

28 Museum Street, London WC1A 1LH

Design Statements in Support of Planning and
Listed Building Consent - Revision A

Design & Access Statement
Lifetime Homes Assessment
Heritage Statement
Land Use Assessment

September 2011



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Design & Access Statement

Proposed Outline

This application seeks Consent for a Change of Use, and some alterations to the upper floors of 28 Museum Street.

The intention is to return the first, second and third floors to their original, residential use.

Some demolition is proposed to realise the changes, with the intention of updating the building for future generations. These are restricted to the rear of the building, have little impact externally and involve the loss of small, ancillary rooms. The existing character and proportion of the principle rooms will be maintained.

Full details are described on the drawings accompanying this report:

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1228_00_01/A	1228_10_01/A
1228_00_02/A	1228_10_02/A
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1228_00_06	1228_10_06
1228_00_07	1228_10_07

Existing Building and Site Context

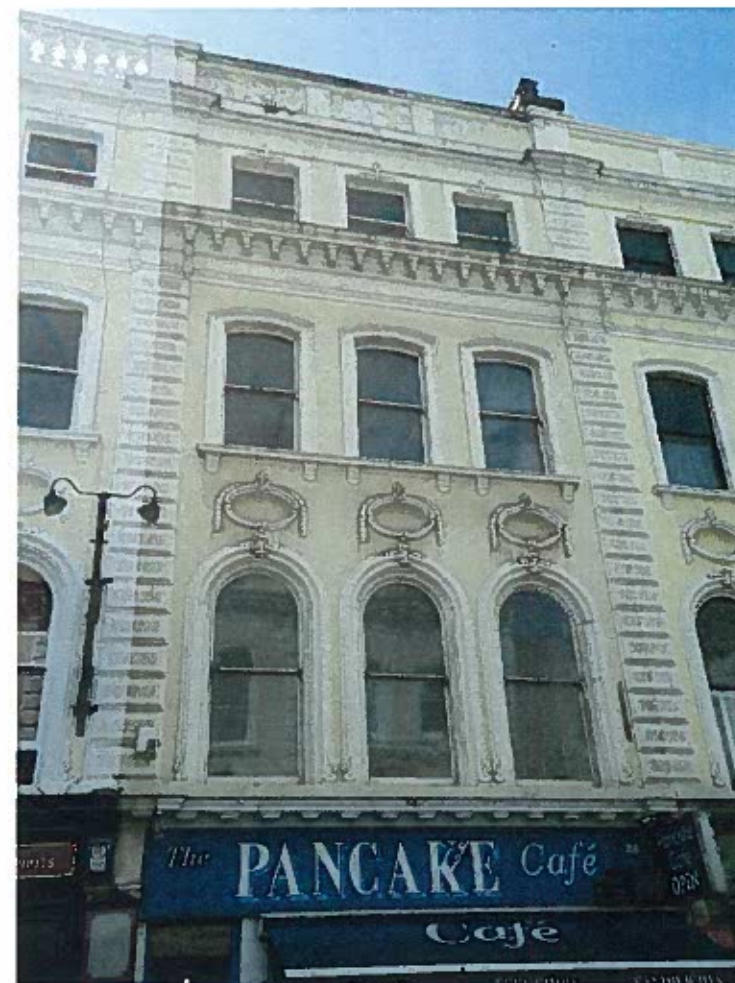
The building was designed by William Finch Hill, and was constructed between 1855-64. It provides a total net area of approximately 2,000 sq ft, arranged over Basement, Ground and three upper floors.

The building is Grade II Listed, and lies within Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It forms part of a wider group of 7 terraced houses on the West side of Museum Street and is designed in a modified French Renaissance style with a painted stucco facade.

The Ground and Basement are occupied by The Pancake Cafe. The upper levels have been used as offices but are now vacant. These now require complete modernisation to meet market expectations, including renewal of all services, and works to upgrade the fabric of the building. There is currently no access for wheelchair users.

The site includes some external space in the form of a flat roof, accessible from first floor level, over the ground floor retail unit. The main staircase continues to the very top of the building, to access a large flat roof above the third floor.

Although the original spine walls remain intact, the interior has been modernised and no significant period features - fire places, cornices, skirtings etc - remain.



Site Location



Aerial View



Site Map
Scale 1:1250 @ A3

Planning Considerations



Site Map
Scale 1:1250 @ A3

 Bloomsbury Conservation Area



Site Map
Scale 1:1250 @ A3

 Grade I Listed  Grade II Listed



Existing Photographs



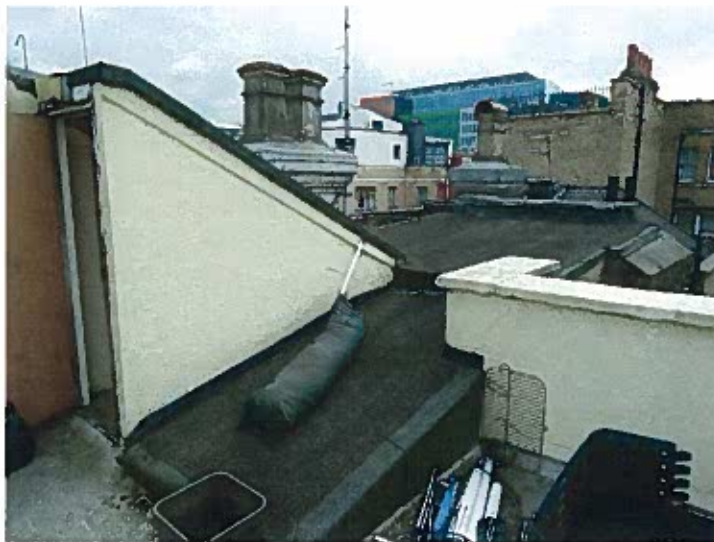
Entrance to Upper Floors



Flat Roof at First Floor Level



Rear Elevation



Rooftop Access



Existing Roof



Stairwell Entrance



View to Half Landing



Rear Office Window at Second Floor Level



Rear Office Window at First Floor Level



Half Landing Kitchen



Typical Office - Front Facade



Typical Office - Front Facade

Planning History

A Pre-Application Planning Enquiry was submitted in August 2011. A response was received on 9 September, reference CA\2011\ENQ\04926.

We have taken into account the comments made in the Officer's Reponse Letter, and now submit a revised, reduced scale scheme. Where advice does differ from the proposals, we have outlined clearly why we believe it is appropriate to do so.

Use

We propose to convert the upper floors of the building to residential use. Recent local development is returning the character of this area to a more residential quarter and these proposals are similar to those carried out at 33, 37, 42 and 43 Museum Street in recent years.

The cafe on the lower floors will remain in place unaltered.

Community facilities within a short walk of the site would support the residential use of the site. It is close to the green spaces of Lincoln's Inn Field and Gray's Inn Fields, and there is a broad mix of retail, cultural and leisure facilities within the vicinity including the British Museum at the end of Museum Street.

Amount / Scale

The scheme includes relocating the existing staircase to the back of the site. A small extension is proposed at roof level, to provide sufficient headroom at the top of the stairs, and the roof itself will be landscaped.

These works will not be visible from the street, and will have no impact upon surrounding buildings.

It is proposed to landscape the flat roof at first floor level, to provide additional private amenity space. Existing flues and drainage pipes from the ground floor retail and neighbouring property will be redirected, and redundant plant will be removed and disposed of.

This will offer a vastly improved outlook to the occupants of 28 Museum Street, as well as the surrounding buildings.

Layout

It is proposed to convert the three upper floors to a single, self-contained 3-bed dwelling.

Comments made by the Council in their response to enquiry reference CA\2011\ENQ\04926 have been used to develop the layout. The key design changes are as follows:

- The existing crosswall and spine wall have been retained to preserve the existing proportions of the front and rear principle rooms.
- The balcony to the second floor rear window has been omitted.
- The sliding sash window at first floor level has been replaced with traditional timber French doors.

We do, however, still propose to relocate the stair into the space currently occupied by the small ancillary rooms.

These spaces are too small for conversion to modern bathrooms or bedrooms, but by relocating the stair, these rooms can be integrated within the main body of the building and the space can be more beneficially used.

Reconstructing the staircase also offers the opportunity to enlarge the half-landings, and to regulate the wobbly, uneven steps.

It is proposed to reuse the existing original balusters and newel posts in the new arrangement.

It should also be noted that:

- Contemporary insertions into the existing plan layout in the form of new bathrooms and kitchen will all be of non load bearing construction, capable of being removed without structural implications to the original fabric.

Inclusive Design

The Grade II listed nature of the existing building means it is not feasible to adopt all the Lifetime Homes standards, as this would mean inappropriate internal and external alterations. The works will, however, comply with Building Regulations and the Equality Act 2010.

Please refer to the separate Lifetime Homes Assessment at the end of this report for further information.

Appearance

The proposed conversion will protect and enhance the existing, unique character of the building. External alterations are all limited to the back of the property, which is currently considerably less attractive. There are no remaining historical features of merit inside the building, so the proposals offer the opportunity of improving the quality of the interior.

The existing windows will be overhauled and the existing external facade will be refurbished. All external architraves, cornices and details will be retained.

The proposed French doors to the first floor rear facade will be timber painted to match existing and be period in detail.

New boiler flues, and kitchen and bathroom extracts will discharge through the roof or rear elevation.

Landscaping

The existing building occupies the whole of the site, and as such there are no grounds around the property. We propose landscaping the existing flat roofs which have historically been unofficially used as terraces.

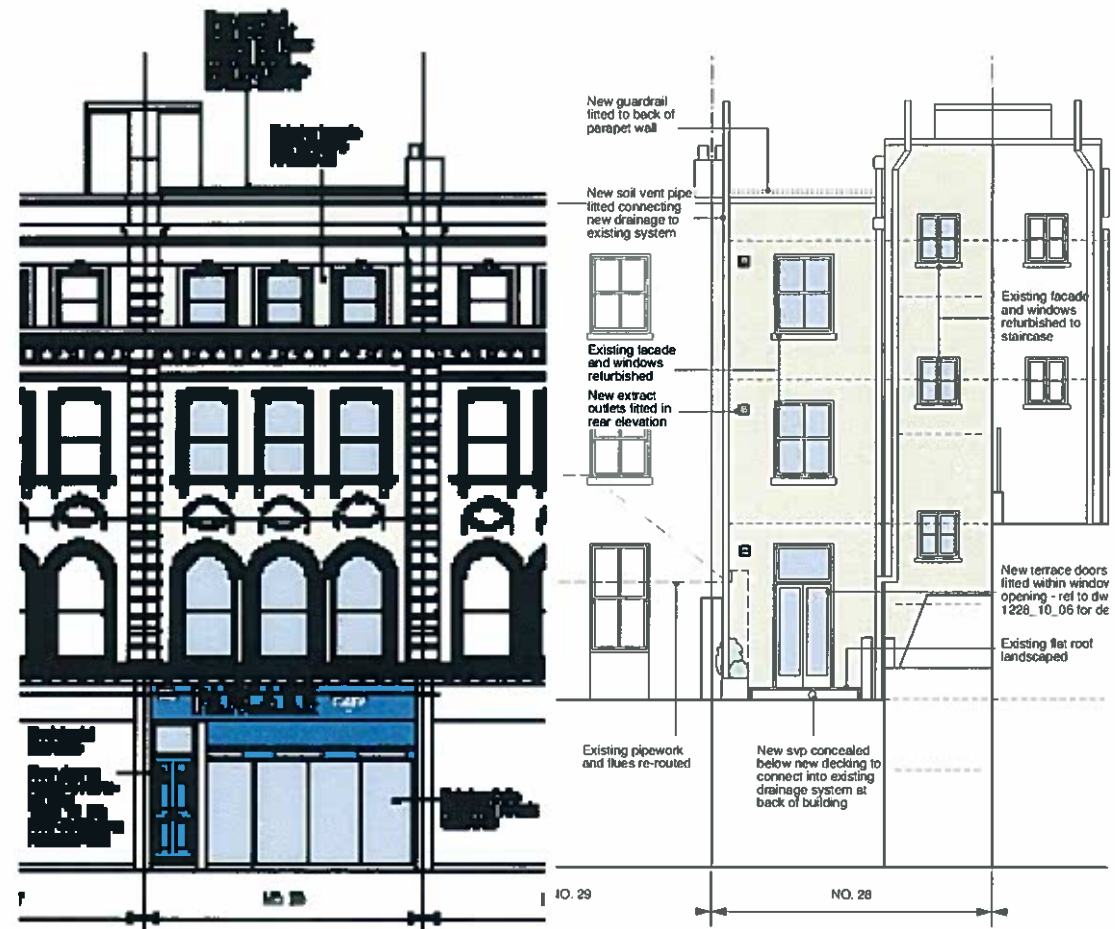
Proposed materials include hardwood timber decking to accept planted containers, with new external water supplies.

A new guard rail will be fixed to the back of the parapet wall at roof level. This will extend approximately 150mm above the top of the wall, but will be set back nom 200mm, to minimise the visual impact from the street.

Refuse and Waste Management

A refuse strategy will be incorporated into the design, with provision for segregated storage of refuse and recycling allowed.

It is intended that Camden will collect waste on a weekly basis.



Transport and Access

Public Transport

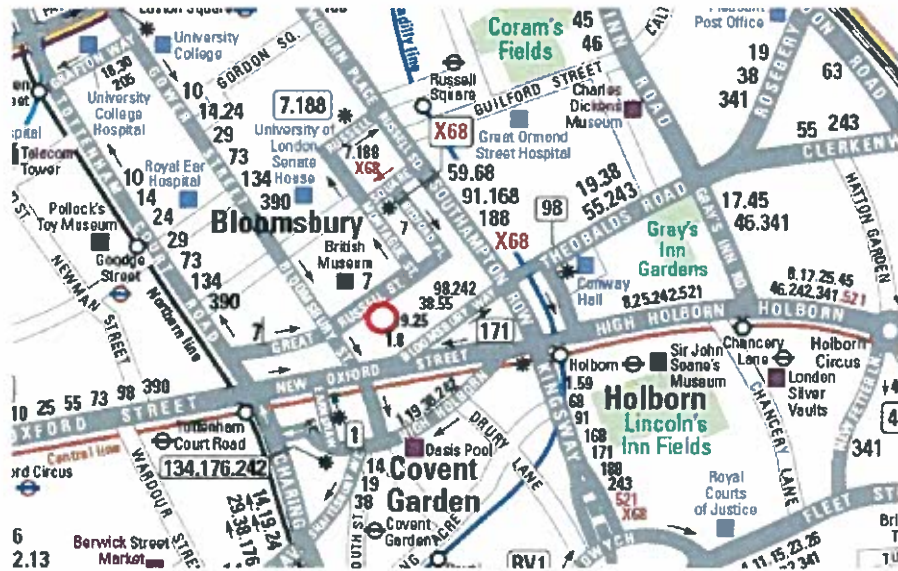
The site is within a very short walk of Holborn, Covent Garden and Russell Square tube stations. It is also well connected in terms of local bus routes.

Parking

There is no parking provision. Private arrangements must be made for cycle storage although there is sufficient space at ground floor level for bikes to be stored internally.

Pedestrian Access

The existing entrance has a threshold step which will be fitted with a contrasting nosing. It is not possible to drop the ground floor level internally without adversely affecting the Cafe vaults below, and it is not practical to raise the pavement locally due to proximity of a manhole and the Cafe seating.



Sustainability Strategy

This project is predominantly the refurbishment of an existing property. It will, however, offer the opportunity to replace all the existing heating and hot water services and the chance to upgrade the principle thermal elements.

It is intended that the new dwelling will include sustainable and energy efficient measures as follows:

Lighting

Low energy lighting will be specified throughout.

Ventilation

Passive ventilation will be provided through trickle vents. Rooms will generally be ventilated by means of opening windows.

Heating and Hot Water

A Green Tariff energy source will be selected. A boiler with a min. NOx4 rating will be specified.

Water Usage and Recycling

White goods with 'A' ratings will be specified. All sanitary fittings will be specified to minimise water consumption, including aerator taps and shower heads, and efficient dual flush toilets. A water meter will be installed. Refuse and recycling facilities will be accommodated within scheme.

Biodiversity

The new roof terraces will offer the opportunity to bring the site back into use as a garden environment, helping to protect the existing habitats of local wildlife species and biodiversity.

Lifetime Homes Assessment

Lifetime Homes Assessment

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|---|---|
| <p>1.0 Car Parking Width
Not applicable. There is no parking provided in the scheme.</p> <p>2.0 Access from Car Parking
Not applicable. There is no parking provided in the scheme.</p> <p>3.0 Approach Gradient
The existing entrance has a threshold step which will be fitted with a contrasting nosing. It is not possible to drop the ground floor level internally without adversely affecting the Cafe vaults below, and it is not practical to raise the pavement locally due to proximity of a manhole and the Cafe seating.</p> <p>4.0 Entrances
External, timer controlled local lighting will be provided.
It is not proposed to fit a canopy over the entrance, as this would distract from the existing historic facade. Neither is it possible to form a level threshold into the building, as described in Section 3.0 above. However, the existing doorway does provide an effective clear opening of 800mm.</p> <p>5.0 Communal Stairs and Lifts
The proposal is a single dwelling, with independent access from the street.
Rebuilding the staircase, as proposed, offers the opportunity to improve access into the building. The existing stairs are uneven, non-uniform and wobbly, with small half-landings. The new stairs can have a consistent tread and riser, in line with Lifetime Homes recommendations.</p> <p>6.0 Doors and Hallways
The existing front door will be replaced to match existing.
All new internal doors will provide a min. 750 effective clear opening width.</p> <p>7.0 Wheelchair Access
The proposed dwelling cannot be described as fully wheelchair accessible, due to the constraints of the existing building.
These include internal changes of level internally and to enter the building, which it is not possible to overcome in this scale of development. Future alterations - such as the installation of an internal stairlift and a temporary ramp externally - would provide wheelchair access and the new layout has sufficient space for wheelchair users to comfortably occupy.</p> | <p>8.0 Living Room
The living room to the dwelling is only accessible via the staircase, but the 900 mm stair width would be adequate for a chair lift to be installed.</p> <p>9.0 Bedspace
All living spaces and bedrooms are only accessible via the staircase, but the width would be adequate for a chair lift to be installed.</p> <p>10.0 Entrance Level WC and Shower Drainage
All bathroom spaces are located on the upper floors, although access could be provided for wheelchair users by installing a chair lift. The bathrooms will all be capable of adaptation to fully compliant wheelchair accessible shower rooms and toilets.</p> <p>11.0 Bathroom and WC Walls
Walls in the bathrooms will be capable of taking future adaptations such as handrails.</p> <p>12.0 Stair Lift / Through-Floor Lift
The proposed staircase has a 900mm clear distance between the stair wall and the edge of the opposite handrail/ balustrade. Unobstructed 'landings' are provided at the top and bottom of the stairs.</p> <p>13.0 Tracking Hoist Route
The proposals provide a reasonable route for a potential hoist from main bedroom to the bathroom, and second bedroom to the ensuite.</p> <p>14.0 Bathroom Layout
Both the main bathroom and ensuite bathroom could be converted to fully compliant disabled shower rooms.</p> <p>15.0 Windows
It is proposed that the existing windows will be fully refurbished to open smoothly. The living room windows are currently located 800mm from finished floor level.</p> <p>16.0 Controls, Fixtures and Fittings
Switches, sockets, ventilation and service controls will be located between 450mm and 1200mm from finished floor level.</p> |
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Heritage Statement

Heritage Statement

The following report outlines the work proposed to the fabric of the existing building:

External Works

1.0 Front Elevation

- 1.1 No alterations are proposed to the upper front elevation. It is intended to survey the existing facade and carry out general repairs, a thorough clean and redecoration. The existing timber sash windows will be refurbished as described on the drawings.
- 1.2 The main entrance door will be replaced with a matching timber panelled door, detailed and painted to match existing. Refer to dwg 1228_10_07 for details.
- 1.3 No alterations are proposed to the cafe facade.

2.0 Rear Elevation

- 2.1 The existing sash windows to second and third floors will be surveyed, repaired and redecorated.
- 2.2 A new soil vent pipe will be fitted to suit the new layout, connecting to the existing below ground drainage system. Rain water pipes will be retained unaltered.
- 2.3 It is proposed to remove the first floor window to the rear of the property and replace it with timber French doors detailed and painted to match the existing period features. Refer to dwg 1228_10_06 for details.

3.0 First Floor Roof Terrace

- 3.1 The existing flat roof (asphalt) and flashings will be checked and repaired/replaced if necessary. New timber decking will be laid to form a roof terrace.
- 3.2 Existing flues and drainage to be rerouted where necessary. Any new pipework sections will match existing.

4.0 Roof Works

- 4.1 The existing flat roof covering (asphalt), chimneys, and lead flashings will be checked and repaired/replaced if necessary. New timber decking will be laid to form a roof terrace. A guardrail will be fitted to the back of the parapet wall, as indicated on drawings.
- 4.2 A new roof terrace access door will be fitted to replace the existing doorset.

Interior Works

A schedule of Works for the alterations to the interior of the existing building is outlined below. It should be noted that the existing building has no notable decorative elements contemporary with the original building.

5.0 Ground Floor Interior Works

- 5.1 New electrical sockets and lighting will be installed throughout, with care taken not to damage any original lath & plaster walls or original floorboards, should these be encountered.
- 5.2 The existing staircase is to be carefully removed and a new staircase installed to the rear of the property with new supporting structure where necessary. Existing newel posts and balusters are to be retained for reuse in the new staircase.
- 5.3 The existing secondary double-doors are to be redecorated with new ironmongery.
- 5.4 All walls and ceilings are to be redecorated and repaired where necessary.

6.0 First, Second and Third Floor Interior Works

- 6.1 New studwork partition walls will all be non-load bearing construction, and therefore capable of being added (and therefore also removed) without structural implications to the original fabric.
- 6.2 All original floorboards are to be retained in place, with new soft wood boards to match existing if required where original boards are absent.
- 6.3 Existing sanitaryware and kitchen units to be removed from half landings. New sanitaryware and kitchen units to be fitted where noted on the drawings, together with new electrical sockets and lighting throughout. Care should be taken not to damage any original lath or plaster should any be encountered.
- 6.4 Original structural floor timbers are to be retained in place. If upon further site investigation during the works it becomes apparent that original timbers are decayed or inadequate, then advice will be sought. Half landing floor timbers will be removed to accommodate the new stair and new timbers will be inserted to form larger floor landings.
- 6.5 New electrical sockets and lighting will be installed throughout, with care taken not to damage any original features, should these be encountered.
- 6.6 Pipe runs will be accommodated without impacting upon the historic fabric (either by notching joists, concealing within cupboard units, or running within a false ceiling).
- 6.7 Any historic features uncovered during the works - original cornices, wallpaper etc - will be carefully protected and either restored or temporarily covered over.

Land Use Assessment

Land Use Assessment

Under the current policy framework, the Council will protect existing employment sites and premises that meet the needs of modern businesses and employers, but will also consider other uses of older office premises, if they involve the provision of permanent housing.

However, policy DP13 states that unless it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for business use, the Council will resist a change to non-business uses.

The key issues for consideration in this case are:

The Relationship of The Site To Nearby Land Uses

The area has had a mixed character for some time. There has been a significant trend towards the reintroduction of residential uses both in the area and in the immediate vicinity of the application site. Our proposals are similar to those carried out at 33, 37, 42 and 43 Museum Street in recent years.

Community facilities within a short walk of the site would support the residential use of the site. It is close to the green spaces of Lincoln's Inn Field, Russell Square Gardens, Gray's Inn Fields, and there is a broad mix of retail, cultural and leisure facilities within walking distance.

It is proposed to maintain the existing A1/A3 retail unit on the ground and basement floors.

Whether The Building Is In A Reasonable Condition to Allow The Use to Continue

Business requirements have changed dramatically over the past 10 years, as a result of technological advancements, statutory legislation and employee expectations.

There is no access for wheelchair or ambulant disabled users, and the toilet provision situated on the half landings are insufficient for the size of the office accommodation.

The existing services and facilities need complete renewal before the upper floors may be re-let, the cost of which in the current market is way in excess of anticipated rental revenues.

Whether The Building Could Be Converted To Other Business Uses

The upper floors are not suitable for conversion to other employment uses. Highway considerations preclude both B2 and B8 uses because of their impact on residential amenity and highways, even if the premises were physically suited to conversion, which is not the case.

A B1b use is considered unsuitable because of the impact upon the historic fabric, while a B1c light industrial use would face many of the constraints of the B2 uses. The property also lacks dedicated servicing and parking facilities.

There is a surplus of available office space in the vicinity, as supported by RIB's schedule overleaf.

It was on this basis that Pearl & Coutts, the previous owners of the property made the decision to sell. The offices have been vacant since October 2010 and there has been no interest since then.

Smaller-scale, start-up business are increasingly attracted to shared serviced desk space (eg Rent-A-Desk in Bloomsbury St, Regus in Mapledown Place etc) or coffee shops and cultural hubs, which offer flexible desk space and accessible WiFi.

Impact on the Fabric of the Listed Building

Although the interior of the building has lost almost all original decorative features, the plan form has survived.

The new proposals will retain the spine and cross walls, but the existing half landing ancillary spaces and the staircase will be removed, and a new stair constructed.

This will not only overcome the problems with the existing stair, but will result in the most effective use of the space available, consistent with Camden policies in relation to the re-use of Listed buildings.

Standard of Accommodation

All habitable rooms will exceed the minimum sizes specified in Camden Planning Guidance. The conversion will provide family accommodation for a local resident working within the Borough.

It will not be possible to achieve Lifetime Homes standards due to the constraints of working with a historic building. Please refer to the separate Lifetime Homes Assessment for further details.

Parking

The site is a central location with good public transport links, and within close proximity to shops, services and entertainment. There is currently no private parking for upper floor occupants, and this will not change in the new scheme. On-site, covered bike storage will be provided as shown on the plan.

The loss of accommodation suitable for small firms

Appendices

- 1 Email by Leigh Peters
Pearl & Coutts (September 2011)
- 2 Schedule of Available Accommodation
Robert Irving Burns Property Consultants (September 2011)