 19th century, several large estates were laid out in the western area on London. One such estate was that of the Duke of Bedford's Bloomsbury estate, of which Bedford Square was a central part.

3.2

The square itself is formed of uniform palace-fronted terraced houses, with stucco faced and pedimented buildings located in the centre of each terrace. On the north and south there are two centre houses (18 & 19 and 46 & 47 respectively) and on the east and west sides just one (6 & 32 respectively).

3.3

4-5 Bedford Square are two of the properties that form the entire eastern run (1-10) which is Grade I listed. 4-5 would originally have been two separate properties but they have long since been co-joined.

3.4

4-5 Bedford Square immediately adjoins 6 Bedford Square, one of the more ornate stuccoed central buildings. No 6 is currently owned and operated by New York University and consent has been granted for them to operate 4-5 & 6 Bedford Square as D1 educational use (2010/6938/L refers).

3.5

The buildings also lie within the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3.6

A full description of the heritage assets is provided in Section 6 below.

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4.0 Planning History

4.1 As might be expected with a building of this age, there is a long planning history associated with the site. The most relevant of these applications are detailed below.

4.2 In February 2011 planning permission (2010/6690/P) and listed building consent (2010/6693/L) was granted for:

The instillation of 4 x air conditioning condenser units on the roof of No 6 Bedford Square, to be used in relation to the attached 4-5 Bedford Square, and the instillation of associated pipe work.

4.3 Essentially this application allowed for the provision of four additional air conditioning condenser units to be located on the roof of No 6 (the same location as the current proposal), within a u-shaped arrangement of existing units on the roof. While located on No 6 these units are to serve No 4-5 Bedford Square, which is also being operated by the New York University. The reason for locating them on the adjacent building was to reduce any potential impact as far as possible.

4.4 This application has been implemented and the condenser units have been located on the roof.

4.5 It has now become apparent that the existing units on No 6, which already serve that building, need to be replaced. Therefore, this application simply seeks to replace the existing units that currently serve No 6 with identical units to those already approved and installed.

4.6 A further application was also approved in February 2011 (2010/6938/L), which allowed for the creation of linkages between No 4-5 & 6 Bedford Square at basement and ground floor level, the reinstatement of a staircase between second and third floor within No 4 and minor internal alterations to modern stud partition walls. These works were required in order to allow the buildings to be used and operated effectively by New York University.

4.7 In 2010 Listed Building consent was granted for various internal and external alterations to 4-5 under 2010/0126/L.

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- The alterations included the repair of external railings, steps to the entrance way, external cladding and instillation of waterproofing to the vault areas.
- 4.8 Internal renovations were also undertaken, with modern partitions removed, windows repaired, replacement lighting and ironmongery, repairs to plasterwork and redecoration. This application was made as the building was becoming vacant and there was a requirement to undertake a comprehensive repair and maintenance schedule of the building. These works have now largely been implemented and completed.
- 4.9 Alterations to stud partitioning, the instillation of new partitions on all floors and the instillation of data and power cables and associated fixings throughout 4-5 were approved in 2006 under application 2006/1518/L.
- 4.10 In 2005 flexible planning permission was granted for the building to be used as either a non-residential institution (D1) or offices (B1). The D1 use was implemented when the building was previously occupied by the Aga Khan University.
- 4.11 Prior to this, in 2003, planning permission had been granted for a straight change of use from B1 (office) to D1 (non-residential institution). However, this was superseded by the 2005 consent.
- 4.12 Planning permission was granted in October 2000 for air conditioning units to be installed to No 6 Bedford Square. It is these units which will now be replaced under the current application.
- 4.13 Buildings 1-10 (inclusive) Bedford Square were subject of a significant refurbishment in the early 1980s. This included alterations to the front and rear elevations and other internal alterations. It is likely that the steel beams, which are prevalent throughout the building, were added at this stage.

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5.0

Planning Policy

5.1

Legislation to control works affecting Listed Buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This is further amplified by in national planning policy guidance as set out in PPS 5.

National Planning Guidance - PPS 5

5.2

Planning Policy Statements (PPS) set out the Government's national policy on different aspects of spatial planning in England. PPS 5 – 'Planning for the Historic Environment' sets out the national planning policy in relation to listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

5.3

PPS 5 sets out policies on the conservation of the historic environment. Published on 23rd March 2010, this is a very recent document, which replaces PPG15, which had been in circulation for over 15 years. As one might expect, it represents a major overhaul of the planning system for the historic environment. However, the changes are evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

5.4

The key change introduced by PPS5 was the scope of assets brought under policy control. In contrast with PPG15 and PPG16, which covered only archaeology, listed buildings and conservation areas, PPS5 encompasses any 'heritage asset' considered to have some degree of significance.

5.5

This includes all nationally designated and registered assets (Listed building, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Site, Conservation Areas, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and World Heritage Sites), plus all locally designated heritage assets (locally listed buildings, sites of local archaeological interest etc). The definition of a 'heritage asset' is set out in Annex 2 of PPS 5, which states:

"A building, monument, site, place area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in this PPS and assets identified by the local planning authority during

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the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process (including local listings)".

- 5.6 Policy HE6 (Para 6.3) advises that "Local Planning Authorities should not validate applications where the extent of the impact of the proposal on the significance of any heritage assets affected cannot adequately be understood from the application and supporting documents". This document addresses this requirement and the significance of the asset is considered in detail below.
- 5.7 In determining applications that would impact upon a heritage asset, Policy HE7 advises that local authorities should seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that would be affected by the relevant proposal. The following should be taken into account when considering the significance of any element:
- (i) evidence provided with the application
 - (ii) any designation records
 - (iii) the historic environment record
 - (iv) the heritage asset themselves
 - (v) the outcome of consultations with any interested parties
 - (vi) if appropriate, expert advice from suitable consultants
- 5.8 The primary focus is clearly aimed at preserving the most significant assets (PolicyHE9), with *"the more significant the designated asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be"* (Para 9.1). As one might expect, substantial harm or loss of a listed building would only be permitted in "wholly exceptional" circumstances.
- Local Planning Policy - Local Development Framework*
- 5.9 The introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 means that Local Plans will be replaced with a suite of planning documents, which is known as the Local Development Framework.
- Core Strategy*
- 5.10 The Core Strategy, which will provide the overarching principles of the LDF and sets out the key elements of the Council's planning vision and strategy for the borough, was adopted on 8th November 2010.

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- 5.11 CS 14 - Promoting High Quality Places and Conserving Our Heritage: The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use. In relation to listed buildings it will seek to preserve and enhance heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation area.
- 5.12 The policy will also seek to ensure the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and require schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible.
- Camden Development Policies*
- 5.13 This is another of the suite of documents that will make up the LDF and, like the Core Strategy and was adopted on 8th November 2010. However, while the Core Strategy provides overarching policies the Development Policy document deals with specific planning issues. These policies will be central in any planning decision made by the Council.
- 5.14 Policy DP 25 - Conserving Camden's Heritage: To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:
- Only grant change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building; and
 - Not permit development that would harm the setting of the listed building.
- 5.15 The sub-text advises in paragraph 25.13 that *"in order to protect listed buildings, the Council will control external and internal works that affect their special architectural or historic character. Consents is required for any alterations, including some repairs, which would affect the special interest of a listed building. The matters which will be taken into consideration in an application for alterations and extensions to a listed building are those set out in Policy HE7 of PPS5.*
- 5.16 Paragraph 25.14 advises that *Where listed buildings are being altered for the provision of access for people with disabilities, the Council will balance their needs with the interests of conservation and policy".*
- Local Planning Policy - Camden's UDP - June 2006*
- 5.17 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) has now been superseded by the above documents.

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6.0 The Heritage Asset Defined

- 6.1 In accordance with the requirements of PPS5 and, in particular Policy HE6, as set out above, it is necessary to provide a description of the heritage assets affected and the contribution to their setting to that significance.
- 6.2 Importantly, the policy advises that *“the level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset”* (my emphasis).
- 6.3 In this instance the heritage assets are clearly and readily definable as the Grade I listed terrace, which includes 4-5 and 6 Bedford Square and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in which the buildings are situated.
- Listed Building*
- 6.4 No’s 1-10 Bedford Square are amongst some of the earliest buildings to have been listed in England, having been added to the Statutory List in October 1951. All the building, as well as the attached railings, are Grade I listed.
- 6.5 The official listing description sets out that the buildings were erected between 1775-1786 and attributes the design of No’s 1, 6 & 10 to Thomas Leverton, with the remainder also being attributed to either him or Robert Palmer.
- 6.6 In fact, there is no clear record as to who designed any of the buildings and there is reasonable evidence that they were not designed by Thomas Leverton at all. While it is known that Leverton was involved in finishing off the buildings, including No 1, the overall design is not considered to be his because *“it is quite simply not good enough to be attributed to him”* (P.26: Byrne, 1990)
- 6.7 Indeed, despite the undoubted appeal of the overall square it could certainly be argued that the architecture is actually rather poor by Georgian standards. The plain brick houses are all plagiarised from designs that were seen forty or fifty years earlier and their main ornament, the door surrounds, were a mass manufactured product from the Coade stone factory in Lambeth. The central houses, which include No 6,

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- offer a little more inspiration and certainly more detail although it is interesting to note that these do not actually offer uniformity (No 6 is two bays larger than the opposite property No 32).
- 6.8 The importance of the heritage asset (No 4-5 & 6) does not therefore lie in the individual design of the properties, or even their particular architectural style, but in their collective contribution to the overall development of the square.
- 6.9 Bedford Square was certainly not London's first square and, in spite of initial impressions, it is by no means perfect. However, it is unique as it has four almost uniform sides which form a 'perfect' symmetrical square around a leafy garden. Built between 1775 and 1783, its **chief importance** lies in the fact that it was the first example in London of a square with such consistent uniformity.
- 6.10 Moreover, the feat was never again exactly repeated. Other squares suffered from being built in "fits and starts", while Bedford Square was completed in a relatively short period of time. Fitzroy Square, for example, only had the south and east sides built to the original elevations in the 1790s. By the time that building commenced again, after the French revolution, tastes had changed and later blocks were influenced by other ideas.
- 6.11 Bedford Square was conceived at a time when architectural effect depended more on the treatment of complete estates rather than the design of a particular street or group of houses. Lavish fitting out of the interior was also a priority and Bedford Square manages to combine both the exterior restraint and austerity of the Palladian years (while hinting at the decorative stucco of the Regency) with the internal magnificence of the 1770s.
- 6.12 With so many of its contemporaries all but vanished (Adelphi and Minories) or greatly altered (Portland Place and Stratford Place) Bedford Square remains remarkably unscathed is seemingly the embodiment of all that is so highly valued in the twenty first century, an intact, uniform and perfect Georgian Square.
- 6.13 Like many properties of this age, 4-5 and 6 Bedford Square have been the subject to much alteration, renovation and

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even reconstruction over time. However, what may come as a surprise to some admirers of Georgian Architecture is that, despite the very high standards that are set on purely aesthetic grounds, the structural story is often very different. Indeed, the consistent high quality of the facing brickwork of Georgian houses often belies the poor quality of construction of the core of the buildings, particularly of the unseen elements of the buildings.

6.14 Often designed to last for the length of their lease, many early Georgian houses, generally leased for 60 years, are now on their 6th life. In Bedford Square many of the foundations have failed over time apparently due to the inadequate nature of the soil on which they were placed. In order to overcome the issue originally large timber beams were inserted. However, these have been prone to rot and it is known, for example, that No 6 had to have work undertaken as early as 1889 after the owner wrote to the Estate outlining that failure of his foundations. Most properties have therefore had to be underpinned over time.

6.15 Furthermore, the walls at Bedford Square were made of two skins, an out facework, made of good quality brick (approx 4½") and an inner skin of largely poor quality brickwork of anything up to 22 ½" thick. These two walls were often not bound together, although in Bedford Square it tends to occur, on average, on every tenth course.

6.16 Softwood timbers were inserted as the brickwork carried up. These performed several essential functions, from carrying the immediate load of the beams and joists to providing a fixture point for internal joinery such as skirting and dad rails. However, in extended old age, these have often decayed, resulting in walls bulging. As a result they have often been taken out and steel ties and straps inserted. Steel beams have also been inserted into many of the floors, in order to strengthen the overall sub-standard structure.

Conservation Area

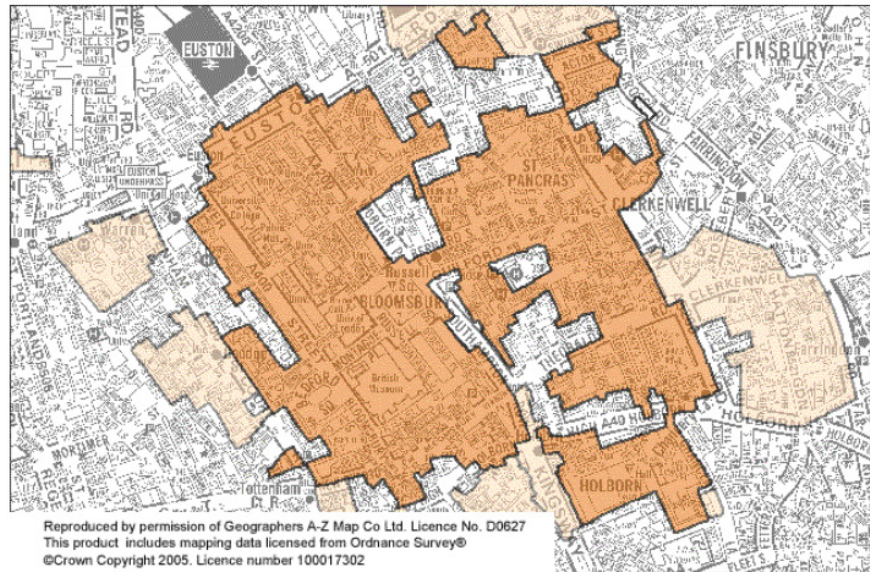
6.17 As can be seen below, Bloomsbury Conservation Area is of a significant size, stretching from Euston Road in the north to High Holbourn in the south and from Bedford Square in the west to Farringdon Road in the east. Bedford Square comprises just a very small element of this overall area.

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Key of map

- Conservation area
- Adjoining conservation area

Map reproduced from Camden Council Website.

- 6.18 The provision of four small additional condenser units will be located within an existing plant area and would not be visible from any vantage point.
- 6.19 Therefore it is considered that there would be no impact on the Conservation Area and there is no requirement for any further description of this heritage asset.

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7.0

Pre-Application Discussions

7.1

Although no formal pre-application discussions have taken place per se, in the process of getting the application validated the drawings have been reviewed and commented upon by Camden Council.

7.2

As a result the proposals have been amended during the pre-validation stage and this current proposal has adjusted the location of the units from those originally submitted.

8.0

Application Details

Purpose of the Application

8.1

As set out under 4.11 above, No 6 Bedford Square already benefits from air conditioning, which was approved in October 2000.

8.2

More recently No 4-5 Bedford Square has been granted consent for air conditioning, including air handling units, located within the roof plant area on the adjacent No 6. This approval has been implemented that the air handling units have been located on the roof.

8.3

However, as part of the on-going repair and review of the properties it has now become apparent that the existing air handling units on No 6 have reached the end of their useful life and also need to be replaced. Therefore, it is proposed to remove all the existing units and replace them with the same type as already approved on No 4-5.

8.4

However, unlike No 4-5, where the new system require the insertion of pipe work and floor units, these already exist in No 6. Therefore, the proposal is simply for the replacement of the condenser units and there will be no internal alterations.

8.5

The British Museum is also currently redeveloping, which is causing significant disruption to the New York University in terms of noise. Therefore, in order to seek a reduction in this disturbance it is proposed to install low-impact secondary glazing.

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Instillation of External VRV Condenser Units.

- 8.6 The proposed condenser units are not particularly large, measuring just 930mm in width, 1680mm in height and 765mm in depth. This will allow them to be positioned so that they will be set well back from the front elevation of the building, behind the pitched roof to No 6, and are therefore they will be easily and permanently screened.
- 8.7 Indeed, the four units approved under planning (2010/6690/P) and listed building consent (2010/6693/L) applications have already been installed. These units are fully screened from the street scene due to their set back behind the pitch roof and therefore are not visible from any public view point. Photographs of the site following the instillation of the units are available in Appendix 1.
- 8.8 It should be noted that, during the validation process, an additional drawing was required showing the units in relation to the front elevation. Once produced it became apparent that glimpsed views of the units may have been possible. As a result, the location has been amended and the four new units are now located with two either side of the central light well. This will ensure that they sit behind the roof at the front of the building and are therefore fully screened.
- 8.9 Full details on the proposed locations of the four new units are provided on the enclosed drawings, while the manufacturers' details are provided under Appendix 2 of this document. Details of how they are fitted to the roof are contained in Appendix 3. Their height and location ensure that they will not be visible within the street scene and there will be no adverse impact on the listed building or conservation area.
- 8.10 The 4 new units that are proposed will replace the various units that are already located on this area of No 6 (a total of 8 units, denoted by the blue areas on the Existing drawing). These older units will be removed as part of the proposals and a condition could be attached requiring their removal if considered appropriate.
- 8.11 In summary, views into and out of the site are not achievable from any adjacent point (other than on the roof tops of adjacent properties) and therefore there would be no

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adverse impact on either the Listed Building or the wider Conservation Area.

Instillation of Pipe Work

- 8.12 The existing pipe work for the air conditioning units at No 6 will be used and the new condenser units are simply 'plugged in' to the existing system.

Instillation of Internal Cooling Units

- 8.13 As with the existing pipe work so the existing internal floor standing units can be re-used and therefore there is no impact in this regard.

Noise Impact of Proposed Units

- 8.14 Given the roof top location of the plant it is important to assess the potential impact that they could have on any adjacent residential properties in terms of noise. In order to address this issue an Acoustic Report has been undertaken by Conabeare Acoustics and it is submitted as part of this application.

- 8.15 The report considers both the possible locations set out above and survey work was undertaken, in accordance with the principles of BS7745-1 (2003) in order to establish the existing background sound levels. These can be summarised as:

- 07:00 - 19:00 hours at 49.4dB(A)
- 19:00 - 00:00 hours at 48.3dB(A)
- 00:00 - 07:00 hours at 46.3dB(A).

- 8.16 It is considered that an appropriate measure is to ensure that the plant operates at 10dB(A) below the background sound level, when measured at 1 metre from the nearest effected residential property. In this instance that is a roof light that serves the top floor on 7 Bedford Square, which is approximately 13.5m away. Therefore, the plant should operate at between 39 - 36dB(A) depending on the time of day.

- 8.17 It is calculated that at 1m the specific sound level would be 36dB(A), which is well below the existing background noise levels and in line with the requirements for the worst case

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00:00 - 07:00 hours scenario. The units will actually operate at 3dB(A) below the daytime target of 39dB(A), when the units will actually be in use. As such, it is considered that the external units would have no adverse impact on the occupants of any adjacent property.

Access Ladder and Walkway

8.18

The proposals also include the replacement of an existing access ladder and the provision of a new access ladder. These are located between 4th floor and roof level in order to provide access from the former to the latter. As such they will be fully enclosed by the building and will not be visible.

8.19

In any instance, they will be constructed of high quality material and are typical features of a building of any age, serving a practical function to enable the safe repair and maintenance of roof top areas. Details are provided in Appendix 4 of this report, while details of the walkway are on the enclosed drawings.

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9.0

Conclusions

9.1

4-5 & 6 Bedford Square are Grade I listed buildings, which have been amended and updated over time. Notably, the properties have undergone extensive refurbishment during the late 1980s.

9.2

The properties have a D1 (non-residential accommodation) use and are occupied and operated by the New York University.

9.3

4-5 has recently received permission for air conditioning to be fitted, with the external condenser units located on No 6 in order to minimise any visual impact. No 6 already benefits from air conditioning.

9.4

However, it has become apparent that the units that serve No 6 now need replacing so it is proposed to remove the existing units and replace them with four identical units as those that have been approved and installed for 4-5. These will be located on the roof of No 6, with two units located each side of the existing light well.

9.5

All the units will be set well back from the front façade of the building and behind an existing pitch roof. As such they will be well screened and have no visual impact on the building or the conservation area in which it is situated.

9.6

A noise survey has been undertaken in order to assess the impact on the roof plant on the occupants of adjacent properties. This shows that there will be no adverse impact and that relevant planning conditions can be attached should this need to be controlled.

9.7

In conclusion, the proposal is in accordance with both national and local planning policy and the Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to approve the application.