

7 Upper St Martins Lane

London WC2H 9DL

Heritage appraisal



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Consultancy for the
Historic Built Environment

KMHHeritage

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1 Summary

7 Upper St Martins Lane was originally two buildings dating from the early 19th century, which were combined to form one building in the late 1880s. It was used for various commercial purposes throughout the late Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war periods. In the late 1930s various works were carried out to re-separate, at least partially, the two buildings.

In the early-mid 1970s various alterations were made at the rear of the building, including a rear extension to increase and improve toilet facilities and internal reorganisation of accommodation. Further work occurred in the late 1970s and the 1980s. Major refurbishment took place in the 1990s: two additional mansard floors were added, a lift installed, and the stairs adjacent to the lift was inserted at this time. A large portion of the rear elevation was rebuilt.

The story of the building makes clear that 7 Upper St Martins Lane has evidential, historical and communal heritage value. It is also clear that 7 Upper St Martins Lane has some 'architectural' and 'artistic interest' (PPS5) or 'aesthetic value' (English Heritage's 'Conservation Principles'). However, this value has been very considerably reduced over many years by substantial and continuous alterations. Those alterations are not of value in themselves.

The period since the War has seen the building almost entirely altered internally and the complete rebuilding of its roof. Its fabric, apart from the front elevation, is largely 20th century. The history of 7 Upper St Martins Lane since the late 19th century has been that of a single building, notwithstanding the partial re-separation of the buildings in the 1930s, which suggests that what now exists as a partial 'party wall' also dates from that time.

The proposed mixed commercial/retail and residential scheme will bring the listed building back into use. It will reverse harmful change that has occurred to the building in recent decades. It will provide high quality, attractive and economically sustainable accommodation, that is consistent with the local planning authority's aspirations for land use in this part of the borough.

The special interest and heritage significance of the listed building will be enhanced by this scheme. Nothing that is central to the significance of the listed building is harmed or lost in the proposed scheme. The effect on other heritage assets will be positive. The scheme will address the condition and appearance of an unused listed building in their setting, and they and the overall area will benefit from its active and sustainable use.

For these reasons, and as explained at length in this report, the proposed development will preserve and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, positively enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, and will also preserve and enhance the setting of the adjacent listed building. The proposed development is therefore consistent with national and local policy and guidance for the historic built environment.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This heritage and urban design report has been prepared on behalf of Angle Property (St Martins) Ltd and Telenomics Ltd in support of a listed building consent and planning applications for the redevelopment of 7 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9DL.

Purpose

- 2.2 The purpose of the report is to assess the proposed development against national and local policies relating to the historic built environment.
- 2.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by MSMR Architects, and the planning statement prepared by Matthews & Goodman.

Organisation

- 2.4 This introduction is followed by a description of the area, the site and their history. Section 4 describes the proposed scheme and its effects. The policy and guidance relevant to this matter is set out in Section 5. Section 6 assesses the proposed development against that policy and guidance. Appendices contain a location plan, historic maps, the list description and selected photographs.

Author

- 2.5 The author of this report is Kevin Murphy B.Arch MUBC RIBA IHBC. He was an Inspector of Historic Buildings in the London Region of English Heritage and dealt with a range of major projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas in London. Prior to this, he had been a conservation officer with the London Borough of Southwark, and was Head of Conservation and Design at Hackney Council between 1997 and 1999. He trained and worked as an architect, and has a specialist qualification in urban and building conservation. Kevin Murphy was

included for a number of years on the Heritage Lottery Fund's Directory of Expert Advisers.

- 2.6 Historical research and assistance for this report was provided by Dr Ann Robey FSA, a conservation and heritage professional with over twenty years experience. She has worked for leading national bodies as well as smaller local organizations and charities. She is a researcher and writer specialising in architectural, social and economic history, with a publication record that includes books, articles, exhibitions and collaborative research.

3 The existing building and its significance

- 3.1 This section of the report describes the history and development of 7 Upper St Martins Lane and its context, and provides an assessment of heritage significance.

The history of 7 Upper St Martins Lane

- 3.2 Located just within the borough of Camden but on the border with Westminster, is a small block of properties on a corner fronting onto West Street, Tower Street and Upper St Martin's Lane. On the south side of the block is Nos. 8 West Street (a wedge-shaped property with a plain Dutch gable), Guild House (sometimes numbered Nos.2-6 West Street), No.7 Upper St Martin's Lane and No.18 Tower Street. To the north side of the block is the St Martin's Theatre built in 1916 to the designs of W G R Sprague, where Agatha Christie's *Mousetrap* has played since 1974. The block is built on the borough boundary – and a St Giles in the Fields parish boundary mark dating from 1691 is placed high on the front wall of Guild House. Historically the site marks the far south-west of the parish of St Giles, where it adjoined the neighbouring parishes of St Ann and St Martin (figure 1).



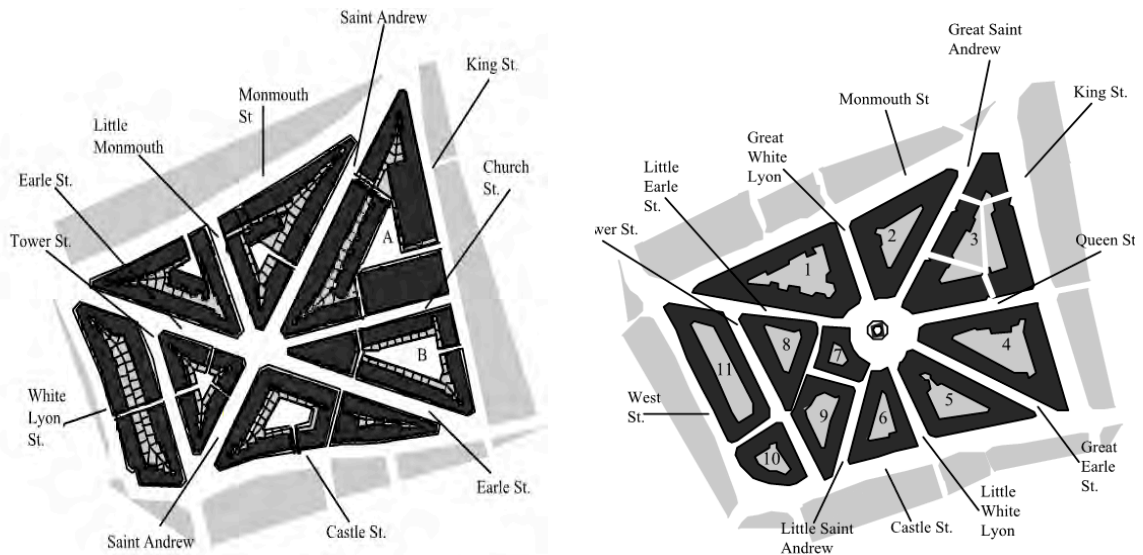
Figure 1: Map of the parish of St Giles in the Fields in 1720 [© LB Camden Local History Library]

- 3.3 The block forms part of the original planned development of Seven Dials built by speculator Thomas Neale between 1690 and 1710.¹ But it is likely that both Tower Street and West Street were laid out in the early 17th century and had to be incorporated into the radiating street plan built by Neale.² By the 17th century the parish of St Giles was becoming a popular residential part of an expanding city. This was due to the building of fashionable Covent Garden in the 1630s, but also as a direct result of pressure for land for residential development after the Great Fire of 1666 devastated the old City and caused a population movement westward. In 1690 William III granted Thomas Neale the freehold of the Marshland or Cock and Pye

¹ William C. Beer, *The Seven Dials: "freak of town-planning", or simply ahead of its time*, *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, (2010) 3:1, pp1-18

² LB Camden, Conservation Area Statement: *Seven Dials (Covent Garden)* 7

Fields, one of the last remaining undeveloped patches of land in central London, in return for raising large amounts of money for the Crown.³



Figures 2 & 3: Initial building proposal by Neale in 1691 and what was built by 1720 from W. Beer, *The Seven Dials: Journal of Urbanism* (2010)

- 3.4 Neale's vision was to establish a stylish residential area, but at the same time to maximise his return so that the development would be profitable enough to honour his financial commitments. His solution was imaginative and still stands today as the unique street layout known as Seven Dials. Neale submitted a plan in 1691 featuring a star-shaped street pattern with a sundial pillar at the centre, a layout that allowed more and wider shops and houses to be built. The initial building licence showed at least 311 houses were to be built on the estate. John Evelyn records in his *Diary* in October, 1694: 'I went to see the building neere St. Giles's, where 7 streets make a star from a Doric pillar plac'd in the middle of a circular area'. At the top of the column were dials, each facing one of the streets and thus the district became known as Seven Dials.⁴

³ 'Site of Marshland (Seven Dials)', Survey of London: volume 5: St Giles-in-the-Fields, pt II (1914), pp. 112-114

⁴ 'Site of Marshland (Seven Dials)', Survey of London: volume 5: St Giles-in-the-Fields, pt II (1914), pp. 112-114 In fact only 6 faces on the sundial – Neale inserted an additional street after the plans were approved

- 3.5 In 1695, Neale disposed of the site and the rest of the development was carried out by individual builders over the next 15 years. In the 1730's, the then owner, James Joyce, broke up the freehold, selling off the triangular sections separately.⁵ The first inhabitants were respectable professionals, but as the 18th century progressed the area became more commercialised and the houses were sub-divided into shops, lodgings and workshops. By the middle of the 18th century, the area had declined to such an extent that 39 night-watchmen were needed to keep the peace.



Figure 4: Horwood's map of 1792-9 showing the development of the corner site by that date

- 3.6 By the early 19th century the area became known, together with St. Giles to the north, as a notorious rookery and it was here that some of the poorest streets in London were located. In 1879 it was said that in the side streets off Seven Dials 'poverty is to be seen in its most painful features. The shops sell nothing but second or third hand

⁵ www.sevendials.com

articles – old dresses, old clothes, old hats, and at the top of the stairs of little underground cellars, old shoes, so patched and mended'.⁶

- 3.7 In May 1878, the freehold properties No. 7 Upper St Martin's Lane and Nos. 14 to 19 Tower Street were sold at auction for £4,500.⁷ They were described as 'a substantial block of six well-built houses and shops'.⁸ By 1883 Messrs Forder and Co's Ltd, Hansom Cab builders occupied No. 7 St Martin's Lane where they promoted their 'improved noiseless tyres'.⁹ In the 1890s Charles Booth's researchers described West Street as a street with a bad reputation full of pickpockets, burglars, bullies and prostitutes. Tower Street was said to be 'less bad than before as it had fewer inhabitants' and because a pneumatic carriage company had opened on the corner with No. 7 Upper St Martin's Lane.¹⁰ But even so, Tower Street and Lumber Court behind (where there was a common lodging house) were said to contain a greater proportion of criminals than West Street. All the streets were coloured black or purple on the poverty maps, indicating the poorest most 'vicious' class of inhabitant.

⁶ Charles Dickens (Jr.), *Dickens's Dictionary of London*, 1879

⁷ *The Times*, 6 May 1878,

⁸ *The Times*, 8 April 1878

⁹ *The Times*, 10 July 1883

¹⁰ LSE Booth Papers online, B354, pp188-189 The pneumatic tyre company was Messrs Forder and Co's Ltd

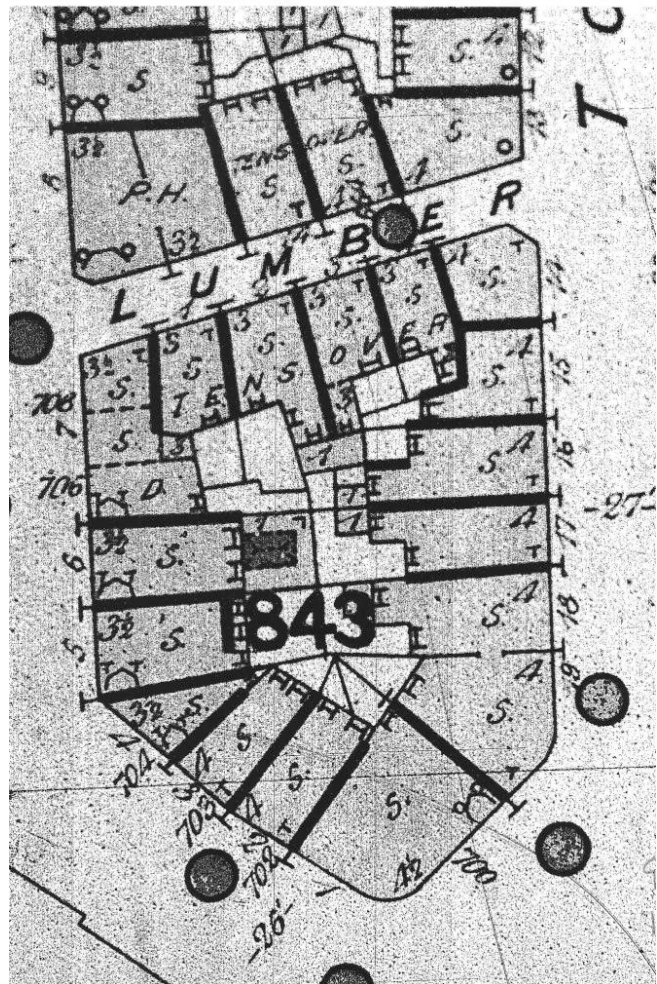


Figure 5: the Goad plan of 1888 [© LB Camden Local History Library]

- 3.8 The Goad plan of 1888 (Figure 5) shows the properties now known as No 18 Tower Street and No. 7 Upper St Martin's Lane which were described as four-storey shops and interestingly the two premises were joined internally to form a single unit. It was probably Messrs Forder and Co. Ltd, the Hansom Cab builders that joined the two properties together sometime in the 1880s to create a large showroom where the cabs were displayed (figure 6). By June 1903 Forder's, which was by then 'by Royal appointment' held 'the largest stock of finished Hansoms in the world' at their showrooms at Nos. 7-9 Upper St Martin's Lane.¹¹

¹¹ *The Times*, 10 Jul 1883, 13 June 1903



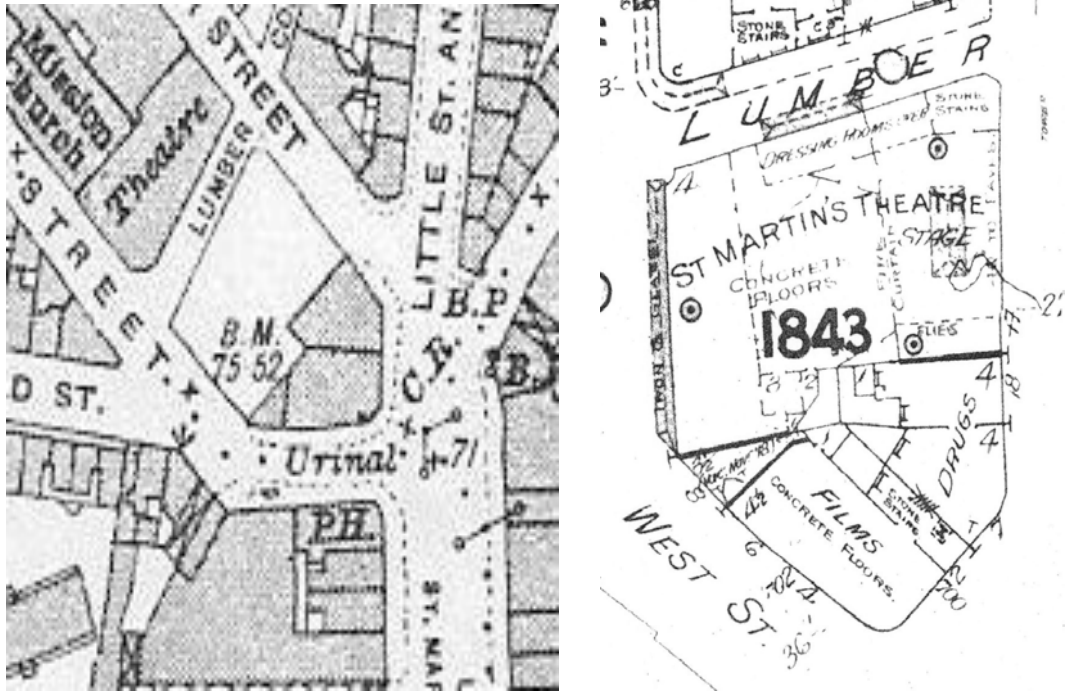
Figure 6: 1902 Advert for Forder & Co who occupied the building in the early 20th century

- 3.9 With the coming of the car the showrooms abandoned carriages but were occupied before the First World War by Valveless Ltd. who sold cars for £395, and in 1922 by the Brompton Motor Company who specialised in Lorries.
- 3.10 By the time of the 1916 OS map much of the block had been cleared in preparation for the building of the St Martin's Theatre which opened in the same year (see figure 8). The only surviving properties were Nos. 8 West Street, Guild House, No.7 Upper St Martin's Lane and No.18 Tower Street, all of which remain today. In the Goad plans of 1923 and 1934 the property at No 7 Upper St Martin's Lane and No 18 Tower Street is labelled 'Drugs' and was probably a drugs warehouse.¹² Above the commercial ground floor in all the properties it is likely that there was residential accommodation and office use from the early 19th century. At No. 7 Upper St Martin's Lane in 1856 a music agent - a Mr Pattern - represented a Hungarian band¹³ In 1933 and 1934, the actor John Gielgud had accommodation at No. 7 Upper St Martin's Lane writing several times to *The Times* from that address. In 1939 a 'good tenant' was required for an 'attractive unfurnished flat near Leicester Square – very central, 4

¹² Interestingly during the 1860s, No. 7 Upper St Martin's Lane had been occupied by a chemist as adverts were placed in *The Times* for adverts for druggists assistants

¹³ *The Times*, 17 Sept 1856

rooms, kitchen, bath etc for rent at £135 per annum' at No 7 Upper St Martin's Lane.¹⁴

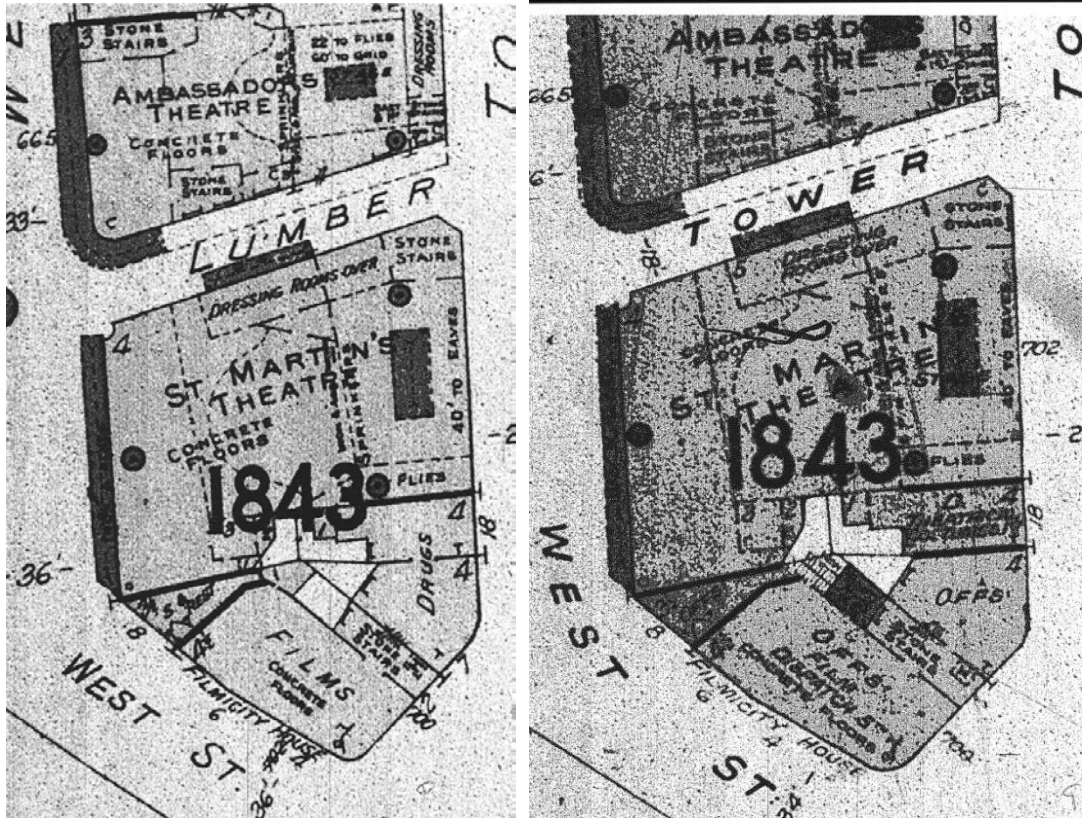


Figures 7 & 8: OS Map of 1916 and Goad insurance plan of 1923 [© LB Camden Local History Library]

- 3.11 The property now known as Guild House (formerly Nos. 2-6 West Street) has from the early 1920s been associated with the film industry and acting. Today it is the home of Equity – the actors union, but before they moved there it was the home of the Film Producers Guild and was probably rebuilt between 1888 and 1916, when a single block replaced a number of smaller properties shown in the Goad insurance plan of 1888 (figures 5 & 7). By the 1920s it is described as 'Films' on the Goad plan and had a fireproof concrete floor (important if flammable films were stored there) and in 1934 was called Filmicity House (figure 9). In 1958 the property was in use as offices and for film dispatch. By 1967 The Film Producers Guild Ltd

¹⁴ *The Times*, 15 Feb 1939

comprised nineteen companies, and their freehold interest in the property was sold in 1968.¹⁵



Figures 9 & 10: Goad Plans 1934 and 1958 [© LB Camden Local History Library]

3.12 At some time between 1934 and 1940 alterations were undertaken to No. 18 Tower Street to separate it to some degree from the adjacent No 7 Upper St Martin's Lane (see figures 9 & 10). The thick black line on the Goad plan of 1958 shows a separation between the two properties. In 1940 at the request of the Medical Office of Health, a WC at the property was reconnected to the mains which may have been in relation to bomb damage – in nearby West Street a bomb did hit the mission church during the war.¹⁶ A plan produced at the time gives a somewhat confusing picture of the layout of the ground floor of the premises (figure 11). It seems to show that there was a

¹⁵ *The Times*, 27 Jan 1951, 5 Jul 1968

¹⁶ LB Camden Local Studies, Drainage Plans (1940)

separate shop at No. 18 and an entrance beyond that to a passageway that gave access to the upper floors of the building and also an exit from No 7 Upper St Martin's Lane which is marked as a shop in 1940.

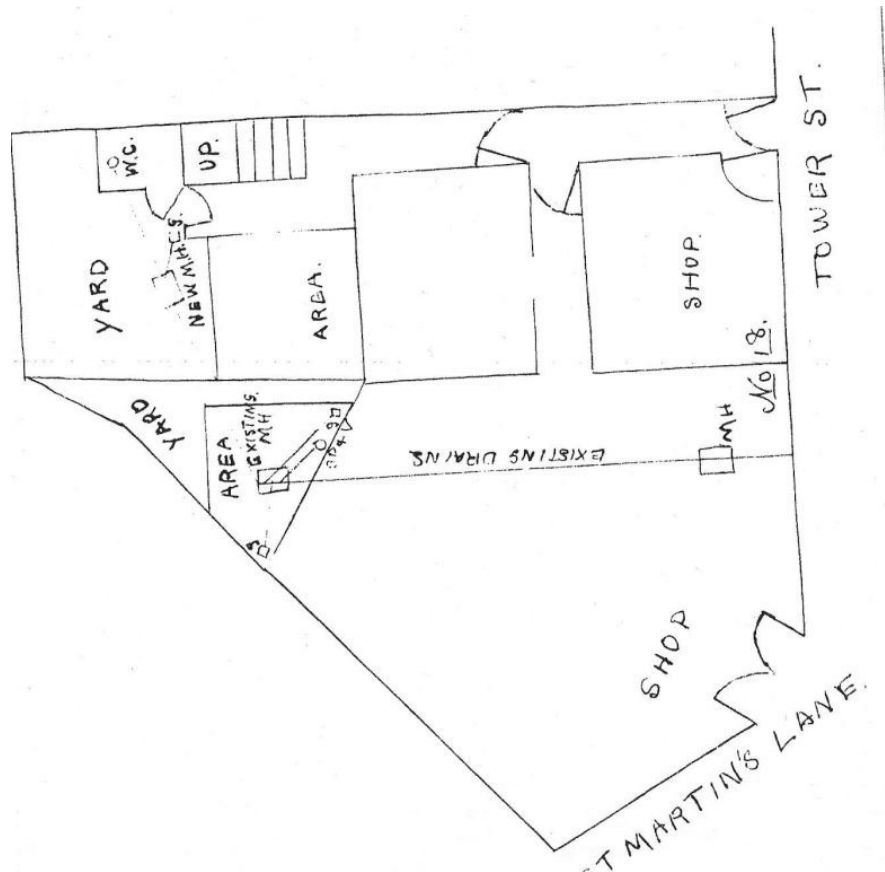
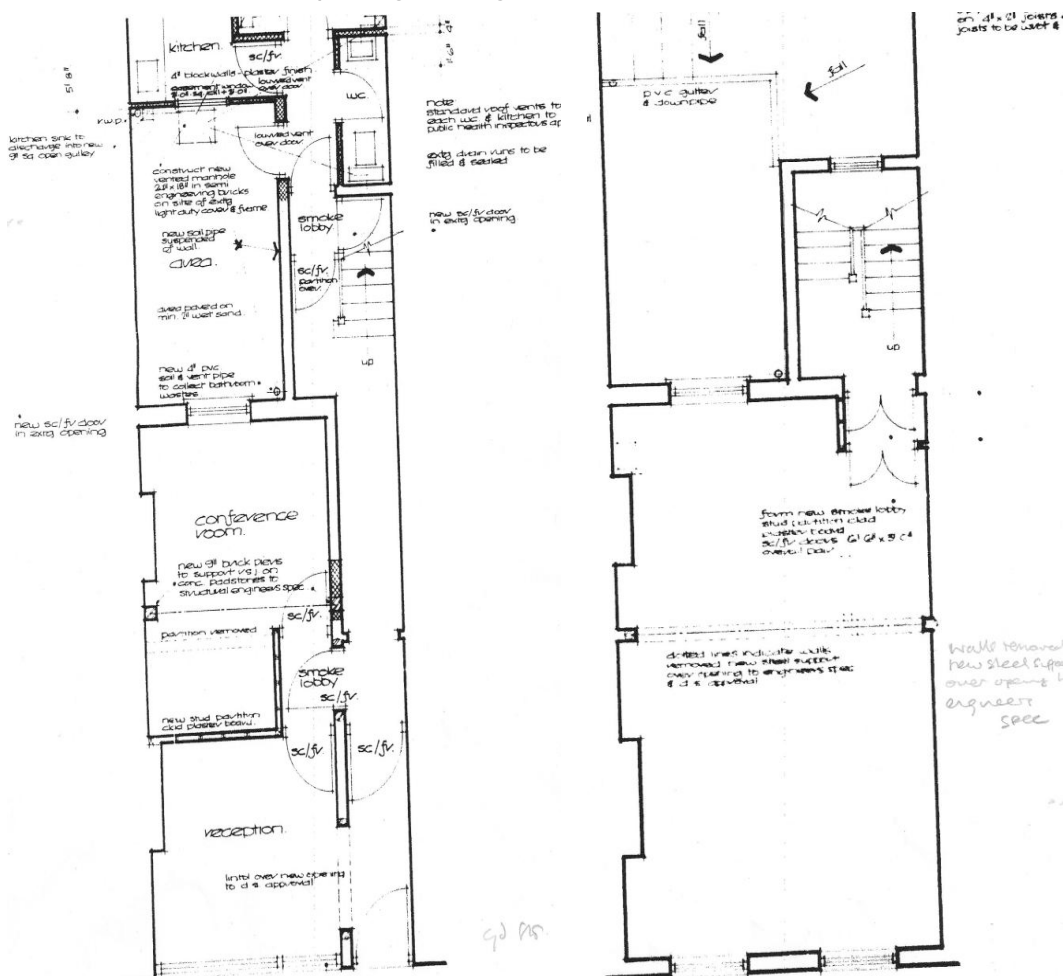


Figure 11: The premises in 1940 [© Camden Local Studies, Drainage Plans for 18 Tower St (1940)]

- 3.13 By the 1950s, No. 18 was a theatrical costumier (figure 11), a use that continued into the 1970s. In November 1974 alterations were made to the drainage of No. 18, for West End Costumers (Peter Dunlop) Ltd. The premises were said to be associated with Nos. 2, 3 and 6 West Street (Guild House) so the separation shown on the Goad plan may not have been at all levels of the building. The works included a rear extension to increase and improve toilet facilities and on the third floor the back room was split in two, to make a separate kitchen and bathroom. At the same time the roof was repaired,

brickwork was cleaned and the two rooms on the first floor were joined into one with the removal of the internal wall and the insertion of a new steel support over the opening (see figures 12 & 13).

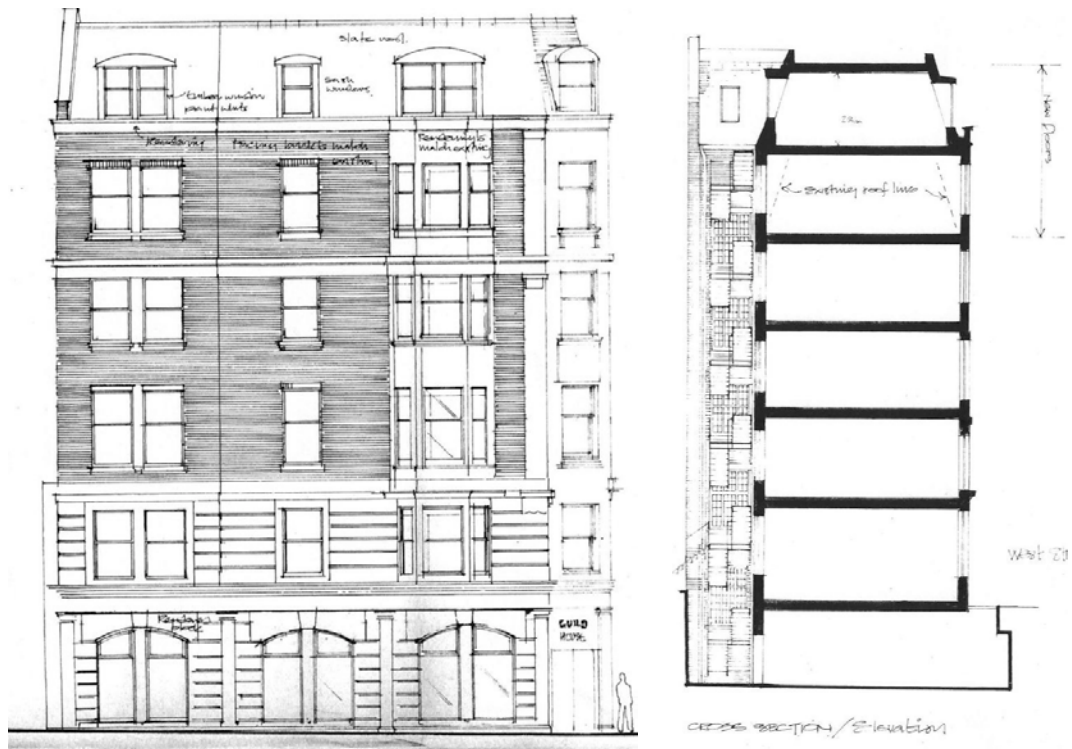


Figures 12 & 13: Ground and Third floor plans of No 18 Tower Street in 1974, [© LB Camden, Planning files]

3.14 In 1977 a series of floor plans were produced that show proposals for Guild House, which by then included the properties that were formerly known as No. 7 Upper St Martin's Lane and No. 18 Tower Street. The works involved the provision of a ventilation hatch at roof level at No. 18 Tower Street, various internal works, including the erection of partitions and the formation of new door openings. They were being proposed on behalf of the Guild of Sound and Vision holdings Ltd. of No. 1

Paternoster Row.¹⁷ The architects for the project were the Howard Sant Partnership of Nos. 87-91 New Bond Street.

- 3.15 In January 1985 George J Mckinna, RIBA of Woking drew up plans for the refurbishment of the existing building known as Guild House (Nos. 2-6 West Street) on behalf of the then owner, Steat Estate Ltd. of Claygate, Surreys.¹⁸ The works which were approved by the council included the refurbishment of the existing office building, minor demolition at the rear; the removal of the roof and the insertion of a new floor and the formation of a new roof above (see figures 14 & 15). On the ground floor there were works to provide a new window fenestration and the building was to continue in office use.¹⁹



Figures 14 & 15: Guild House -insertion of extra floor and re-fenestration
c. 1986 plans by George J Mckinna [© LB Camden, Planning files]

- 3.16 In June 1989 a planning proposal was put forward on behalf of Ford Sellar Morris Ltd by Orms Designers &

¹⁷ LB Camden, Planning Office files for No. 18 Tower Street

¹⁸ LB Camden, Planning Office files for No. 18 Tower Street

¹⁹ *ibid*

Architects of Bedford Street that would have seen the erection of an extension to Nos. 18 and 18a Tower Street involving adding two additional floors to make a five storey building (as had happened on the West street side of Guild House). The plan proposed a change of use of the existing residential accommodation at second and third floor levels of No. 18 Tower Street into office use. The works would have altered the elevations including the shop front and fascias, added new windows and internal alterations that would have completely removed of all partitions within and between both buildings. The staircase at No. 18a was to be removed; a lift inserted and the plans would have extended the basement and ground floors to the rear. The developer stated that the works would make a more articulated façade, more in scale with the adjoining building. Listed building consent was refused, as the Council decided that the planned works would constitute a demolition of these two listed buildings and a complete rebuilding behind a retained façade'.²⁰

- 3.17 Substantial works of conversion and alteration appear to have been undertaken as a result of the planning and listed building consent ref 1990/9070006/7 granted on appeal on 7 June 1990, which permitted 'Change of use of basement ground and first to fourth floors from Class B1 office use to mixed Class A1/A2/B1 use within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as shown on Location Plan (BCP1) Site Plan (BCP2) and supporting letter dated 23rd December 1993'. Two additional mansard floors were added, and a lift installed. It seems that the stairs adjacent to the lift was inserted at this time.

²⁰ LB Camden, Planning Office files for No. 18 Tower Street

The heritage context of the site and its context

Listed buildings

- 3.18 7 Upper St Martins Lane was listed Grade II in 1973 (the list description is contained in Appendix D). Two list descriptions exist, one for 'Guild House (South Wing), 18 Tower Street' and one for 'North Wing, 18 Tower Street', though both essentially describe the same building.
- 3.19 There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of 7 Upper St Martins Lane. Immediately to the west is St Martins Theatre, beyond which (on the opposite side of Tower Court) is the Ambassadors Theatre. To the north is 61-71 Monmouth Street and 42-48 Monmouth Street, on the eastern and western side of Monmouth Street respectively, on the section of Monmouth Street below Seven Dials. 22 Tower Street is a former school, on the northern side of the street to the northwest of 7 Upper St Martins Lane. All these buildings are listed Grade II.

The Seven Dials Estate and Covent Garden Conservation Areas

- 3.20 7 Upper St Martins Lane is located at the southernmost point of Camden's Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area, the southern boundary of which also forms the borough boundary with the City of Westminster. The present conservation area appraisal dates from 1998. The property is located within Sub-Area 1 of the conservation area. 7 Upper St Martins Lane is not specifically referred to in the conservation area appraisal (other than being identified as listed), though Tower Street is described thus:

Tower Street is dominated by warehouse buildings and the old Board School (listed Grade II). The 19th century school is yellow stock brick with red brick and stone dressings and has been converted into offices. Nos.4-10 was built in 1878 and is a four storey brick building with rendered string courses and tripartite sash windows

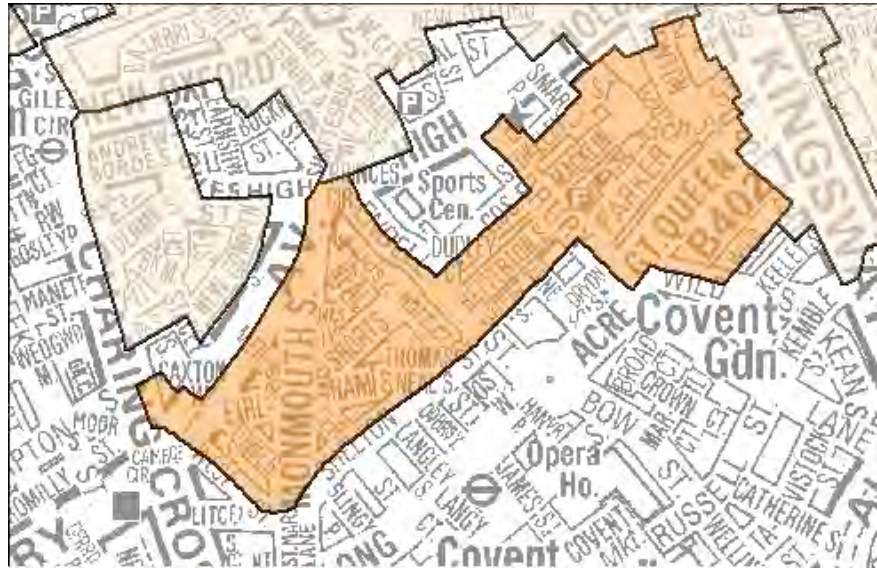


Figure 16: The Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area (© London Borough of Camden)

- 3.21 Nos 4-10 and 19-21 Tower Street/50-52 Monmouth Street, are identified as 'buildings which make a positive contribution' to the conservation area, as are 73 Monmouth Street and 1-9 Shelton Street. Most of the shop fronts in the southern portion of Monmouth Street are identified as being 'of merit'.



Figure 17: the Covent Garden Conservation Area; the blue line indicates the borough boundary

- 3.22 Figure 17 shows the relationship of Westminster City Council's Covent Garden Conservation Area to 7 Upper St Martins Lane. This relationship is indirect – there is only limited visibility of 7 Upper St Martins Lane from within the conservation area, and then only from a point on 7 St Martins Lane a considerable distance to the south.

Heritage significance

- 3.23 7 Upper St Martins Lane, and the listed buildings and the conservation areas in its vicinity are 'designated heritage assets', as defined by Annex 2 of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The unlisted listed buildings within the conservation areas, that contribute to their heritage significance, are 'undesigned heritage assets'.
- 3.24 'Significance' is defined in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic'. The English Heritage 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' that accompanies and explains the PPS puts it slightly differently – as 'the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest'.
- 3.25 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of 'heritage values' that may be present in a 'significant place'. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.
- 3.26 7 Upper St Martins Lane, and the listed and unlisted buildings of any discernible quality nearby, their relationship to one another and to the conservation areas, illustrates the evolution of this part of London. The story of this part of London illustrates a good deal about how the city evolved during the 19th century, about the transformation of the older city by social and economic

change and lifestyles in various periods, and about the effect this had on the historic building stock.

- 3.27 In terms of English Heritage's 'Conservation Principles', buildings can provide us with 'evidence about past human activity' and by means of their fabric, design and appearance communicate information about their past. Historical value is described as being illustrative or associative. 7 Upper St Martins Lane, along with other buildings in the area, plays an important part in providing that evidence and in communicating about the area. Buildings around it exude the essential character of the conservation area, and immediately communicate their nature and past to us.
- 3.28 7 Upper St Martins Lane has associations with social and commercial activities characteristic of the West End at various times, such as film and theatre. However, it does not have any associations with specific notable residents other than Sir John Gielgud (it is doubtful whether Gielgud actually lived in the building; it was quite possibly an office or agent address).
- 3.29 The building thus has evidential, historical and communal value. It is also clear that 7 Upper St Martins Lane has some 'architectural' and 'artistic interest' (PPS5) or 'aesthetic value' ('Conservation Principles'). In respect of design, 'Conservation Principles' says that 'design value... embraces composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) and usually materials or planting, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship'.
- 3.30 The aesthetic significance, or the special architectural interest of 7 Upper St Martins Lane as a listed building, has been considerably reduced over many years by substantial and continuous alterations. In many instances of listed buildings that have very altered, the alterations themselves contribute to the special interest of the building. That is not the case at 7 Upper St Martins Lane. Setting aside the almost continuous change that occurred from the late 19th century to the Second World War, the

period since the War has seen the building almost entirely altered internally and the complete rebuilding of its roof. Its fabric, apart from the front elevation, is largely 20th century. A large portion of the rear elevation was rebuilt in recent decades, a lift inserted and a new stairs placed alongside the lift. The second stairs in the building almost certainly dates from the late 1930s, and perhaps the 1950s. The stairs enclosure was, in any event, altered by the addition of toilet facilities in the 1970s. The building was altered in the 1990s. None of these changes are of any particularly quality or architectural value, though the present roof is certainly in keeping with the style of the building beneath it.

- 3.31 Though the list descriptions set the date of the building as being the early 19th century, it is clearly the case that its architectural character is late Victorian, and the building that we now have essentially came into being when the previous pair of buildings were joined into one. Its history since then has been that of a single building, notwithstanding the partial re-separation of the buildings in the 1930s, which suggests that what now exists as a partial 'party wall' also dates from that time.
- 3.32 The cumulative effect of the various changes that have occurred is a building whose historic plan layout has been long lost, which has been denuded of any original architectural detail, and whose fabric dates mostly from the 1990s or later.
- 3.33 However, the frontage to Upper Saint Martins Lane and Tower Street retains something of its architectural character as a historic building, and clearly makes a positive contribution to the Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area.

4 The proposed development and its effects

- 4.1 This section of the report describes the proposed development and the range of benefits it provides. No harm is caused to the special architectural and historic interest of 7 Upper St Martins Lane, the character and appearance of the Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area or the setting of nearby listed buildings – indeed these things are preserved and enhanced by the proposed development.
- 4.2 The proposed redevelopment of the site is illustrated in the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by MSMR Architects.

The need for the proposed scheme

- 4.3 The building is presently vacant, its previous occupant having left some time ago. As a building in the heart of the west end it clearly needs a use, one that will allow the building to contribute to the economy and life of the borough, and one that will provide it with a sustainable future.
- 4.4 As a listed building, the building needs that future in order to continue to form part of the historic built environment in central London, and to contribute to the character and appearance of the Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area.
- 4.5 In order for the building to have a sustainable future, a sensible use that is likely to produce a reasonable return for investment in the building is essential. That is the way in which the building will firstly be repaired and refurbished, and secondly the means by which its long-term future will be secured.
- 4.6 The scheme retains commercial/retail use ground and basement with apartments on the floors above. This is an entirely appropriate mix of uses for a historic building such as 7 Upper St Martins Lane, and echoes what would have been its original or early character: though the

evidence of their original layout has long disappeared, the two buildings were almost certainly built as houses, and – probably at a quite early point – the ground floors were converted to shops.

- 4.7 This mix of uses is what is now the optimum use for the listed building – it being proposed because that is what it is appropriate in commercial terms for a building such as 7 Upper St Martins Lane in this location. In order to provide residential accommodation, it is necessary to adapt the building further, and to undo some of the various changes that were made to the building during the 20th century.
- 4.8 It is essential that new apartments are attractive to the market: there would be little point in refurbishing 7 Upper St Martins Lane to provide residential accommodation that was unlikely to be suitably organised and laid out – this is a key factor in considering how the upper floors of the building are planned.
- 4.9 7 Upper St Martins Lane is not a listed building that is ever likely to receive grant aid or assistance of any kind: it clearly needs to be in sustainable economic use in order for its heritage significance to be capable of preservation.

The design and how it affects the listed building

- 4.10 The scheme makes a number of changes to the present layout of the listed building. The existing lift is retained, and the adjacent stairs reoriented to rise in the opposite direction. At the rear of the building, the largely 20th century rear extension is altered: the stairs and toilets are removed so as to create additional floor space for the apartments, and a new rear wall to the extension built.
- 4.11 The remnants of the ‘party wall’, which probably dates from the 1930s, are also altered in varying ways. The wall is retained in its present extent at basement level. At ground and upper floors it is partially removed in order to permit a sensible and useable layout for both retail and residential use.

- 4.12 At each level where the 'party wall' exists – basement, ground, first, second and third floors – a significant portion of wall is retained to form part of the stair enclosure and will be present at the centre of the plan of each apartment. The wall is therefore not removed in its entirety, and a visible indication of the original split nature of the building will continue.
- 4.13 The existing fourth and fifth floors are not original, dating from the 1990s. They will be converted to form a duplex apartment. Various modern walls at ground and basement levels at the rear of the property will also be removed.
- 4.14 The existing (and entirely modern) shop front will be altered and reconfigured to facilitate the shop layout and access to the residential accommodation above. Its design will remain traditional in appearance, and the recessed corner entrance will remain as an entrance to the shop. Above, the existing 20th century timber sash windows are in very poor condition will be replaced with matching and appropriately detailed new sashes and frames.

Effect on the significance of heritage assets

- 4.15 The heritage assets that are potentially affected by the proposed development are No 7 Upper St Martin's Lane, the nearby listed buildings described earlier and the Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area. The heritage significance of these heritage assets will be enhanced by the scheme.

7 Upper St Martins Lane

- 4.16 The heritage significance of 7 Upper St Martins Lane is analysed and described in detail in the previous section of this report. Nothing that is central to that significance is harmed by the proposed development. The fabric that is affected by the proposals is almost entirely 20th century in nature, and the overall scheme fits well within what is a very altered listed building without depriving it of what remains of its special interest.

- 4.17 Such is the nature of the building, and the nature and distribution of heritage significance throughout the building, that it is possible to create suitable residential accommodation without significantly affecting the key elements of the listed building's special and historical interest. As has been shown in the previous section of the report the building has been altered over time, and this means that significance has been reduced in certain areas and the opportunity exists to recover it while updating the building for modern residential use.
- 4.18 The listed building will clearly be altered by the proposed scheme, but in a manner that is sympathetic to and consistent with its heritage significance. The works cause no 'harm' to that heritage significance, in the sense of the term as it is used by Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'. What is proposed by way of change to the building has been carefully designed so as to establish the best fit possible between its that adaptation and its heritage significance. As the preceding text and the Design & Access Statement clearly show, steps have been taken throughout to balance intervention against the existing positive qualities of the listed building, and to repair where possible some of the harmful things that have occurred to it in the past.
- 4.19 The overall effect of the scheme will be highly beneficial, and Section 6 will demonstrate how the proposed scheme complies with national and local policies concerning change to heritage assets.

*Other listed buildings and the Seven Dials Estate
Conservation Area*

- 4.20 There will be a positive effect on the heritage significance of other listed buildings and the Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area: these heritage assets will be enhanced by the refurbishment and renewal of a moribund listed building, and the repair of its fabric. The street elevations of 7 Upper St Martins Lane will be greatly improved in physical and appearance terms, and this will enhance the

setting of nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Sustainability and accessibility

- 4.21 The proposed building will inherently be more accessible. It will retain a lift to all floors and have step-free floor plates. It will also, by being refurbished to current standards with new building systems, be very significantly less demanding of resources than the existing building is.

Economic and social benefits

- 4.22 While the area around Upper St Martin's Lane is not economically disadvantaged, two things are important from a planning point of view – that it continues to be an attractive and desirable place to work, shop and live, and that its ability to contribute to the local economy. Refurbishing and improving 7 Upper St Martin's Lane can only enhance the potential economic benefit of the building. It has for a very long time been a hardworking building; the scheme permits it to continue to do so.
- 4.23 Residential use at the upper floors is a highly positive and beneficial measure, adding to the vitality of the local area and providing much-needed residential accommodation in the Seven Dials area.

General benefits of the proposed scheme

- 4.24 The scheme allows a number of important things to happen that will improve the present circumstances of the site:
- The scheme will provide a greater number of uses, adding increased life and vitality to the site as well as its surroundings;
 - The scheme enlivens the ground level street frontages with active uses, and replaces the 'closed' frontage that exists at present with a retail unit – this enhances the pedestrian experience, making

the use of the streets around the site a safer and more pleasant experience;

- The scheme creates upper floor, twenty four hour, residential use that ensures that life and activity - and the security and place-making that they bring - continues around the clock.

Conclusion

- 4.25 The special architectural and historic interest of 7 Upper St Martins Lane will undoubtedly be affected by the proposed scheme, but this effect will be positive. The scheme will bring the listed building back into use. It will reverse harmful change that has occurred the building in recent decades. It will provide high quality, attractive and economically sustainable accommodation, that is consistent with the local planning authority's aspirations for land use in this part of the borough.
- 4.26 The special interest and heritage significance of the listed building will be enhanced by this scheme. Nothing that is central to the significance of the listed building is harmed or lost in the proposed scheme. The interventions are an elegant and extremely well-designed solution to the complex problem of providing modern apartments within a building that has been so altered.
- 4.27 The effect on other heritage assets will be positive. The scheme will address the condition and appearance of an unused listed building in their setting, and they and the overall area will benefit from its active and sustainable use.

5 The policy context

- 5.1 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment

National policy: Planning Policy Statement 5

- 5.2 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On Tuesday 23 March 2010, the Government published the new Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, which replaces Planning Policy Guidance 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment, 1995) and Planning Policy Guidance 16 (Archaeology and Planning) with immediate effect.
- 5.3 The PPS sets out planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment. It is accompanied by a 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide', published by English Heritage 'to help practitioners implement the policy, including the legislative requirements that underpin it'. The PPS consists of an introductory section called 'Planning for the Historic Environment' and a 'Policies' section. The 'Policies' section is divided into 'Plan-making policies' and 'Development Management'.
- 5.4 The 'Government's Objectives' in respect of the historic built environment are defined as
- To deliver sustainable development;
 - To conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
 - To contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past by ensuring that opportunities are taken to capture evidence from the historic environment and to make this publicly available, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

- 5.5 Annex 2 of the PPS provides a formal definition of the term ‘heritage asset’:

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

- 5.6 Policy HE6 of the PPS, ‘Information requirements for applications for consent affecting heritage assets’, requires applicants ‘to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance’ so as ‘to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset’. This information ‘together with an assessment of the impact of the proposal’ should be incorporated in applications.

- 5.7 Section 3 of this report provides an account of the history and evolution of 7 Upper St Martins Lane, with specific reference to the various changes that have occurred over time, along with an identification of the heritage significance present in the listed building and the surrounding area.

- 5.8 Policy HE7 is entitled ‘Policy principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets’. Paragraph HE7.2 says:

In considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, local planning authorities should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for this and future generations. This understanding should be used by the local planning authority to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposals.

5.9 Paragraph HE7.4 says:

Local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and of utilising their positive role in place-shaping; and*
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets and the historic environment generally can make to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality by virtue of the factors set out in HE3.1*

5.10 Paragraph HE7.5 says:

Local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use.

5.11 The ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ gives, at Paragraph 79, a number of ‘potential heritage benefits that could weigh in favour of a proposed scheme’ in addition to guidance on ‘weighing-up’ [sic] proposals in Paragraphs 76 to 78. These are that:

- It sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- It reduces or removes risks to a heritage asset;
- It secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation;
- It makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities;
- It is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment;

- It better reveals the significance of a heritage asset and therefore enhances our enjoyment of it and the sense of place.
- 5.12 Policy HE9 provides ‘Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets’. It sets out a basic presumption in favour of the conservation of designated assets, and says that ‘the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be’. Significance can be ‘harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
- 5.13 Paragraph HE9.2 provides guidance for local planning authorities in instances where ‘the application will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance’ of a heritage asset or assets. It says that:
- Where the application will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance local planning authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that:*
- (i) the substantial harm to or loss of significance is necessary in order to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss; or*
- (ii) (a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- (b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term that will enable its conservation; and*
- (c) conservation through grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is not possible; and*
- (d) the harm to or loss of the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.*
- 5.14 HE9.4 deals with ‘a harmful impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset which is less than substantial harm’, and says that local planning authorities should:

(i) weigh the public benefit of the proposal (for example, that it helps to secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset in the interests of its long-term conservation) against the harm; and

(ii) recognise that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset the greater the justification will be needed for any loss.

5.15 Paragraph 111 of the Guide sets out the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that local planning authorities when making decisions must ‘have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’ and ‘pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance’ of a conservation area.

5.16 Policy HE10, ‘Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset’ deals with the setting of the heritage assets and urges local planning authorities to not just protect the setting of heritage assets, but to use the opportunity to cause development ‘to better reveal the significance of the asset’.

Local Policy: Camden Council’s Local Development Framework

5.17 Camden Council adopted its Core Strategy and Development Policies on 8 November 2010. Core Strategy Policy CS14 deals with ‘Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage’ and says:

‘The Council will ensure that Camden’s places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

‘....b) preserving and enhancing Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;....’

5.18 The commentary to the policy says:

‘Our overall strategy is to sustainably manage growth in Camden so it meets our needs for homes, jobs and services in a way that conserves and enhances the features that make the borough such an attractive place to live, work and visit. Policy CS14 plays a key part in achieving this by setting out our approach to conserving and, where possible, enhancing our heritage and valued places, and to ensuring that development is of the highest standard and reflects, and where possible improves, its local area’

5.19 Regarding Camden’s heritage, the Core Strategy refers to Policy DP25 in Camden Development Policies as providing more detailed guidance on the Council’s approach to protecting and enriching the range of features that make up the built heritage of the borough

5.20 Policy DP25 is as follows:

Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will:

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*
- d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and*

e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

Listed buildings

To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;

f) only grant consent for a 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

g) not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

Archaeology

The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

Other heritage assets

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and London Squares.

5.21 The policy commentary regarding conservation areas says at Paragraph 25.6:

'The Council has a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, whether they are listed or not so as to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. We will not grant conservation area consent for the total or substantial demolition of such a building where this would harm the appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention. Applicants will be

required to justify the demolition of a building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area, having regard to Policy HE7 of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Camden's conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans and any other relevant supplementary guidance produced by the Council'.

- 5.22 Similarly, the commentary regarding listed buildings says at Paragraph 25.12:

'The Council has a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings. Total demolition, substantial demolition and rebuilding behind the façade of a listed building will not normally be considered acceptable. The matters which will be taken into consideration in an application for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building are those set out in Policy HE7 of PPSS'.

- 5.23 The policy commentary also deals with the setting of listed buildings, and says at Paragraph 25.15:

'The setting of a listed building is of great importance and should not be harmed by unsympathetic neighbouring development. While the setting of a listed building may be limited to its immediate surroundings, it often can extend some distance from it. The value of a listed building can be greatly diminished if unsympathetic development elsewhere harms its appearance or its harmonious relationship with its surroundings'.

- 5.24 Policy DP24 seeks to secure 'High quality design'. It says:

'The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;*
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;*

- c) the quality of materials to be used;*
- d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;*
- e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;*
- f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;*
- g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;*
- h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and*
- i) accessibility'.*

6 Compliance with policy and guidance

National policy: Planning Policy Statement 5

- 6.1 The proposed development is an example of the balance sought by the new PPS (at HE1.3) in terms of sustainability, where it says that ‘the public benefit of mitigating the effects of climate change should be weighed against any harm to the significance of heritage assets’. By helping to secure the continued and long term use a listed building, the scheme is inherently sustainable and less demanding of resources. The scheme is thus consistent with thrust of Policy HE1 of the PPS.
- 6.2 The proposed development achieves what is sought by Policy HE7 of the PPS. It ‘take[s] into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset[s] – the listed building, adjacent listed buildings and the Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area] and the value that [they] hold... for this and future generations’. This is demonstrated by the careful consideration of the how the proposed scheme can optimize the use of the listed building while at the same time respecting the key surviving elements of its heritage significance. The works are based throughout on a holistic understanding of the heritage significance of the listed building – on an integrated assessment of the spectrum or hierarchy of significance and how significance varies according to the nature of different parts of the building and how they have been changed.
- 6.3 In doing this, the scheme undoubtedly succeeds in ‘sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets’, and utilises ‘[their] positive role in place-shaping’. The proposed scheme also clearly permits 7 Upper St Martins Lane to continue to make a ‘positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment’ in the way described earlier in this report and in the Design & Access Statement. The scheme enhances that contribution by allowing 7 Upper St

Martins Lane to continue to be a practical and adaptable historic building.

- 6.4 The scheme also does the relevant things that the 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' urges in its Paragraph 79. The proposed scheme, by enhancing the residential quality of the building, will make 'a positive contribution to economic vitality', and the alterations to the listed building are 'an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment' for the reasons given earlier.
- 6.5 For the reasons set out in Section 4 of this report and in the Design & Access Statement, the scheme for 7 Upper St Martins Lane will not cause meaningful 'harm' to heritage significance in the sense used in PPS5. Quite the opposite: what is proposed for the listed building represents enhancement. The proposed scheme represents an improvement in the circumstances of the building over those that exist at present – it will give the site a new life and help sustain the contribution that it makes to this part of the borough. The sum total of the key interventions in the listed building to facilitate this future falls far short of discernible 'harm' in the proper sense of that term.
- 6.6 Given that the proposed development does not 'lead to substantial harm to or total loss 'of significance' of designated heritage assets, Policy HE9.2 of the PPS does not apply to the proposal. It is not proposed to rebuild the building behind its façade, and the overall building is kept largely intact and is repaired as a result of the works. Interventions are proposed for areas of the building where major change has happened either recently or during the mid-late 20th century.
- 6.7 The proposed scheme preserves and enhances 7 Upper St Martins Lane. It 'deliver[s]... public benefits' without damaging the key significance of 7 Upper St Martins Lane, nearby listed buildings or the conservation area. For the

multiple reasons provided here, earlier and the Design & Access Statement, the relative or perceived 'harm to or loss of [any] heritage asset[s]' - if any - is completely outweighed by the benefits of enhancing the building with this scheme.

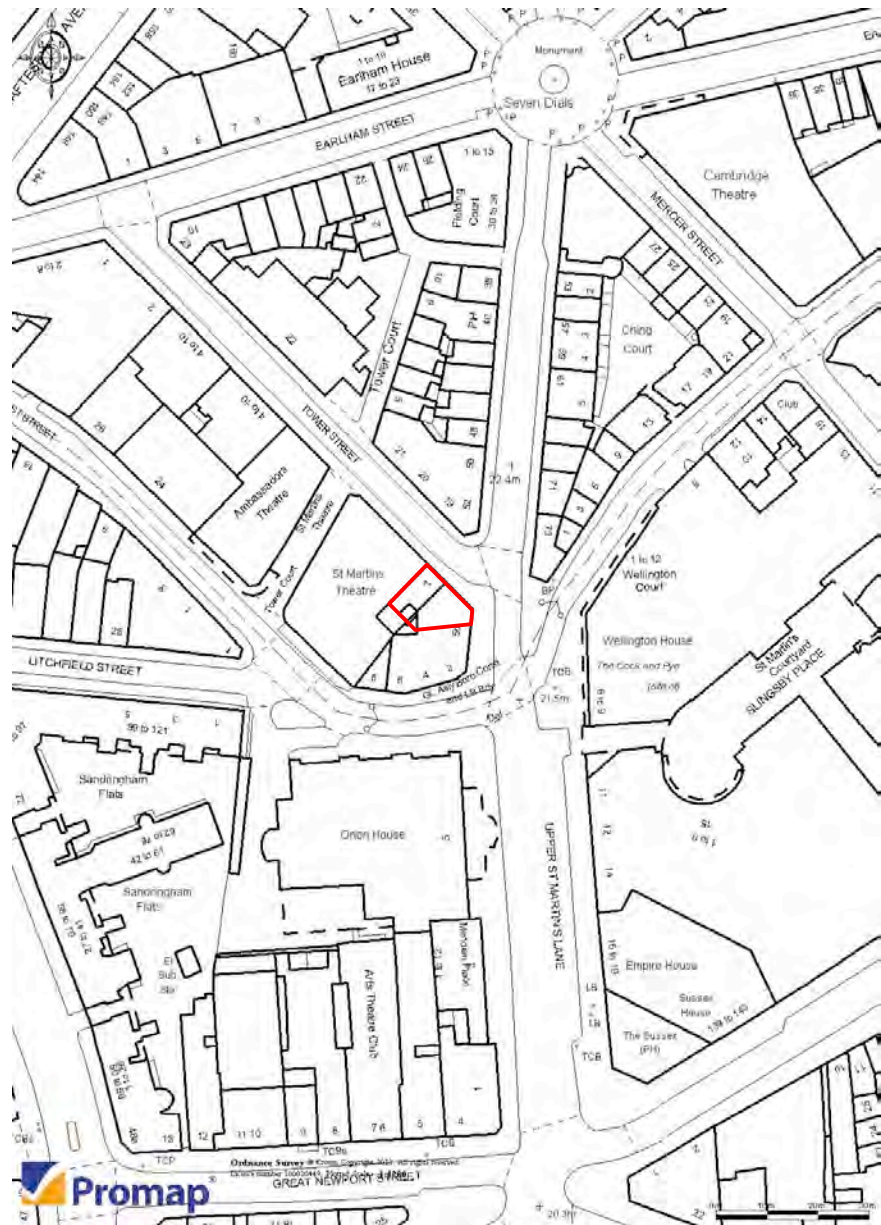
- 6.8 We do not believe that the proposed scheme represents 'a harmful impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset which is less than substantial harm', as Policy HE9.4 puts it, but even if it is considered in this way, the policy is thoroughly satisfied by the benefits provided by the scheme. The scheme will clearly 'secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset in the interests of its long-term conservation'. In a limited number of areas it has been necessary to alter and adjust the listed building to accommodate the changes required.
- 6.9 The sum total of change at the building does not, in any way, damage what is of special interest about the listed building – the changes involved are firmly within the overall framework of heritage significance at the building, and do not reduce that significance.

Local policy: Camden Council's Local Development Framework

- 6.10 In positively addressing the requirements of PPS5, the proposed scheme also meets the requirements of Policies DP24 and DP25 of the Local Development Framework in relation to listed buildings, conservation areas and the achievement of high quality design. It is certainly 'development within [the Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area] that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area' and it does *not* involve 'the total or substantial demolition of a listed building'.
- 6.11 It would certainly *not* 'cause harm to the special interest of the building' of 7 Upper St Martins Lane, nor does the scheme 'cause harm to the setting of a listed building' or the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 6.12 The scheme has very carefully considered the ‘character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings’, and the ‘the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed’ (Policy DP24), as is shown earlier.
- 6.13 Similarly, and for the reasons given earlier, the scheme as a whole ‘preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the [Seven Dials Estate Conservation Area]’.

Appendix A: Location



Current Ordnance Survey (not to scale)



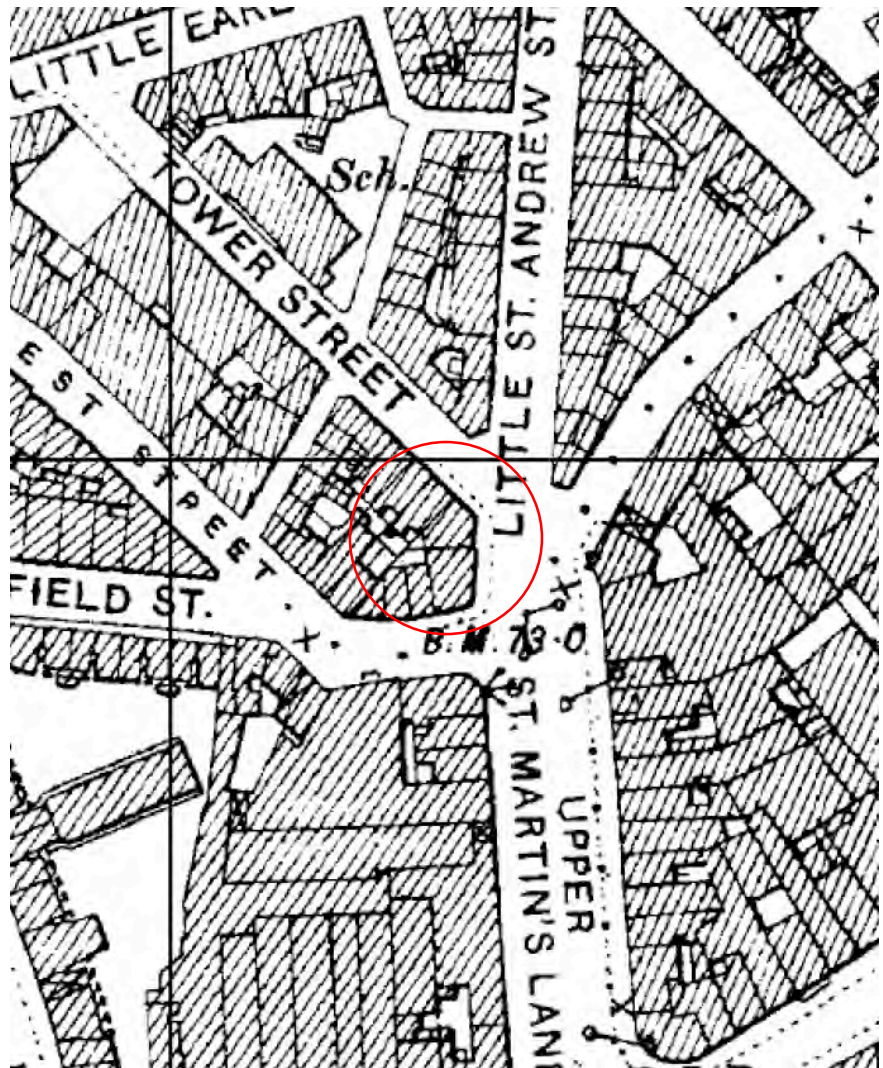
Aerial photograph (not to scale)

Appendix B: Historic maps

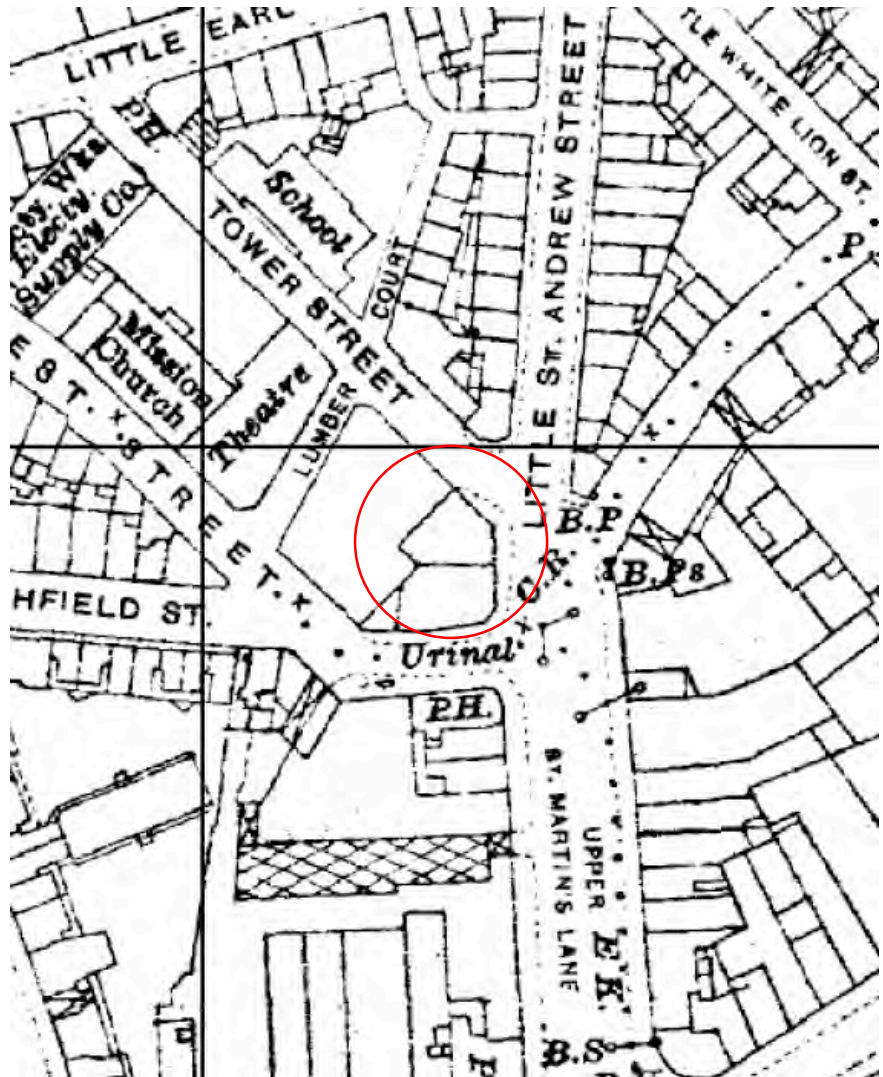
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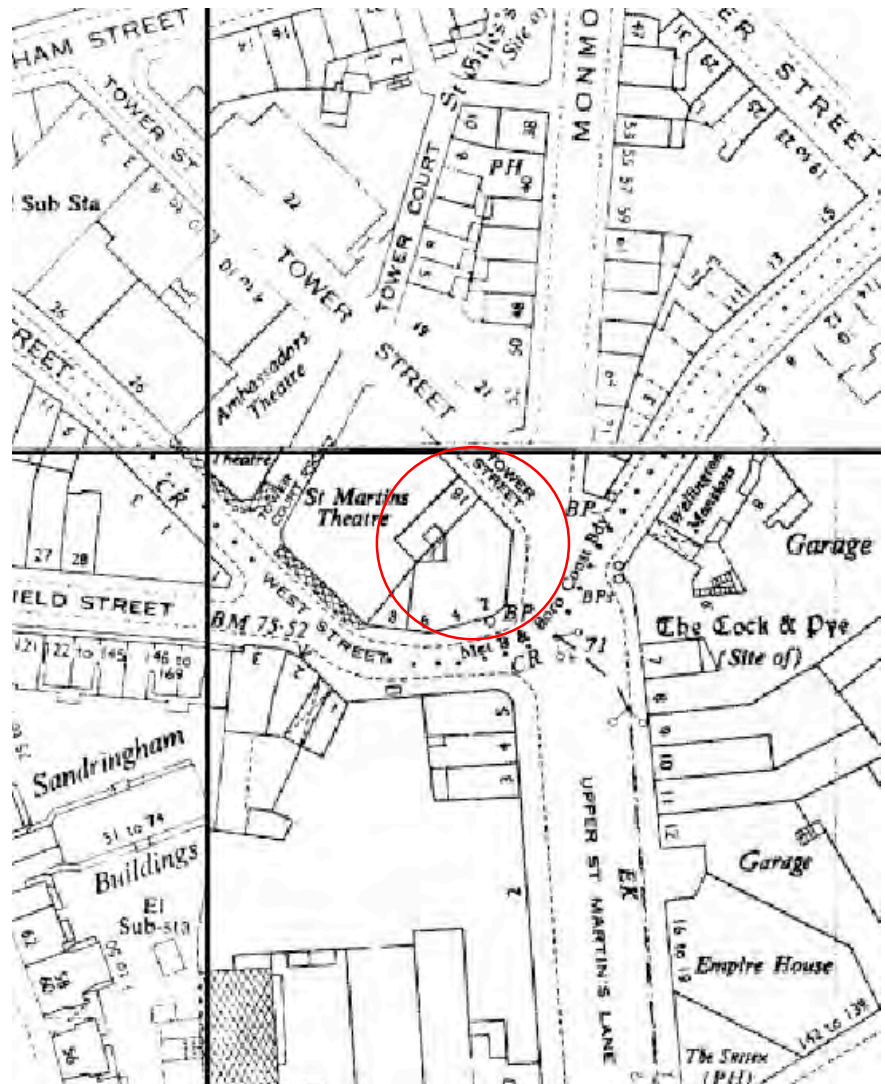
1875-78



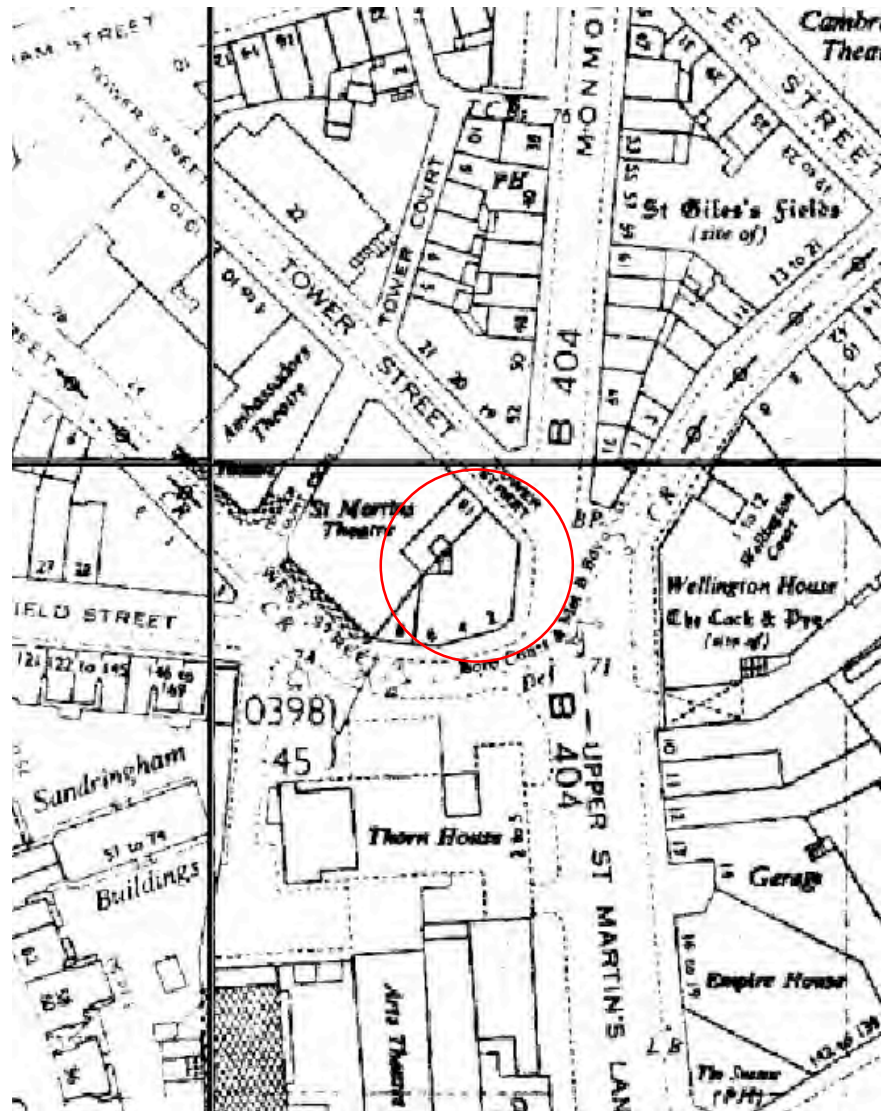
1896



1916



1951-53



1965-68

Appendix C: Photographs

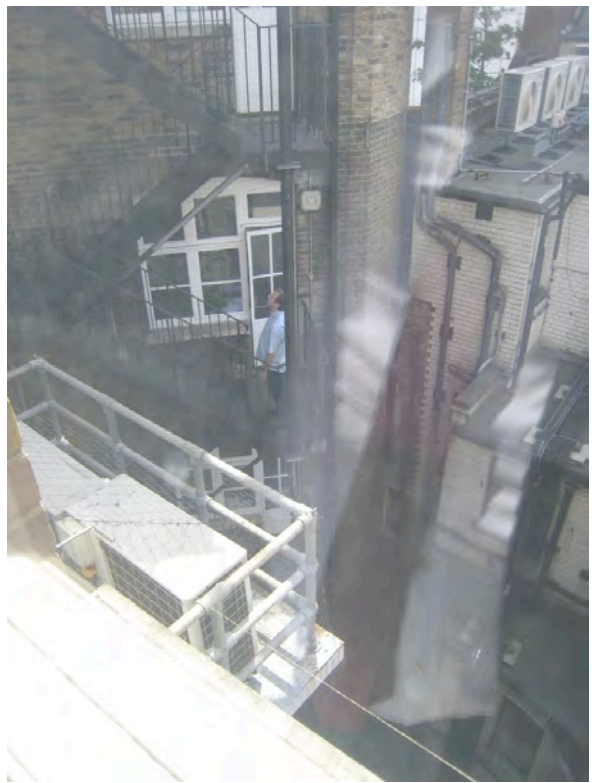




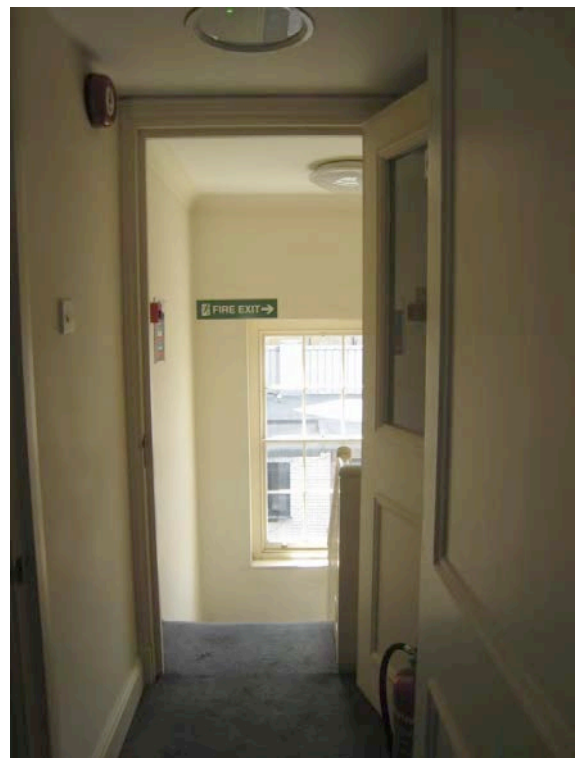


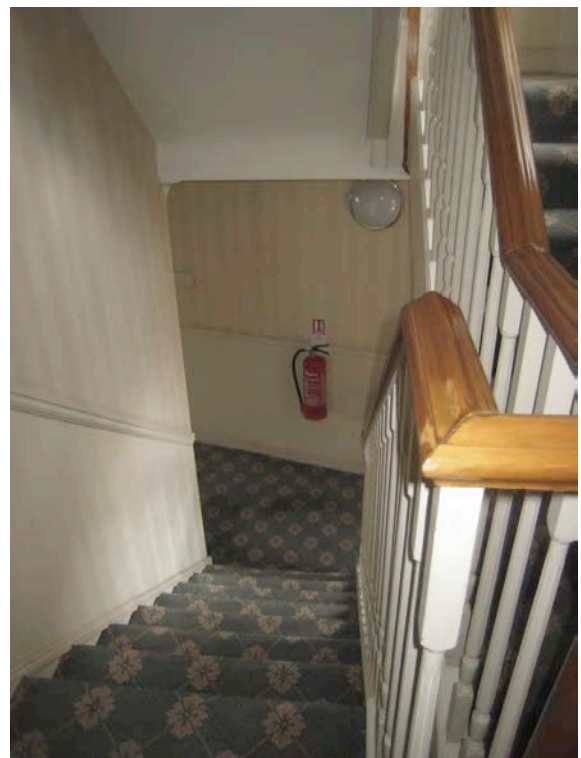
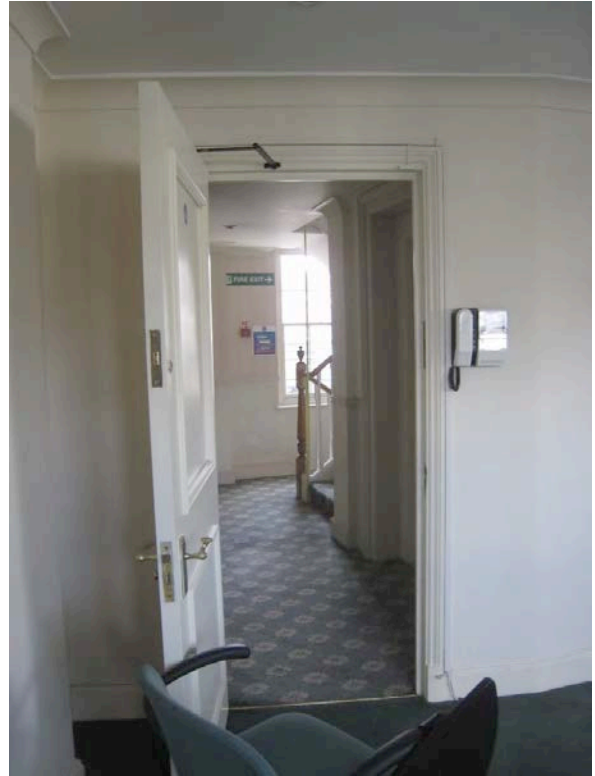






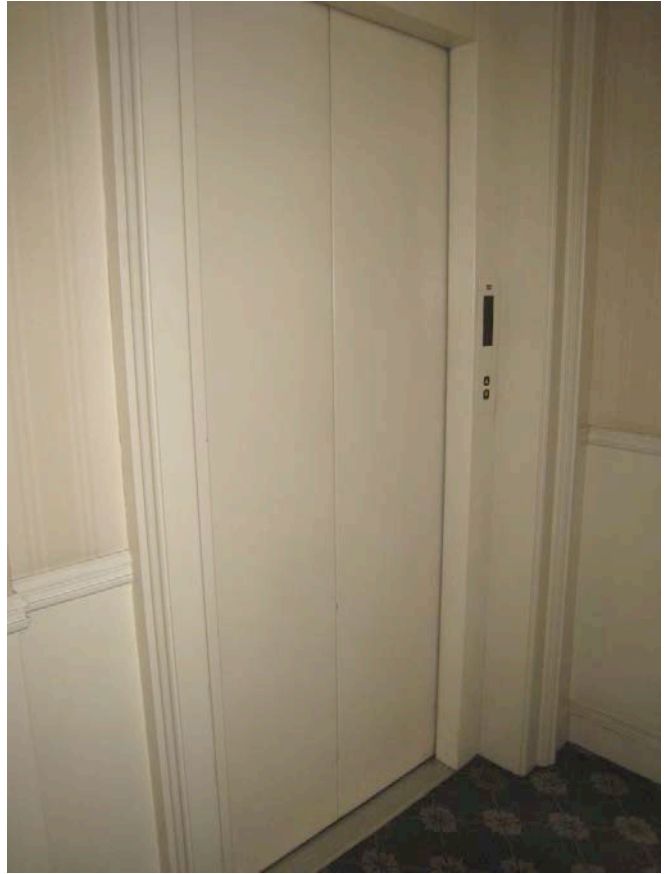






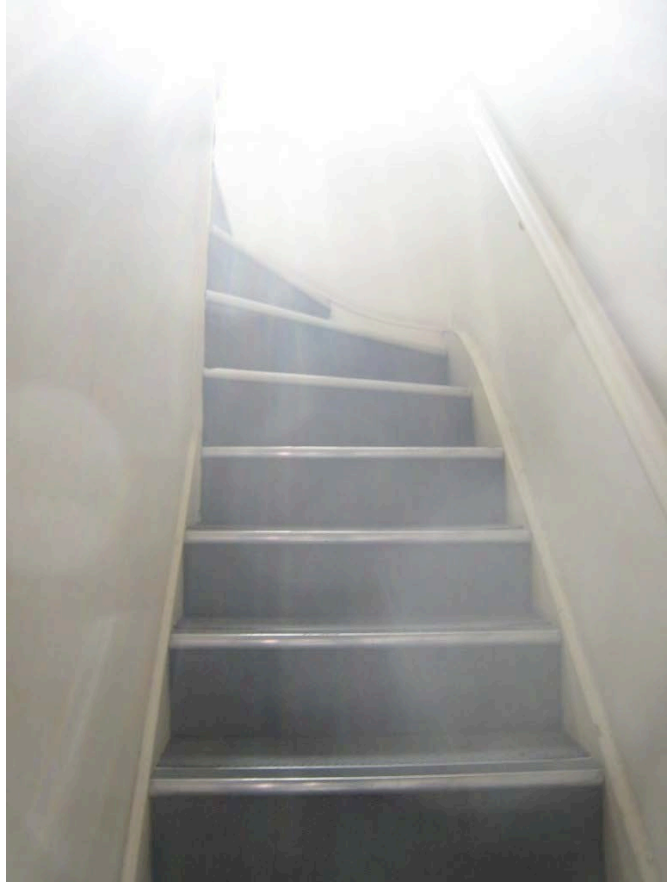












Appendix D: List description

GUILD HOUSE (SOUTH WING), 18 TOWER STREET (south west side)

CAMDEN TOWN, CAMDEN, GREATER LONDON

Date listed: 15 January 1973

Date of last amendment: 15 January 1973

Grade II

CAMDEN TQ3080NW TOWER STREET 798-1/108/1652 (South West side) 15/01/73 No.18 Guild House (south wing) GV II Shop with accommodation over, the right hand bay of the right hand return forming No.18 North Wing (qv). Early C19. Yellow stock brick with rusticated stucco dressings. On corner with 1 window returns. 4 storeys. Stucco shopfront with pilasters and consoles carrying cornice. Shop windows and doorways altered. Gauged flat brick arches (painted) to recessed tripartite sash windows with original glazing bars. Rusticated stucco corner treatment with blind openings, 1st and 3rd floor round-arched. Stucco cornice and blocking course. INTERIOR: not inspected.

NORTH WING, 18 TOWER STREET (south west side)

CAMDEN TOWN, CAMDEN, GREATER LONDON

Date listed: 15 January 1973

Date of last amendment: 15 January 1973

Grade II

CAMDEN TQ3080NW TOWER STREET 798-1/108/1651 (South West side) 15/01/73 No.18 North Wing GV II Shop with accommodation over forming part of Guild House, No.18 (qv). C19 earlier. Yellow stock brick. Stucco cornice and blocking course. Shop front with pilasters and consoles carrying cornice. Shop window and doorway altered. House doorway with fanlight and panelled door. Gauged flat brick arches to recessed sash windows with original glazing bars. INTERIOR: not inspected.



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