

the overall importance of an ensemble may well justify listing at a high grade' (EH 2007b, 9–10).

Criterion 1: architectural interest

- 30–31 Great Queen Street

The building was designed by E R Barrow, and replaced two terraced houses of early 18th-century date, altered by the addition of a fourth storey in the late 18th or 19th century. The external appearance of the present building has been little altered, with the exception of the ground-floor restaurant, which occupies a former shop, and by the replacement of the windows in the south-facing façade with modern metal-framed windows. Internally, the staircases and second and third floors have been little altered, aside from cosmetic changes in decoration. The first floor has seen some changes to the positions of the timber partitions which divide the offices; one section of timber partitions has been completely removed, and some other sections have changed position; this has been outlined above. Despite these changes, the building remains a fine example of an early 20th-century office building, with a clear hierarchy of importance: the most imposing architectural effect is reserved for the principal spaces; the foyers, stairs and boardroom and meeting room on the first floor, and for the offices of the RMIG, the owners of the building and the principal occupants. The offices on the second and third floors were rented out, and were not treated with the same degree of architectural grandeur, although the principal offices facing Great Queen Street and the apartment on the second floor were equipped with large fireplaces.

Barrow also designed some of the buildings at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, constructed in 1924–5 by Messrs Allen Fairhead, which are the only other buildings of his to have been statutorily listed.

- 32 Great Queen Street

The building has been extensively altered during its lifetime. Originally the building probably appeared similar to its neighbours at Nos 27–29 and 33–35 Great Queen Street; three-storey brick buildings with attics and basements. By 1904, when 30–32 Great Queen Street was photographed in advance of excavations for the Piccadilly Line, the building had been increased in height by one storey and the façade covered with stucco. Internally, any original features, including the staircase and internal partition walls, have been removed or replaced.

Criterion 2: historic interest

- 30–31 Great Queen Street

The structure was built to house the offices of the Royal Masonic Institute for Girls, a charitable organisation founded in 1788 as the Royal Cumberland Freemason School. The purpose of the organisation was to 'preserve the female offspring of indigent Freemasons from the dangers and misfortunes to which their distressed situation may expose them; to train young female minds destitute of parental care and attention to industry, virtue, and social and religious duties; and to qualify the children to occupy a useful, though not a menial, station in life' (Handfield-Jones 1974, 20). The charity merged with its brother organisation, the Royal Masonic Institute for Boys, in 1982; No 30–31 became its office.

The offices on the first floor are laid out with partitions and glazing, including doors and opening internal windows. Although altered somewhat subsequently, these constitute an interesting example of early 20th-century office fixtures and fittings.

- 32 Great Queen Street

The building appears to date originally to the early 18th century, and for much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the premises housed a pawn shop.

Criterion 3: close historical association with nationally important people or events

- 30–31 Great Queen Street

The building was designed by E R Barrow, who also designed a number of buildings in Cambridge, including Harrington House and Kent House at Sidney Sussex College, and his own house in Ealing. The predecessor building on the site was occupied by the engraver James Basire and his various apprentices, among them the poet William Blake.

- 32 Great Queen Street

No nationally important people or events can be tied to the building at 32 Great Queen Street.

Criterion 4: group value

The northern side of Great Queen Street is predominantly Georgian in character, with many buildings of early 18th-century date, including 32 Great Queen Street, still standing. The present architecture and character of Great Queen Street has been shaped by the development of the Freemason buildings, with former 18th-century houses like Nos. 21 and 30–31 being redeveloped to provide offices for charitable organisations linked with Freemasonry. The southern side of Great Queen Street is dominated by Freemasons' Hall, designed by H V Ashley and Winton Newman and constructed 1927–33; 30–31 could be seen as a precursor to this, albeit in a more elaborate classical style than the more stripped-down Freemasons' Hall.

6.2 Assessment by conservation area criteria

Great Queen Street is situated in Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area, designated by Camden Council and English Heritage as being an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. 'It is the quality and interest of areas rather than of individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas' (DoE 1994, paragraph 4.2). This specialness is judged against local and regional criteria, rather than national importance as is the case with listing.

The significance of Nos 30–31 and 32 Great Queen Street can also be considered in relation to the published conditions under which unlisted buildings are held to make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area (EH 2005, appendix 2):

'Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?'

Initial research into the architect of Nos 30–31 Great Queen Street has shown that E R Barrow designed his own Arts and Crafts-style house in Ealing in 1906, now locally listed, and a number of buildings in Cambridge in the 1920s and 30s. No other buildings attributed to Barrow are statutorily listed. The architect of No 32 Great Queen Street is unknown.

‘Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of other buildings in the conservation area?’

‘Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?’

‘Does it, individually or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it now stands, or an earlier phase of growth?’

‘Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?’

‘Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?’

Like many other buildings in Great Queen Street, Nos. 30–31 and 32 fulfil a use predominantly associated with the Freemasons, a major influence on the street since 1774, when the Moderns’ Grand Lodge (founded in 1717) bought a house on the southern side of the street. No 32 has been much altered from its original early 18th-century appearance, but still makes a valuable contribution to the streetscape; Great Queen Street was built in the first half of the 17th century, with the first houses constructed by the speculator William Newton.

‘Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings?’

No 30–31 is a prominent part of the streetscape; despite the altered appearance of No 32, it also makes a positive contribution to the predominantly 18th and 19th-century streetscape.

‘Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?’

Both 30–31 and 32 Great Queen Street have strong historical associations for Freemasonry and for the generations of children assisted by the charity it houses.

‘Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?’

The association of the buildings with the Freemasonry movement and continuing use of them for charitable purposes contributes to the character of this part of the conservation area.

This assessment concludes on balance that Nos 30–31 Great Queen Street is of architectural and historic interest, justifying its statutory listing as being of architectural or historic interest, Grade II, and its inclusion in a conservation area, to which its character and appearance make a positive contribution. No 32 Great Queen Street has been much altered since its construction in the early 18th century, to the extent that it could not be considered worthy of listing as being of architectural or historic interest, however its external character and appearance make a positive contribution to the conservation area in which it is situated.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

This assessment is intended to provide the local planning authority and their designated advisers with information to enable them to make an informed decision as to the most appropriate mitigation strategy that may be required. Such a mitigation strategy may be a further historic survey which could be undertaken as a condition of listed building consent being granted.

As the description and history (4 and 5, above) indicate, Nos 30 and 31 Great Queen Street, since its construction as a single building in 1923–4, has been relatively little altered, at least structurally. The listing description (see 4, above) indicates that the building was statutorily listed in 1973 mainly for the interest of its external appearance; its interior had not been examined. The exterior, including the front facing on to Parker Street as well as that on Great Queen Street, properly meets the criteria for listing. The interior possesses aspects and features of notable architectural and historic interest dating from construction in the 1920s, such as the entrance hall and main staircase, and the elaborately panelled and decorated rooms to the north on the first floor. The lift inside the well of the main staircase is probably also original, certainly pre-1939, although its motor room at fourth-floor level appears to have been built, or rebuilt, relatively recently. In any refurbishment of the building these features should, if possible, be retained, and the opportunity should be taken of conducting a fuller investigation of the fabric of the building, probably to ‘Level 3’ in the recommended specifications of English Heritage (2006).

The fixtures and fittings of the offices on the first floor and the other upper floors are of moderate architectural and historic interest, especially those on the first floor. They all date from the construction of the building but have been altered subsequently. They are interesting enough to be investigated and recorded before being altered or removed, but not interesting and important enough in themselves to be retained *in situ*. A record of these fittings to ‘Level 3’ in the English Heritage specifications should reasonably satisfy future interest in them.

The exterior of No 32, although not an exact reconstruction of an actual house front on this site, nevertheless conforms to a type of house front which could have been built there in the mid 19th century. This front, and that of Nos 30 and 31, contribute positively to the appearance and character of the local conservation area. The interior of No 32 has apparently been altered in the 20th century and is not, and should not be, statutorily listed.

8 Acknowledgements

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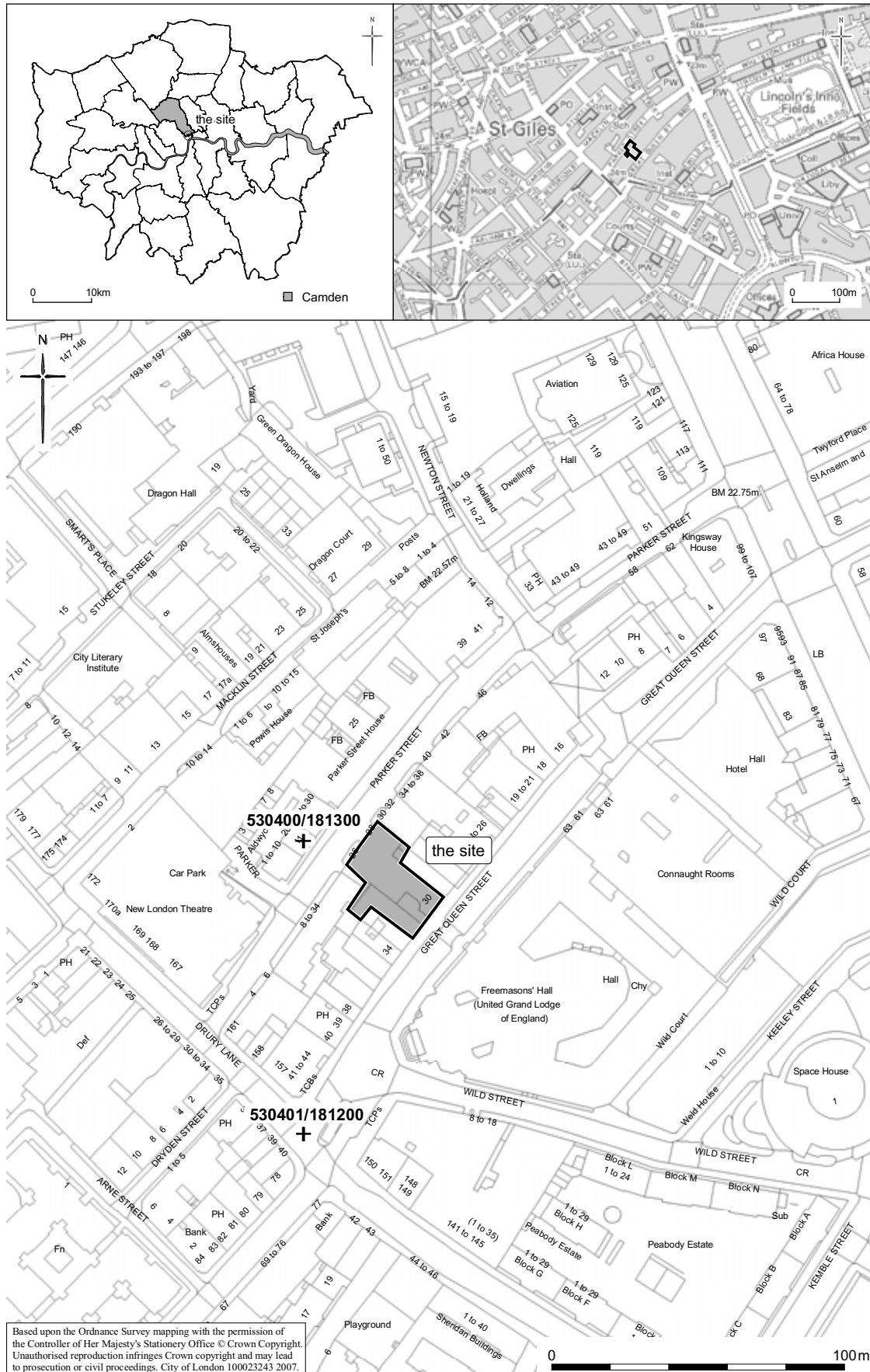
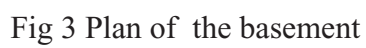


Fig 1 Location map



Fig 2 Map of the area in 1871 (OS 1874)





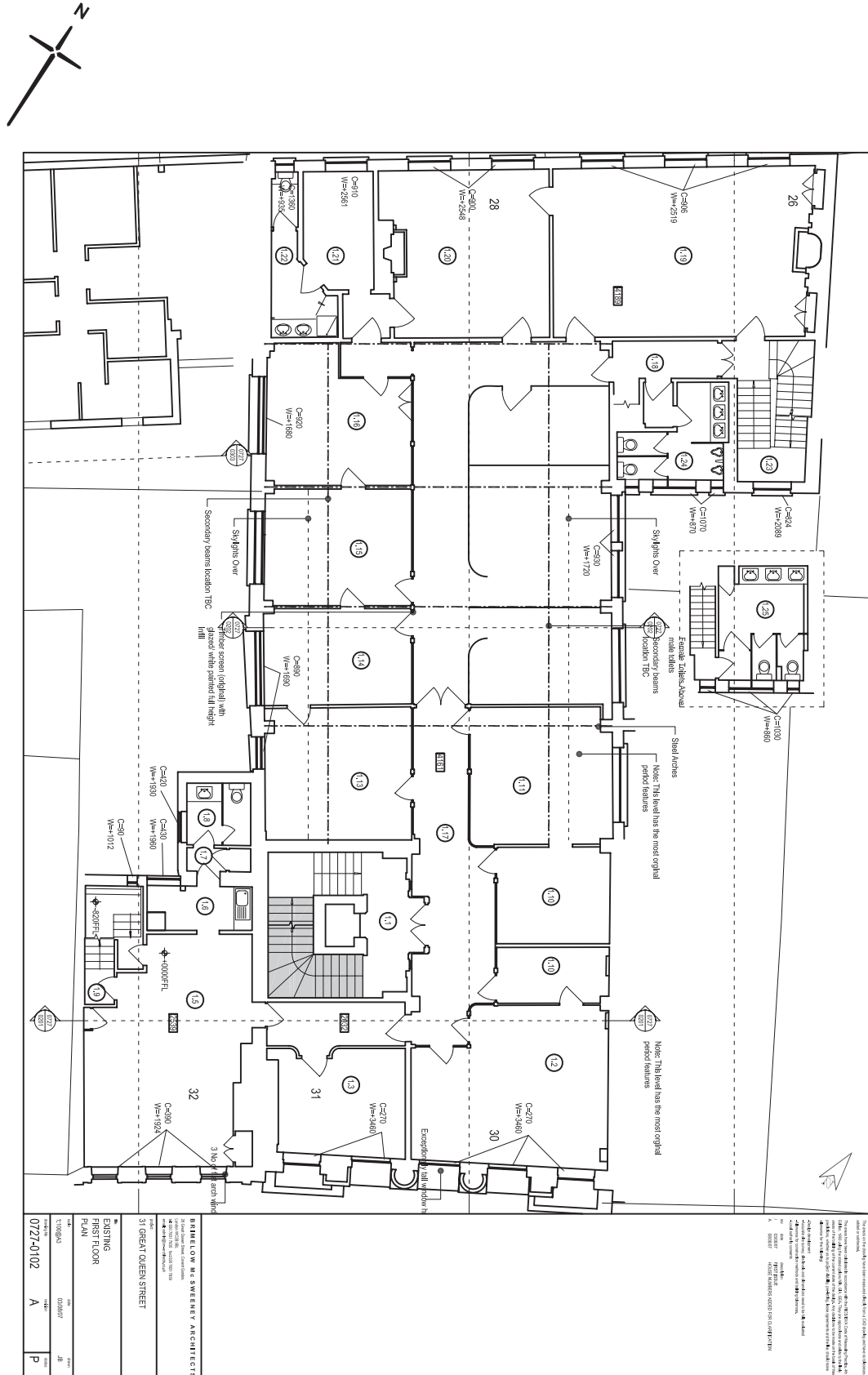
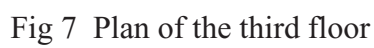


Fig 5 Plan of the first floor





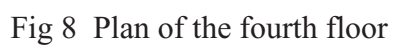




Fig 9 Nos 26 and 28 Parker Street, looking south-west (4864.jpg)

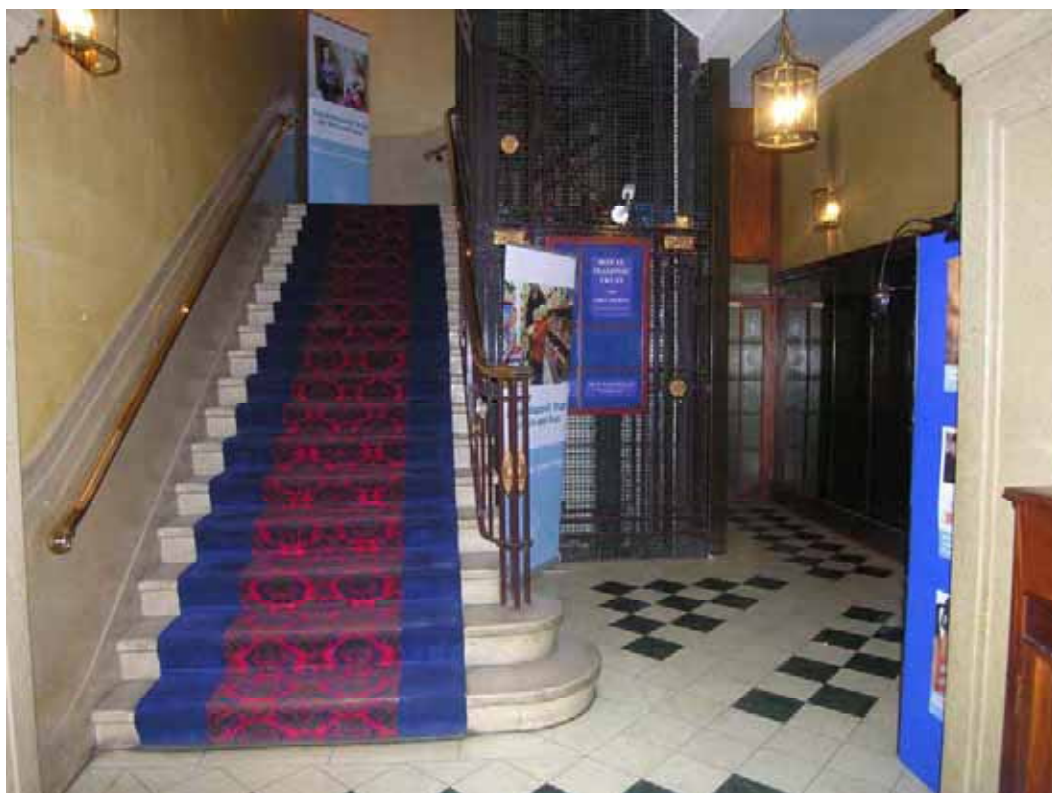


Fig 10 No 31, ground-floor entrance hall, stairs and lift, looking north (4931.jpg)



Fig 11 Nos 30 and 31, 1st-floor stair landing and doors to offices, looking north-east



Fig 12 1st-floor offices, looking south



Fig 13 1st-floor offices looking south



Fig 14 1st-floor offices looking north-east



Fig 15 1st-floor board room, looking east



Fig 16 2nd-floor office, looking south-west



Fig 17 2nd-floor office, looking east



Fig 18 3rd-floor level, roof of Nos 30 and 31, looking south



Fig 19 Staircase in No 32, looking north-west (4929.jpg)



G Q 9 CL AC



G Q 9 CL AC