

**12 Great James Street
London WC1N 3DR**



Design and Access Statement



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12 Great James Street WC1N 3DR Design and Access Statement

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Summary This design and access statement describes the design rationale behind a new planning application to include amendments to the existing planning consent 2008/1141/P and listed building consent 2008/1143/L.

Introduction **Amendments to the Existing Consent**

12 Great James Street, Bloomsbury achieved planning and listed building consent on 31st March 2009 (2008/1141/P and 2008/1143/L).

The consent provided for change of use and works of conversion to a pair of ex-solicitors offices at Nos.11 and 12 Great James Street.

This new planning submission concerns No.12 only and the proposed amendments to the existing consent.

The Design and Access Statement provides information regarding these amendments and the design rationale adopted.

The intention is still to convert the building to a single family dwelling but also to improve on the original scheme by more faithfully returning the building to its original form and attempting to increase the available amenity space.

Description **Grade II* Listed Georgian Townhouse**

12 Great James Street forms part of a terrace of Grade II* listed buildings dating from the early 18th Century. Located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, the building has a basement, raised ground and 3 additional floors with a small modern extension to the rear. It is constructed of brick with flat red brick arches, painted timber windows and cast iron balustrades to the street frontage.

The building is in good condition with no evidence of settlement nor damage to the main front elevation. The interiors and rear of the property have suffered various amendments over the years which have not been sympathetic to the original character.

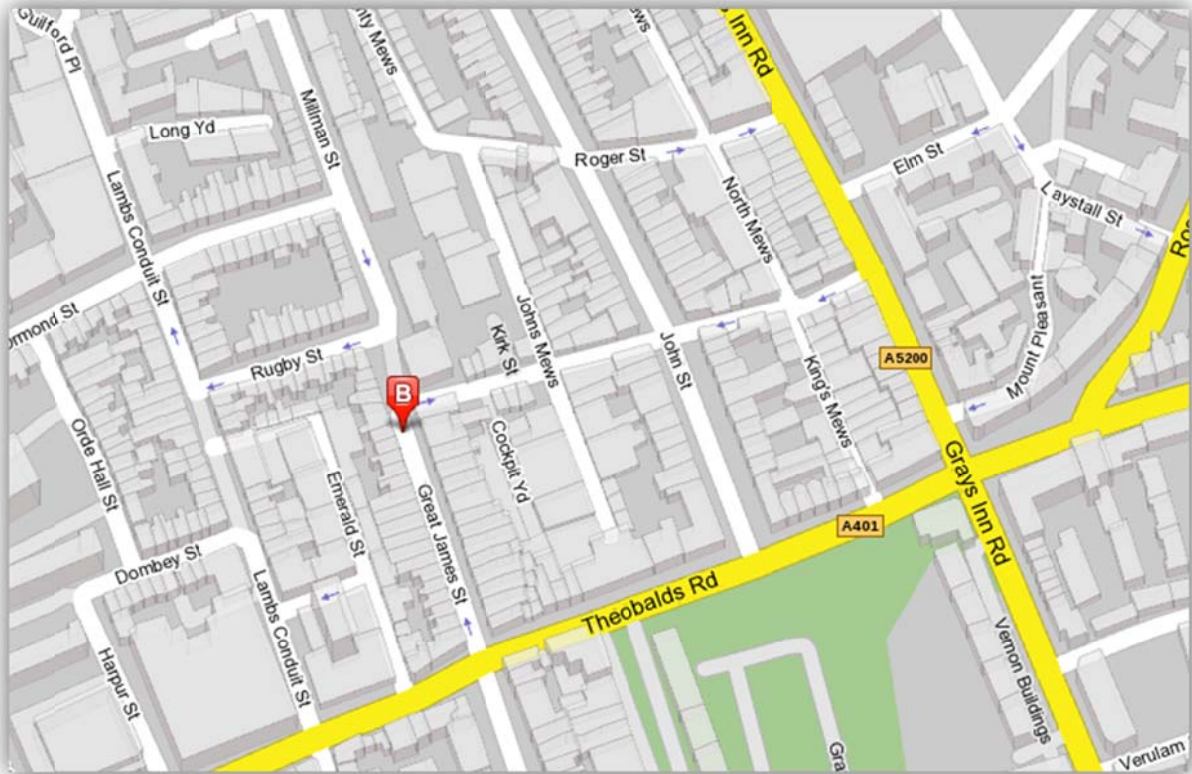
The Design Process

Charter Projects has worked very closely with the new owners to try to improve on the original proposal in order to provide them with the best layout for their new home.

The owners are committed to bringing this historic property back to its former glory at the same time as creating a comfortable and sustainable home for 21st Century living.

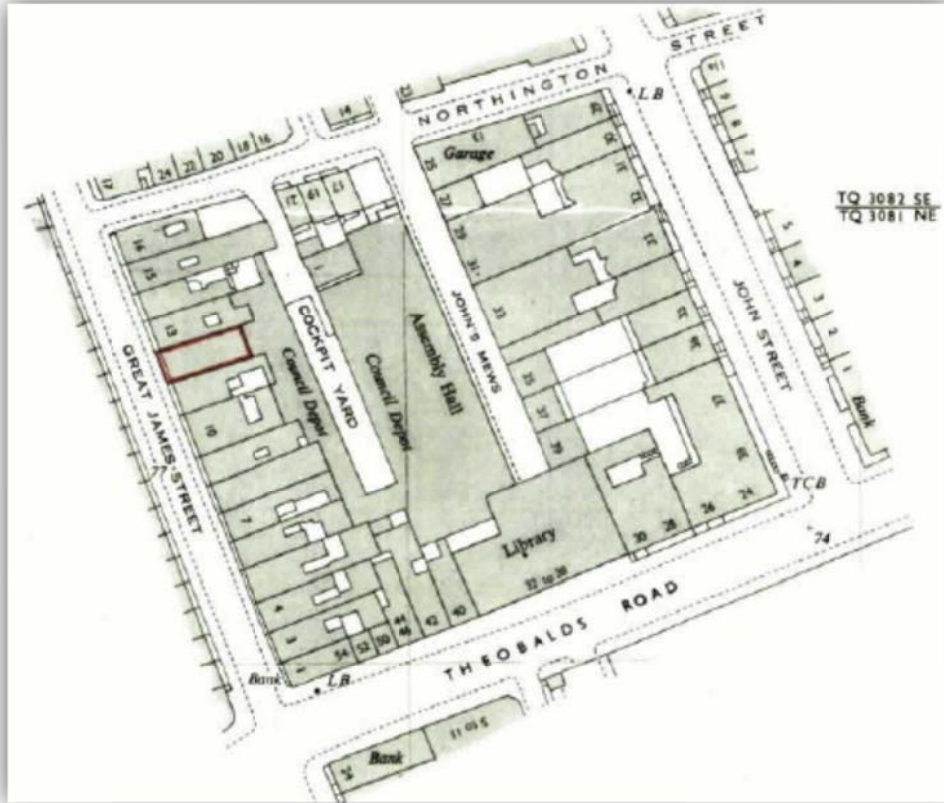
With that in mind, a lot of effort has been spent trying to make modern service installations as discrete as possible as well as trying to restore and enhance the interior fabric of the property.

The main amendments to the existing consent are to introduce amenity space in the form of a roof terrace and rear courtyard garden.



These have been designed with full regard to the sensitive context of the site and have, as far possible, been set back from public view.

There are also several minor amendments to the internal layout and the rear balcony and basement entrance stairway.



12 GREAT JAMES STREET

Use

Until recently, both 11 and 12 Great James Street were used as solicitors' offices and the buildings were connected at each level by openings in the party wall. As stated above, the 2008/1141/P and 2008/1143/L consents granted permission for a change of use to single residential dwellings for each property.

This application for No 12 only, does not seek a further change of use and the intention is for the property to become a single family house with accommodation for a housekeeper or nanny at lower ground level with a kitchen, dining/ reception and small courtyard at ground floor level; reception rooms and rear balcony at first floor level and bedrooms and bathrooms on the upper floors. A new roof terrace is also proposed on the existing flat roof to improve the amenity space available.

Layout

General:

The amendments aim to make moderate alterations to the internal layout and to significantly improve the amenity space for the new owners. This will involve the demolition of the later addition structure to the rear of the ground floor to reinstate the courtyard garden and the introduction of a new roof terrace. The proposed changes will restore more of the original features and arrangements than were proposed in the previous consent.

The consented layout will be adopted in large part with several amendments outlined below;

- Front elevation to remain as existing except for sunken entrance stairway and porch to the basement (new amendment);
- Rear elevation largely unchanged other than regularising all downpipes and services (new amendment);
- Rear extension demolished to reinstate original courtyard garden at ground floor level (new amendment);
- Rearranged layout in basement for housekeeper accommodation (new amendment);
- New arrangements for basement wine cellar (new amendment);
- Small ground floor extension to house WC and the roof forms the balcony at first floor level (new amendment);
- Ground floor – change of room uses and opening up of partition between kitchen and dining (new amendment);
- First Floor – new WC to under-stair area and amended balcony arrangement to prevent main arch window being partly obscured (new amendments);
- Second floor new master suite layout (new amendment);
- Third Floor – new stair to the roof terrace; new entrance to the communal bathroom; new utility room replacing ensuite to bedroom 5 (new amendments);
- New roof terrace to include decking and structure plus associated hand-railing to front and rear (new amendment).

Exterior Details:

The **front elevation** will be largely unchanged except with regard to the basement entrance area where it is proposed to remove a later addition brick-built coal storage structure beneath the existing steel stairway to expose a second basement window. A new ironwork stairway will be installed, similar in appearance to the existing but with a shorter upper landing and narrower in scale. All windows to the front elevation will be replaced with Georgian style sash windows and frames. The **rear elevation** of the historic building will become more visible with the demolition of the modern rear extension at ground floor level. The original consent grants permission for this to be replaced with a smaller extension, however, it is now proposed not to replace the rear extension but to reinstate the courtyard garden and leave it open to the elements, thereby providing greater amenity space to the occupants.

Existing pipework to this façade will be regularised and concentrated in one area to avoid the ad-hoc current arrangement.

Basement Details:

The existing basement has been sub-divided and contains obsolete plant and ducting that serviced the office buildings during their lifetime. We propose to remove all obsolete plant and to regularise the layout to accommodate a housekeeper and nanny. The new basement arrangement is one of the changes to the existing consent. Please see drawing **0039_000_GAP_A** for details. The new layout will expose the original kitchen range which will be restored and incorporated into the new layout.

The basement area will continue to be connected to the main house via the existing internal staircase and will also have its own private entrance via the new stairway from the pavement.

Ground Floor Details:

The new application changes the room uses and seeks to introduce an opening in the panelling between the kitchen and dining room. The proposed new WC extension is to be retained but with a more symmetrical arrangement.

First Floor Details:

Consent is sought to allow for a new WC to the under-stair area and to amend the balcony to improve the relationship with the tall stair window which was partly obscured by the previous proposals.

Second Floor Details:

This new application alters the layout to the master suite. The amendment only involves new partition positions and alternative door arrangements.

Third Floor Details

The third floor seeks to introduce a new permanent staircase to the roof terrace in addition to changing the entrance to the bathroom and including a utility room instead of the ensuite to bedroom 5 (see **0039_400_GAP_A**)

Roof Terrace Details:

The property has a severe lack of amenity space limiting its appeal as a family home. Reinstating the courtyard garden and introducing a roof terrace onto the existing flat roof with decking and a lightweight, transparent structure will address this imbalance securing a sustainable residential use for many years to come.

Scale

The existing consent proposes demolishing the modern rear extension and building a small new extension, forming a terrace at first floor and then glazing the remainder of the courtyard to form a garden room leaving the original lightwell into the basement.

The new amendment proposes reinstating the original courtyard garden by leaving it unglazed. All other elements will remain as per the original consent.

In addition, we propose returning the basement entrance area to its original layout by amending the stairway and demolishing the existing brick enclosure beneath the stairs (see **0039_ALL_ELEV_A**). This will expose the second window to the basement and reinstate the front façade it to its original format.

It is also proposed to introduce a roof terrace to the existing flat roof to improve the provision of amenity space to the property. This will include decking, planting and a lightweight, transparent structure.

Overall the proposed amendments will reduce the volume of the building.

Landscaping

The existing building has no existing external amenity space. Proposals for new amenity space in the rear courtyard and roof terrace will include hard and soft landscaping in the form of timber decking, stone paving and wooden planters.

Appearance

There will be no visible change to the front elevation from Great James Street other than the sunken area being returned to its original format. The proposed roof terrace will not be visible from Great James Street.

Within the house, where there are interventions or repairs, new panelling, woodwork and plasterwork will match the original profiles.

New windows and doors will be painted timber. Most existing doors will be reconditioned originals. We are proposing replacing the windows with Georgian style sash windows. It is proposed that the small new extension at rear ground floor will have rendered walls and a tiled terrace above.

Context

Surrounding Area and Transport

Great James Street runs roughly in a North - South direction and is parallel with John Street and Lambs Conduit Street in Bloomsbury.

It is accessed via Theobalds Road in the South and Northington Street in the North. Cockpit Yard runs directly behind the property and contains many workshops and studios.

The area is a mixture of commercial offices and residential properties with several buildings having undergone conversion over the last few years. Many of these large properties appeal to prospective owners who value the historic character and ample space afforded by these centrally located townhouses.

The property is in the London Borough of Camden close to Grays Inn Road and a short walk from Chancery Lane, Holborn and Russell Square underground stations. Many bus services run along Theobalds Road in the South.

Access

Access is from the front steps up to the entrance and by a new, ironwork stairway down to the basement entrance below.

Listed Building Considerations

The Listing Description

Location: (East side)

Nos.3-16 (Consecutive) and attached railings

Street: Great James Street

Grade: II*

Reference No: 798-1-658101

Date of listing: Oct 24 1951 12:00AM

12 Great James Street is listed with 13 other terraced houses in Great James Street.

14 terraced houses. 1720-24. For J Metcalfe. Brown brick, upper storeys with some later re-facing in multi-coloured stock brick. No.3 re-faced in yellow stock brick.

EXTERIOR: 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Segmental red brick arches and dressings to flush frame windows, some with glazing bars and some with reeded frames with roundels. Parapets. Wooden, architraved doorcases.

No's 3 and 4 with half pilasters, plain pediments, patterned fanlights and panelled doors.

No's 5, 7 and 10-16 with enriched carved brackets carrying hood with panelled soffits, most with patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors.

No.6 with engaged columns (Tower of Winds), frieze with festooned urns, dentil pedimented cornice, round arched doorway with fanlight and panelled door.

No's 8 and 9 with pilasters, dentil cornices, patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. Between the houses, lead rainwater heads with lion masks and lead pipes.

At 2nd floor level of No.16, a much worn stone cartouche inscribed "Great James Street 1721".

INTERIORS: most houses with good panelling; open staircases with turned balusters, column newels and carved brackets to treads.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas, with urn or torch flambe finials. No.14 was listed on 14/05/74.

Documentary Evidence

Great James Street, dates from 1721, and is named after James Burgess who helped the ground landlords, George Brownlow Doughty and his wife, Frances, develop the area.

The first occupants on No. 12 are unknown. However, by 1792 the dwelling had become the home of Henry Atherton (1729-1814), whose family 'had for many years possessed land in the shires of Banff and Perth'. His grandfather, Sir James Atherton, was chief Justice of the Common Pleas and his father, Henry Atherton senior, was a 'person of great honour, worth and esteem in his county'.

Henry Atherton the younger, the occupant of No. 12 Great James Street, was Member of Parliament for Colchester and at some time under-secretary of state. He pleaded clemency for Admiral John Byng who in March 1757 was shot on the quarterdeck of the 'Monarque' for cowardice in the face of the enemy; and in 1759 was one of a party of forty politicians who offered a vote of thanks to the commanders of the forces which were driving the French from Canada. This was the 'Annus Mirabilis', which produced military successes at Quebec, Minden, Lagos and Quiberon Bay - and caused Horace Walpole to remark: 'One is forced to ask each morning what victory there is for fear of having missed one'.

Henry Atherton died in 1814, although his name continues to appear for No. 12 Great James Street in the fashionable directories until 1816. His widow held the property until her own death in 1827, when she bequeathed it to her daughter, Agnes. Agnes Atherton never married. In old age she fell on hard times. We know this because she was afterwards a member of the local Work Society. During the last century - and the early years of the 20th Century - there was much poverty amongst single gentlewomen. Very few jobs were open to them other than those of companion, governess or private school teacher. Those who had been the 'daughter at home', caring for aging parents, frequently found themselves left in middle life with a very inadequate income, or perhaps none at all. Between 1866 and 1890 a number of Work Societies sprang up to alleviate this distress. Each Society had a depot where orders were taken for knitting, crochet, lingerie, baby clothes and embroidery. Its members were paid the full amount charged, less a small percentage to cover costs. The Work Societies died out between the wars, as more opportunities opened for gentlewomen.

Agnes Atherton dies at some date between 1869 and 1871. By 1873 her former home in Great James Street had passed into use as the Middlesex Registry of Deeds, a use in which it continued until the turn of the century. It was then acquired by the firm of Ashwell & Nessbit, ventilating engineers, who were still in possession of the property more than sixty years later, in 1967.

It was then taken by the solicitors, Edell and Co., who sub-let one part of the building to Jacobs Greenwood, solicitors, and another to the Association of Average Adjusters.

By 1975 the chief occupants were Woodham Smith, solicitors, who continue to feature for the property until the mid-1980's. The house, together with No.11 Great James Street has been used as offices occupied by a firm of solicitors until recently.

Consultation with Camden Conservation & English Heritage

Initially Marcus Beale Architects and then Charter Projects consulted with Camden Planning, Camden Conservation and English Heritage regarding the proposed amendments to the existing planning and listed building consent.

Site meetings were held on Tuesday 12th October 2010 and Thursday 13th January 2011 with Victoria Pound of Camden Conservation and Richard Parish of English Heritage to look at the amendments in detail and to discuss procedures and options. It was agreed that further detail would be provided in the form of plans with photographs and notes detailing the new proposals. This was subsequently done and all the comments were incorporated into these proposals. An additional meeting with Senior Planning Officer Hugh Miller was held on Tuesday 23rd November 2010 to discuss the detail of the amendments. Email correspondence continued following the meetings to verify details before submission. All agreed comments have been incorporated into the design.

General Methodology

Where alterations are proposed the intention is for minimum intervention and maximum reversibility. This building was refurbished between 1998 and 1999 when it was re-roofed, some window alterations were made, substantial re-plastering was carried out and the floors to the third floor were levelled. Some brickwork between third floor and roof level has been rebuilt to the rear, probably post-war.

Asbestos

There was asbestos in the building in ducts and service enclosures as well as door panels. This has been recently removed by an approved contractor.

New walls and infilling

The party wall infilling will be carried out in solid blockwork. New partitions will be lightweight and fully and easily removable without destruction of the existing fabric.

Existing doors

Many of the original doors had previously been replaced or upgraded to fire doors with asbestos over-panels. Following the asbestos removal detailed above and where fire doors are still required, it is intended to maintain the original door panel profile but upgrading them to fire doors with intumescent strips and fire retardant coverings.

Fire Surrounds

Many of the fire surrounds and inserts are original. However, there are some replacement inserts and surrounds, and some fire surrounds have been removed and openings blocked up.

The intention is to bring some fireplaces back into use and to cover some up. Most flues will be used for passive stack ventilation.

Joinery

Method statement for repair of joinery: It remains the intention to repair the panelling with minimal intervention and the minimum loss of historic fabric. Any significant damage (more than 10mm) will be pieced in with matching timber and any redundant screw holes or fixing holes will be filled using either timber or putty, depending on the size of the hole.

Method statement for decoration of joinery: A paint analysis is to be carried out on previously painted historic panelling. If an inappropriate modern paint has been applied this will be removed using the poultice method, thereby ensuring the historic layers are kept. Where paint layers are loose, the surface layers will be rubbed down and redecorated with an undercoat and 1 to 2 top coats. It is suggested that the panelling may have been painted a stone colour (to be confirmed by the paint analysis).

Where a gloss paint finish is required, traditional linseed oil based internal quality paint is to be used. If a matt finish is required, a water based traditional internal timber paint (i.e. not plasticised) will be used.

Joinery generally

- Repairs are to match existing mouldings and profiles;
 - Where new panelling is proposed, for example where a party wall opening is to be blocked up, the panelling is to match the surrounding profiles and scale
 - Many of the floorboards are later additions or are too damaged to be reasonably repaired. Where possible, original good condition floorboards will be salvaged and reused or new flooring will be installed;
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- In panelled rooms, new sockets will be positioned in existing cut-outs and switch plates are to be appropriately located;
 - Where original shutters exist and are painted shut, they are to be re-opened, overhauled and returned to good working order.
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Exterior

- Where demolition is to be carried out, any making good to the original fabric will be carried out with brick and lime mortar to match the original;
 - To the rear there have been some window alterations. Under the original consent, it was proposed to change the first floor rear elevation casement window [F8] back to a sash window;
 - To the second floor [S5] the brickwork has been altered to form two windows. The proposal remains to replace these with a single sash window as per the original arrangement.
 - There is some water damage to the roof at third floor in [T3]. A new fully waterproof and guaranteed surface to the flat roof terrace will be introduced to prevent further water ingress.
 - To the front elevation, it is proposed to alter the access to the sunken area by replacing the existing stairway with a new ironwork staircase thereby exposing the second window to the basement.
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Basement

Much of the service installation for the office building, including some large ducting, is to be removed as permitted under the existing consent. The partition which partially obscures the existing range is also to be removed. There is some simple panelling around the fireplace to room B6 which is of limited value (as agreed in the previous consent). It is unknown whether a fire surround currently exists and the intention is to investigate further, clear out any debris and cover up.

To the rear, staff accommodation is proposed and the existing lightwell is to be refurbished and used as a vestibule to access a second bedroom and the main bathroom. It is to be closed off at ground floor level with a glass roof.

The vaults under the pavement are in their original state and will be waterproofed with damp proof breathable membrane systems and used for storage and as a plant room.

Ground Floor

- It remains the intention to remove the modern pediment above the double doors into [G6] and replace this with a panel.
 - The column in [G6] will be removed and replaced with a beam over continuing to a column butting against the party wall.
 - A new service riser adjacent to the existing ramp will be formed and panelled to match the existing.
 - Alterations have been carried out around the door from G6 to G5 and this will be investigated with a view to enlarging the opening.
 - The wall between G5 and G6 on the G6 side appears to have been over-panelled. These panels are to be investigated further by being carefully removed to see if original panelling is below.
 - Room G12 has seen some alterations to the high level window above the existing door. It is proposed not to change this, but to leave the existing jib door and window in their current configuration.
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First Floor

- The modern partition dividing the front drawing room is to be removed.
 - To room F7, a door is proposed to access the proposed balcony. This will be detailed as a sash window with a solid timber painted panel at low level (as in dwg no. **0039_ALL_ELEV_A**).
 - Access to the terrace will be via structural glass flooring to allow light through to the lightwell below. To F8, the existing casement window will be replaced with a sash window with profiles to match the existing.
 - The existing 1920's stair from first floor to third floor is to be upgraded to a style more in keeping with the main staircase with a polished timber handrail and turned spindles at first to second floor and something more modern above. This will show that the staircase is a later addition and also allow some light into the stairwell.
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Second Floor

- A new jib door is proposed within the existing, original partition dividing S2 and S3.
 - The original existing door in the partition will be reopened to provide access to the new proposed dressing room.
 - To the rear, a bathroom and dressing room are proposed where there is no panelling. The proposed soil pipe will be above floor level concealed within the dressing room units.
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- The original window to S3 has been replaced with two small windows. These will be replaced with a sash window of the appropriate size and location for the rear elevation.
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Third Floor

- Substantial re-levelling works have been carried out in the form of raised floors at this level. It is intended that these raised floors are removed, and joists re-levelled by bolting new timbers alongside (see **0039_ALL_DT_A**). This would be subject to confirmation from the structural engineer.
 - There is no panelling to the third floor.
 - A new partition to divide T4 is proposed to form a bathroom and dressing room.
 - A new doorway is proposed as the access to the dressing room between T3 and T4 at the front of the building.
 - The existing door off the landing will be used to access the bathroom.
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Roof

- New conservation roof lights are proposed between existing rafters.
 - Chimneys will be provided with cowls where necessary to allow for passive stack ventilation.
 - The roof will be overhauled and lead flashing replaced as appropriate with repairs carried out where necessary (fig 17 & 18). A new waterproof, insulated surface to the concrete roof slab will be installed with timber decking over.
 - It is proposed to alter the current modern clerestory light to introduce a glazed, lightweight and transparent structure to the new permanent stair and for the roof terrace itself.
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Servicing the buildings

It is proposed to re-use existing pipe runs where possible and to ensure that any new services are not visible.

- Currently the buildings are serviced to accommodate the needs of an office and have many ducts and exposed heating pipes but little in the way of bathrooms on the upper floors. As can be seen from the existing plans 423/101,103,105,107 &109, there are numerous exposed pipe runs and risers.
 - The proposal is to remove bulkheads, exposed pipework and most risers and replace with mechanical and electrical risers in more appropriate locations where possible.
 - With regard to the heating system, the proposal is to use a combination of underfloor heating and radiators as appropriate. Where possible, cast iron radiators will be used with electric underfloor heating and towel radiators in bathrooms.
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- All plant for the house is to be located in the first under pavement vault opposite the basement entrance door.
- As a material change of use has been agreed, Building Control has confirmed that the building must meet building regulations. The proposed dwelling is four storeys plus basement and has only one means of escape via the main staircase. Building Control requires a new mains-fed sprinkler system to the basement in addition to protected staircases in the main house.
- There is an existing fire alarm system. This will be replaced and upgraded to suit the new dwelling
- The details of the lighting will be discussed and agreed with the conservation officer at the appropriate time.
- Soil pipes and new drainage to proposed bathrooms have been carefully considered and will generally be located above floor level within existing boxing or within new cupboards where there is altered or no panelling. This is to avoid pipe runs within the floor where possible.
- Where bathrooms are in panelled rooms (such as in existing rooms S7) all fittings are to stand clear of the panelling or be fixed to a false wall. Fittings (particularly baths) will be chosen with the existing structure in mind.
- Ventilation will use existing chimney flue routes as passive stack ventilation. Ventilation to the bathroom within existing room S5 will be within new boxing to the rear elevation.
- Ventilation to the bathroom in existing rooms T4 and the proposed utility room in T5 will be through the existing boxing/ corner flue and through the roof. Bathrooms in S7 and T8, ventilation will be through the external wall.
- All new soil and rainwater goods to the rear elevation are to be in cast iron and painted black.
- The proposal is to form a new service riser behind the existing 1920's staircase rising from first to third floors. This is to contain both electrical and mechanical services.

Conclusions

The above information demonstrates that 12 Great James Street was originally constructed and occupied as a single family dwelling. It has evolved and been re-ordered until its recent use as solicitors' offices. As previously stated, the 2008/1141/P and 2008/1143/L consents granted permission for change of use from offices to use as a single family dwelling and it is not our intention to apply for a further change of use.

We trust the information also illustrates the intention to maintain the historic fabric of the building as far as is practicable whilst upgrading the property for use as a high specification 21st Century home.
