

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



Proposed alterations and extension to
34-35 John Street, WC1

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

This Design and Accessibility Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for both Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent in regards to the alterations and an extension of 34-35 John Street, WC1N 2EU. It appraises and analyses the existing Grade II Listed building on this site, in order to formulate a well informed sensitive design solution.

The document has encompassed information from a number of sources, including but not limited to: PPS1: *Delivering Sustainable Development*, Assessment of Significance, PPG 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment*, and site specific guidance from English Heritage/CABE.

1.2 Project Details

The restoration and extension works of a Grade II Listed building, in order to change it back to its original use as a single dwelling for:

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1.3 Supplementary Documentation

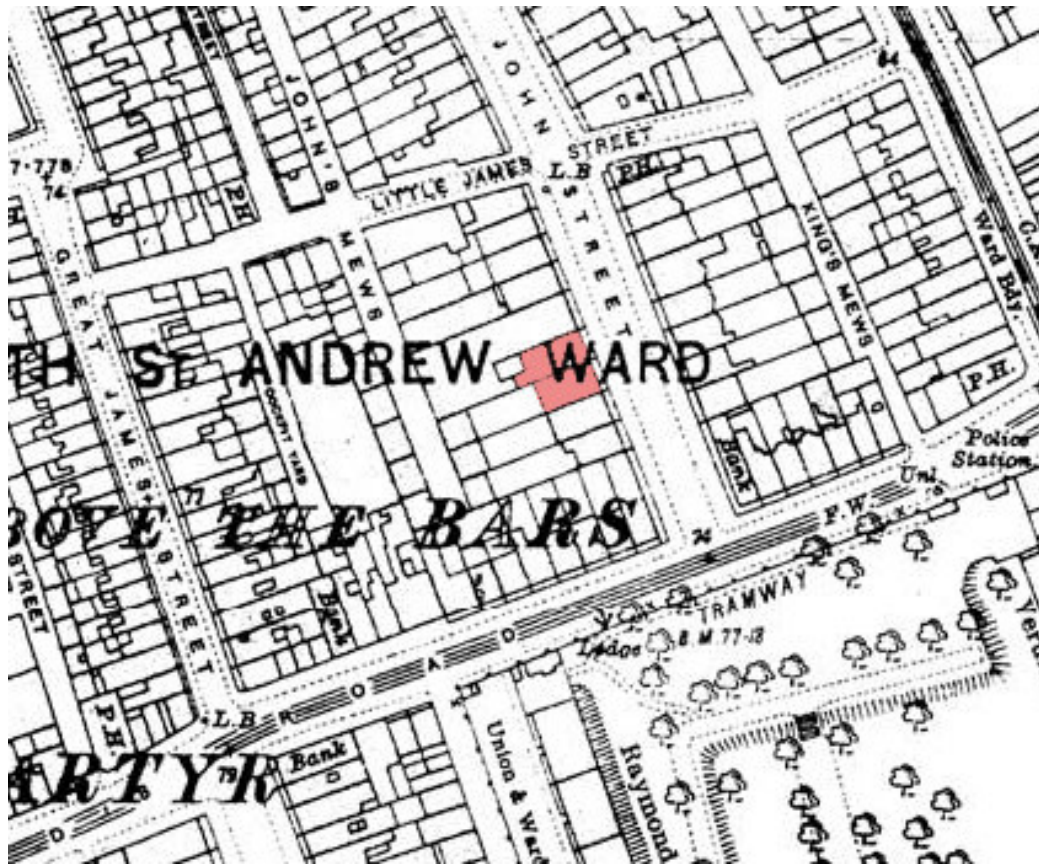
The following information accompanies this Design and Access Statement

- Planning Statement prepared by GVA Grimley
- Structural Engineering Method Statement undertaken by FJ Samuely and Partners Ltd
- Assessment of Significance and PPG15 Statement of Justification by Alan Baxter and Associates
- Schedule of Works by Frederick Gibberd Partnership, Architects and Historic Building Consultants

2.0 Site and Area Assessment

2.1 History of 34-35 John Street and the Surroundings

34 and 35 John Street are part of a speculation of 35 houses built between 1754 and 1759 on the estate of Henry Doughty, by the builder John Blagrave. They followed the prevailing fashion for houses with minimal façade decorations but having Palladian mathematical proportions, arranged into uniform terraces. As well as fifteen houses either side of the entrance to John Street on Theobalds Road, there were two 'palace-fronted' compositions, each of 9 houses. On the east side were Nos. 2-10, while on the west side were 29-37, with a pediment on the central houses on each side, numbers 6 and 33.



Ordnance Survey Map of 1914 showing 34-35 John Street

The houses would originally have been split into several separate zones. Servant's quarters would have been in the basement, while the ground and first floors were used for reception rooms. Bedrooms on the second floor were for the family, with third floor bedroom probably for the servants. The front room on the ground floor would have been the dining room, with a drawing room directly above it.

Today, Nos. 2-5, 7-9, 29, 30, 33-36 are wholly or partly original, while the others were damaged in the war and rebuilt afterwards to match their neighbours. Number 6 is a rough copy with concrete lintels in the basement and poorly matched brick, while Nos. 31 and 32 are very accurate facsimiles, though with unsympathetic mansard roofs. Of the surviving houses, both 34 and 35 have been extensively rebuilt on their upper floors, as has its neighbour No. 36 (some time between 1942 and 1950, after severe war damage), while No.

33 appears to be largely original. Several of the houses are noted in the list description as having original stairs and balusters, with some panelled rooms also remaining. The block south of 36 on the corner of John Street and Theobald's Road is a post-war reconstruction following bomb damage.

Nos. 29-36 and their attached railings were listed Grade II in 1951; with the reconstructed buildings included for group value. As part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (designated in 1968), these houses contribute to an extensive surviving network of Georgian streets and squares, which still retain a large proportion of their original buildings. Within this conservation area, John Street forms a group with Doughty Street and Mecklenburgh Square, with which it connects.

The main surviving significant features of 34-35 John Street, are the front facades including door cases, the main staircases, and the historic decorative chimneypieces, plasterwork and panelling – where these survive. Original or historic wooden sash windows and shutters also survive in several places, although some of these may have been relocated during rebuilding works.

Both houses have been considerably altered in the 20th century. Apparently the second and third floors have been largely rebuilt, while the roofs are modern and the rear facades are mostly not original.

In 1987 permission was given for the demolition of a brick store and garden wall at the rear of the buildings, and the erection of a single-storey conservatory behind both 34 and 35 – presumably the basement extension we see today.

A photo dated 1973 shows the rear elevation of No.35 with only 3 storeys, with a hidden mansard above. The first floor windows have concrete or stone lintels which were subsequently replaced. The photographic evidence suggests that the 1st and 2nd floor facades were rebuilt or refaced before 1973.

In 1974 and again in 1976 permission was given to extend the rear brick outer wall up over the 3rd floor. When this was carried out it appears that the bricks on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors were harmonised in their headers and general appearance.

In the interiors, the current sets of wall panelling and chimneypieces seem all to have been in place by 1973. However, several areas of ceiling plaster and wall panelling, especially on the ground floor, were by this time suffering from water ingress and had to be replaced. New partitions, both solid and glazed, were inserted on all floors, and numerous other alterations were made, including the insertion or upgrading of kitchenettes and lavatories, and related services, on all floors. In general, new pipework and electrical trunking was hidden within the walls behind studwork, hollow skirtings and dadoes.

Listed building consent was given in 1974 for the demolition of the cross-wall between the front rooms and the main staircase of No. 35, from the first floor to the roof, and its rebuilding in load-bearing masonry. It would further appear that the rear cross-wall of No. 34 is not original, as the position of the chimneybreast on the first floor would indicate that the rear room on that level originally occupied all the space west of the main stair hall. However it is not known when this wall was inserted to create the subdivisions we see today.

To the rear of the buildings, an application to erect a two storey office in the garden behind No. 35 was refused in 1976, on the grounds of overdevelopment; however permission was granted for the lowering of the basement window cills, the replacement of sash windows and the insertion of a glazed door. In 1987 the demolition of the brick store behind No. 34 was permitted, as well as the erection of a 'conservatory'. This latter structure may refer to the skylit basement extension that was added at that time. It was also presumably around this time that the basement as it now appears was laid out, involving the removal of the original stairs from the entrance hall of No. 35 down to the basement.

3.0 Design Principles

3.1 Consultations with Camden Council

We have discussed the principle of returning the property back to 2 houses with officers who have confirmed this is acceptable. In addition, following a site visit the Arboricultural officer advised that all trees in the rear garden could be felled as they have little or no merit.

3.2 The Client Brief

Taking into account the present condition of 34-35 John Street, and the provisions of the PPG15, the client's brief is to return the Grade II Listed buildings to their former purpose as single dwellings, with the careful addition of modern everyday amenities. The brief focuses on providing two substantial family homes in a key area of London.

3.3 The Existing Building

The existing front elevations, and their adjoining buildings make an impressive collective contribution to the overall characteristics of the area. The choice of materials, and standard of construction to the street frontage is of similar standard to the other buildings in John Street.



Unfortunately over a long period of time, and largely due to the damage received during the war, both the rear and front elevations have been significantly altered. In some aspects, the new building works of these rear facades have fallen short from detailing through to choice of materials.

3.4 Access

Much of the historic environment was created with little regard to the rights of disabled persons to enjoy freedom of access to buildings. Unfortunately, 34 and 35 John Street are these types of buildings.

The present buildings do not meet the needs of disabled people, with no access from street level into the building. However, in order to provide disabled access into these Grade II Listed buildings, the original front elevations would have to be altered. This would cause the fronts of the buildings to be out of keeping with the adjoining listed buildings, and therefore detract from the visual aesthetics of the current streetscape.

3.6 Sustainable Design

One of the key benefits of the renovation and the extension of the property is that we can exercise the opportunity to consider matters of sustainable design. Although there are clear limitations set out by the original building fabric and layout, the proposed solution has been designed to address the issue of fuel and energy consumption.

4.0 Analysis

4.1 Architectural Style

The proposed scheme is largely a restoration project of both 34 and 35 John Street. It is proposed that No. 35 will have a new ground floor one-storey extension to the rear of the building, and an extension to the basement. Over a period of time there has been substantial damage done to both the rear elevation, and to the interior of the building. Wherever possible, our design proposal preserves, repairs and replaces all original detailing and all features of architectural importance.

4.2 Siting

The existing site area has largely dictated the design for the new extension to the rear of No. 35. The design, orientation and aspect of this extension have been taken into consideration, so as to ensure that the new fabric responds sympathetically to the special characteristics of the building and its surroundings.

4.3 Existing Materials

The predominant original material on the street frontage is stock brickwork. Similar to the other buildings on John Street, the houses have minimal façade decorations, which adopt Palladian mathematical proportions. The original attached railings were Grade II Listed in 1951. Additional to this, there are painted timber framed windows that appear to be original and some are in need of repair and restoration.

The rear elevation unfortunately bears no resemblance of detail to the front. It is constructed of stock brickwork.

The roof remains largely in its Georgian configuration, although it has been completely rebuilt in the 20th century. It is covered with slate tiles and lead flashings with prominent chimneys.

5.0 The Design Solution

5.1 Planning

The proposals for restoration and extension works are illustrated in the drawings which accompany this application.

We propose to re-establish the principal living areas on the ground floors (entry level), and the kitchen and staff areas on the lower ground floors as per the original design. The original timber cantilevered staircases will be retained and restored. This stair is of great architectural importance to the history of the building.

In order to provide an acceptable level of amenity in No 35, a new ground floor extension, will accommodate more functional living space, with an external terrace above. The extension to the basement also provides a great deal more light into the extended Basement. The rear extension also improves the flow from inside to outside amenity spaces. As a result of the new Ground Floor extension, a terrace which leads off the Master Bedroom has been introduced. Various examples of rear extensions have been considered, following the precedents of neighbouring properties. We feel that the proposed design achieves the most sensitive balance between the original building, the needs of its occupants and its current surroundings. The design of this element carefully sits within the existing walls and foundations of the building in order not to compromise its structural integrity. Please refer to the accompanying Structural Engineering Method Statement for further information.

The entire original first floor of both properties accommodates the master bedroom and ensuite, which have been arranged in response to the layout of the existing spaces, which contain decorative cornices and ceiling roses, so as to obviate erosion of the original plan. All plasterwork will be carefully retained, replaced or restored having regard to the status of the various rooms, with simple openings connecting the spaces as necessary.

Continuing up the building, bedrooms are once again reinstated on the upper floors. However, in keeping with modern times and respecting how one lives, ensembles have been introduced into these areas.

5.2 Elevational Treatment

The elevational treatment has been considered carefully in relation to the precedents of the adjoining and surrounding built environment.

The front elevations which are in reasonable repair require minimal intervention apart from routine inspection and maintenance.

On the rear façade of No. 34, new full height openings have been introduced to allow access to a garden space at the rear of the building. The new door types and styles have been set by the original window patterns on the properties. The design matches these in order to create a continuity of style across the buildings.

On the rear elevation of No. 35, the new extension will adopt the same window/door treatment as used on the original building. All openings on the ground and first floor will be full height in order to increase a freer flow of space from inside to outside. On the flank of the terrace area off the main bedroom, privacy will be provided by means of a fixed obscure glass screen, softened by planting.

The rear façade requires some brickwork to be made good or replaced. All new bricks will be selected to match the existing brickwork.

5.3 External Materials

The materials for the extension will be closely matched to the original surviving fabric.

6.0 Accessibility

The site is well served with existing transport links, including good public facilities, and the nearby Underground Stations of Holborn, Chancery Lane and Russell Square. The sites themselves do not accommodate vehicles, which is common in the majority of dwellings in the local vicinity.

There is direct pedestrian access to the Grade II Listed building from John Street, by means of four steps up to the front entry. Separate pedestrian access is provided to the Lower Ground Floor from street pavement. As indicated throughout this document, the primary objective of our design proposal is to restore 34-35 John Street. Therefore, access to the building has not been altered.

Areas within the principal storey of the building have been restored. The entry foyer and hall remain very generous, which is more than suitable for ease of movement within and between rooms for both wheelchair and ambulant disabled users.

Due to the nature of these Grade II Listed buildings, and the historic importance of the stair being retained, inter-floor travel for wheelchair users has not been accommodated. Thus wheelchair access is restricted to Ground Floor.

Making an environment accessible to the disabled is not necessarily confined to accommodating wheelchair users. Difficulties arising from disabilities, either physical or sensory, can be alleviated by attention to detail, such as the positioning of electrical sockets and controls, and the choice of colours and materials. The introduction of the new extension to the rear will allow for easy outside access.

7.0 Sustainability

Restoring the properties in order to overcome the deficiencies which are present in the buildings today, provides an opportunity to address issues of sustainability, and in particular making the houses more energy efficient by incorporating passive energy systems, and exploiting renewable energy sources. However, the opportunities in a Grade II Listed building are somewhat restricted.

7.1 Recycling

Recycling can be achieved through several activities.

The recycling of materials from the demolition works to the rear of the building.

This will be dependant on whether some of the building components have already been previously recycled, and therefore may not be suitable for reuse, due to both age and condition. For example the following building components will be considered for recycling - facing bricks, which have not been damaged by the cement mortar, roof tiles, which haven't been damaged by fixings, metalwork and concrete (for use as hardcore). The recycling of all materials will follow WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) protocols.

The use of recycled materials in the restoration and extension works of the dwelling

Heavy construction will also follow WRAP guidelines, incorporating recycled components where appropriate. Traditional materials will generally be used in the construction of the extensions, and where possible will be obtained from sustainable sources.

The sorting and storing of waste generated by the new occupants

The proposed design has allowed for a general provision for a large refuse store for the sorting and storage of household waste. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the Council's Cleansing Group.

7.2 Energy Efficiency

Heat Conservation

All new walls, roofs, windows and doors will be highly insulated in order to conserve heat. The new construction will have high thermal mass and act as a heat store.

Lighting

The buildings were originally constructed with large windows, allowing light through to all areas of the dwelling. The new extension to the rear of No.35 will enable larger amounts of light to enter the building on the ground and basement floors. A new, larger lightwell to the lower ground floor of No.34 also allows for maximum light gain.

8.0 Design and Access Summary

Use

The proposal returns the properties back to their intended original use as single dwellings. John Street is served by excellent local facilities, and is easily accessible to a range of private and public transport, including both Holborn, and Chancery Lane Underground Stations.

Amount

The proposal is for two single dwellings, with principle accommodation areas arranged over the Ground and Lower Ground Floors. Bedrooms are found on all the upper floors. Additional ancillary areas will be located on the Lower Ground Floors.

Layout

The sense of the original plans, particularly, in the principal stories of the property will be retained. The layouts necessarily reflect the changes in living standards over the past 250 years, and the level of comfort and convenience commensurate with high quality residences.

Scale

The scale of the extensions to the rear has been carefully considered in relation to the surrounding properties as well as the existing buildings themselves. The extensions are not visible from the public streets around the site, and make the best use of the available site without compromising the architectural integrity of the original buildings.

Appearance

The front elevation will remain unaltered, whilst the ad hoc extensions to the rear will be replaced with modest extensions of appropriate quality using appropriate materials.

Access

The proposals utilise the existing infrastructure and facilities, which serve the neighbourhood. Listed building guidelines have restricted wheelchair access into the building; however the building will be suitable for people with physical and sensory impairments. Access for emergency and service vehicles will be from the street as at present. Good surveillance will be provided over the premises, to both the front and rear.

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