

Design & Access Statement

Broader Context & Composition

Front Elevation:

The Georgian buildings of Bloomsbury conform to the typical tripartite façade organisation derived from the composition of classical, or perhaps more specifically, Hellenistic temple fronts. Usually they are constructed with deep brickwork facades, plain or stucco bases and defined attic storeys above a cornice or string line.

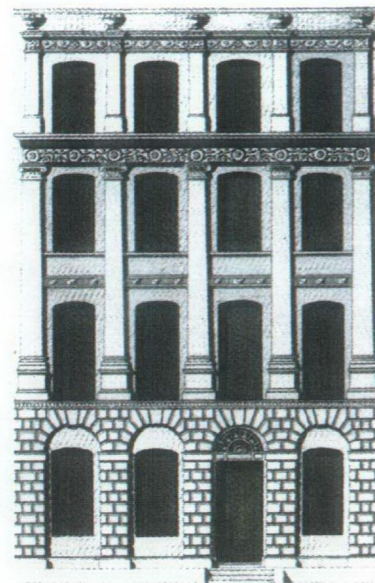
This system of façade organisation is clearly demonstrated by the application of stucco pilasters and cornice work in the houses adjacent to 73 Guilford Street. When these applied elements are removed the remaining window openings act as a negative imprint of the temple front and it is such relatively austere stripped classical frontages that are often thought of as being typically Georgian.

The ancient temple front, therefore, provides the basic pattern for Georgian architecture styles, along with numerous others. It is these principles of order and proportioning that we propose to adopt in the design of the new building.

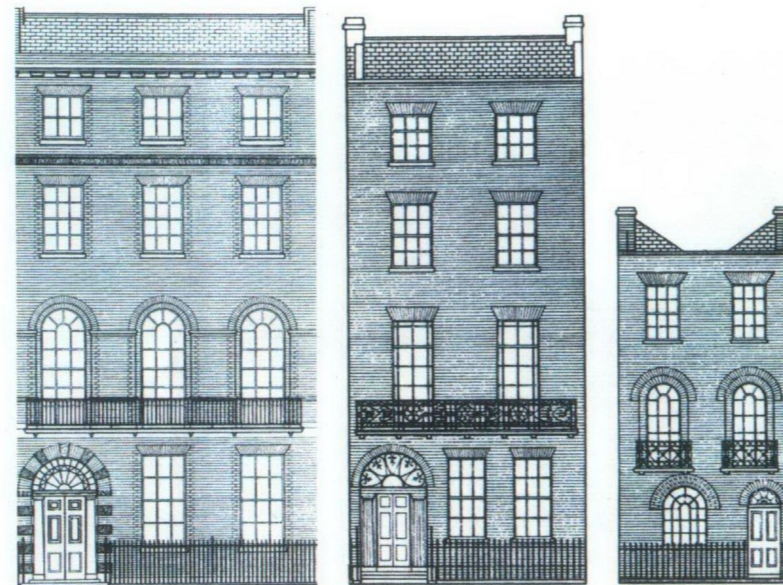
The materials used to construct the new insertion will underpin its success in the streetscape. Our view is that the integrity of the solid masonry façade is fundamental to terraces such as these and the importance of the laying patterns is a vital contributor to their general appearance. It is a point of conjecture that had mechanically made bricks been available at the time of construction then they may well have been the preferred choice of Georgian architects seeking to emulate the clean lines and ashlar finish of stone facades.

Windows and doors were generally painted timber, whilst the lower stories of many buildings were rendered using a range of stucco plasters emphasising the bases of the building. It should be noted, however, that many buildings did not receive stucco until the Victorian era and the presence of such finishes should not be taken as an indication of the original design intent.

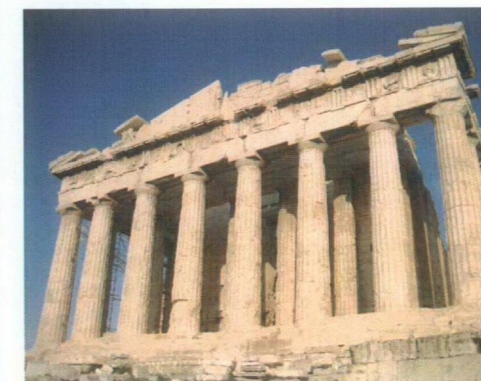
Four bay Georgian facade



The three 'classes' of Georgian town houses



A Hellenistic temple, The Parthenon in Athens



A temple fronted Georgian house



A stripped Georgian frontage

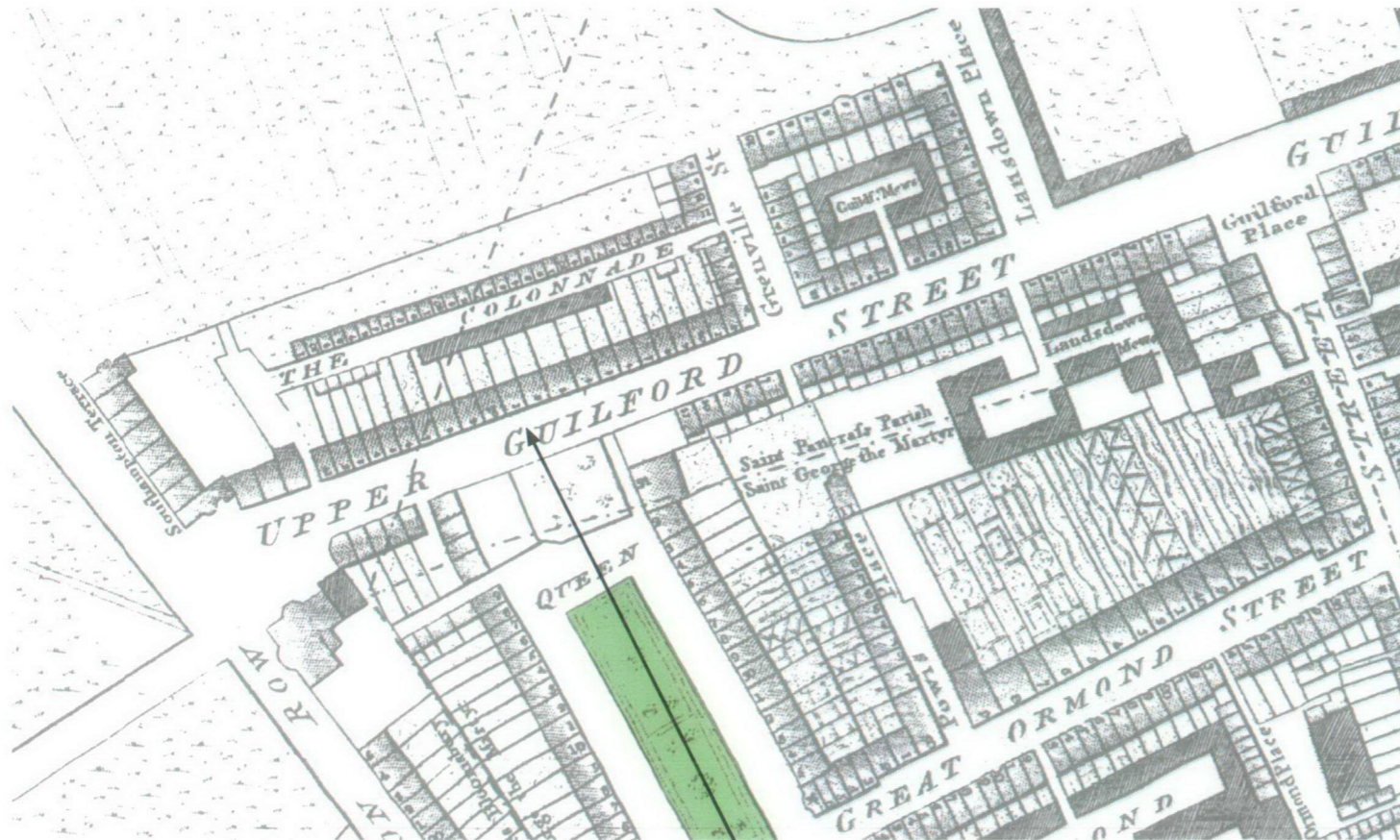


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Horwood map 1792-99

The terrace has a 'palace front' centred upon 70 to 72 Guilford Street with a series of secondary compositions to the left and right. This series of individual compositions reflects the relative importance and 'class' of each site in the original townscape, and thereafter the quality of accommodation provided.

70-72 Guilford Street is of specific interest within the context of the Georgian street layout. It is apparent from historic information that these buildings with their pilastered giant order in stucco and arched windows, once formed the end to Queen Square (see diagram left). The view towards these facades was interrupted by the building of new properties on the south side of Guilford Street and consequently the formal logic of the composition has been partially undermined.

The buildings that flank each side of 70-72 differ significantly in their façade treatment and both 68 & 69 Guilford Street and the site under consideration have facades that are partially recessed from those at 70-72. These elevations run for seven bays before returning to the prevalent building line and appear to have been built as independent compositions with two houses to each section.

Beyond these blocks, at 66 & 67 and 75 & 76 Guilford Street, there is further variation in the composition of the facades. Each of these blocks appears to have been designed as a distinct pair of houses with three bays to each property. Beyond this point the terrace reduces in height significantly and the width of the properties diminishes.

What is apparent is that the upper northern part of Guilford Street has a composition base around numbers 70-72 and is arranged symmetrically between 66 and 76 Guilford Street, with variations in façade design from block to block.

When the condition and status of 73 & 74 Guilford Street is considered along side the general compositional treatment of the terrace, it becomes clear that the two buildings benefit significantly from being treated as a single compositional element within the context of the surrounding buildings. This has been the basis of our proposals.



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The Proposal

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The Proposal Schedule of Accommodation

Approximate Residential Gross Internal Areas

Lower Ground	1 No 3 bed Unit	124sqm
Ground	1 No 2 bed Unit	88sqm
First	2 No 1 Bed Units	49sqm each
Second	2 No 1 Bed Units	49sqm each
Third	2 No 1 Bed Units	49sqm each
Amenity Space		??sqm communal ??sqm private

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PPG Statement

We note below a justification for the current structures demolition in relation to the three tests listed in PPG15, paragraph 3.19:

Criteria 1: The condition of the buildings, the cost of repairing and maintaining them in relation to their importance and to the value derived from their continued use.

The site at 73 Guilford Street forms a gap in the listed terrace of Georgian houses along the north of Guilford St. This is due to the lack of original building fabric and the poor quality of the repair and rebuilding works previously undertaken.

The site at 73 Guilford Street was damaged beyond repair by enemy action during the Second World War, since which the site has been cleared and raking shores erected in order to maintain the stability of the adjacent structures. Only the ground and basement walls to the front façade now remain and these have suffered from significant alterations. The quality of the rebuilding works to the front facade is crude and inelegant with inadequate consideration given to the brickwork / render.

What remains at 73 Guilford Street is in an extreme state of disrepair. Seven years ago the structural engineers Price & Myers advised that the majority of the existing structure of the building could not be saved. As the building has lain vacant since this report was made, with no repair works being undertaken, it can reasonably be assumed that this situation has only worsened.

Given what little of the original Georgian fabric remains the facades have little or no fabric of architectural significance and instead detract from the otherwise complete James Burton designed row of houses.

Criteria 2: The adequacy of efforts made to retain the buildings in use.

During the last ten years approximately, 73 Guilford Street has passed through the hands of at least three owners who have all had proposals drawn up to return the building to full use and each of these owners has independently concluded that their needs can be met elsewhere. Furthermore the building in its current form, (a small and at best two storey building only half the depth of the terrace), has an impractical layout and inefficient use of space that is uncondusive to any type of conversion.

Criteria 3: The merits of alternative proposals for the site.

We have previously outlined the design guidance provided by the Conservation Area Statement. In it the importance of the street pattern and continuity of design is discussed with the negative affect of buildings which do not respect the principles of the original architecture noted as being potentially damaging to the conservation area's overall character. Sympathy with the plan form and materiality of the existing is also encouraged.

The new building proposed replaces a two storey structure with a rigorously designed Georgian elevation that is more in keeping with its surroundings. Additionally we propose to reinstate the original building's relationship to the street and to reinstate the original rear garden as a part communal, part private, facility for use by all of the building's residents. As such we consider that our proposal should be viewed as a considerable planning gain. It will take a fractured row of houses and allow it once again to be considered as a complete terrace, whilst also creating a series of high quality flats the exact pattern of which will be designed to fulfil all the requirements of modern living.

Furthermore the proposal will increase the floor-space on the site and enable the building to accommodate more people than it has previously. This will bring about a more efficient use of urban land, a move that is in line with national objectives to increase inner-city housing density and so relieve pressure on the greenbelt and other previously undeveloped land types allowing them to be maintained for the benefit of the wider community.

For the above reasons we consider the demolition of these unlisted buildings within a conservation area and their replacement with the scheme detailed in this planning application justifiable. The loss of the existing buildings will be far out weighed by their well designed replacement, comprising seven residential flats, more in keeping with their surroundings.



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Party Wall to 72 Guilford Street Schedule of Works

In order to take advantage of the construction activities, and to minimise sound transfer from one site to the other, it is proposed to infill existing openings in the adjacent listed party wall. Below we schedule out the proposed works, and these are also highlighted on the proposed demolition drawings.

1.0

Our proposals are to retain the structural integrity of the historic structure and minimize any works to it. Prior to any works commencing on site detailed proposals will have to be prepared by a competent contractor and engineer when the works are tendered, and the schedule below, whilst not exhaustive, indicates the parameters they should work within.

2.0

It should be noted that the proposals for 73 Guilford Street can be designed so that there is no need for the new structure to tie into the party walls of the neighbouring properties. These party walls were originally designed to transfer the compressive load of both adjoining properties into the ground. Our proposals will therefore decrease this load, and no works to the existing foundations will be required.

3.0

During demolition of the structures at 73 Guilford Street, the lateral load from 72 and 74 Guilford Street could be transferred with temporary works, most probably scaffolding, the precise form of which will be concluded during the detailed design process mentioned in 1.0 above. All demolition will be carried out with care and in such a way as to cause no movement in the adjacent party walls or damage to the adjacent properties. Where necessary areas of brickwork will be taken down by hand (using hammers and bolsters).

4.0

The final stability of the party walls will be maintained, possibly by tying them into their own floor structure. The precise nature of this work will be confirmed during the detailed design as 1.0 above, and party wall negotiations.

5.0

At the ground floor level of 72 Guilford Street an existing through door will be blocked up, and at first-third floor levels existing doors and windows will be blocked up. The nature of this work will be maintained by the rights and duties contained in the *Party Wall etc Act 1996* and an outline specification for the works is provided on the drawings.

6.0

At the rear, the adjacent Colonnade building has access doors into two number garages. It is proposed to block these up and an outline specification for the works is provided on the demolition drawings. The nature of this work will be maintained by the rights and duties contained within the *Party Wall etc Act 1996*.



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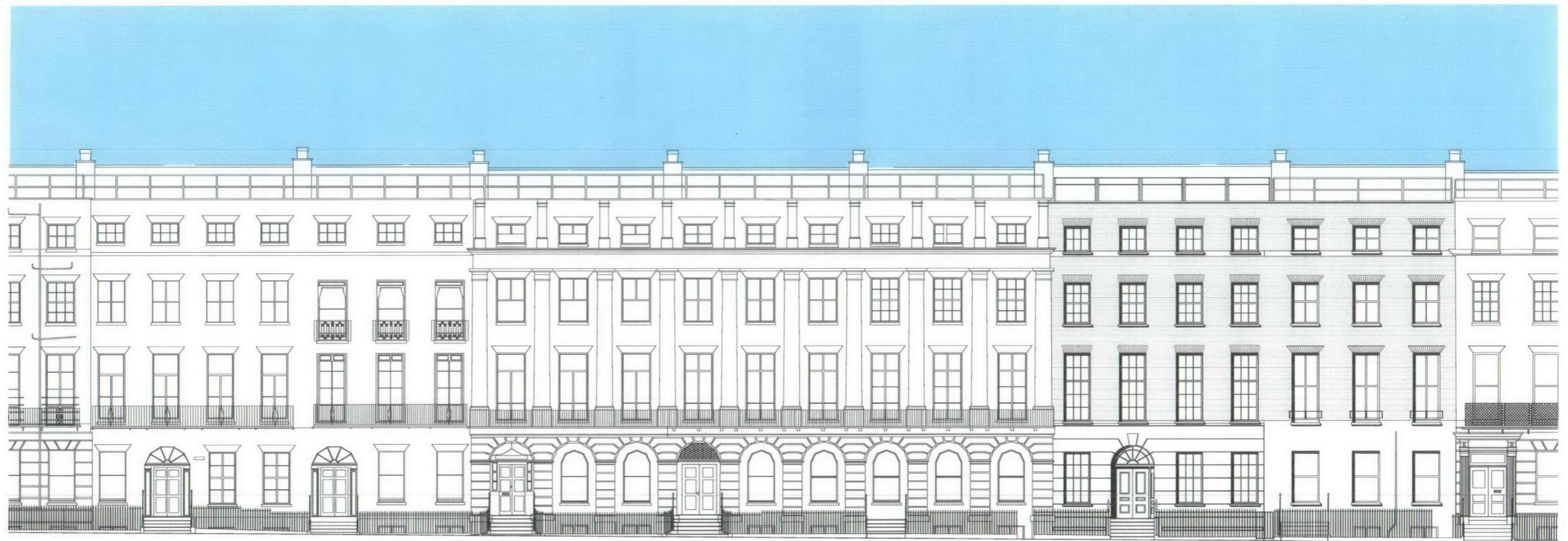
Front Elevation

Achieving a successful principal elevation to Guilford Street, that ties the adjacent listed palace frontage of numbers 70-72 together is key to achieving a successful composition.

We are proposing to achieve this with a typical four bay composition, that pays cognisance to both the overall terrace, and what has subsequently been built at number 74 Guilford Street.

Each floor level is carefully planned to tie in with the overall frontage, and to achieve Lifetime Homes Standards.

The elevation is to be constructed in masonry to match the surrounding terrace, with the windows formed from painted FSC certified timber and double glazed units to meet modern energy demands.



73 Guilford Street