



34 & 35 JOHN STREET, CAMDEN
ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND PPG15 STATEMENT OF JUSTIFICATION

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Prepared for
THE CAMPING PARTNERSHIP

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Numbers 34 and 35 John Street are two contiguous Georgian houses built in the 1750s, as part of a unified row of nine dwellings. They stand within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in the London Borough of Camden. In 1951 numbers 29-36 were listed as a group at Grade II for their architectural and historic value as a row of attractive Georgian terrace houses, from a period when there was very little building activity in London. Although the facades of Nos. 31 and 32 have been rebuilt in facsimile and several other houses have been partly rebuilt, the row still retains most of its original character.

Although built as grand family homes, Nos. 34 and 35 have been in office use for the whole of the twentieth century. This report has been commissioned by The Camping Partnership to inform their proposals to convert both houses back into single residential use, and accompany their planning and listed building consent applications. The first part of this report analyses the history of the houses, charting their development as far as it is known, and using this information to create an assessment of their historic and architectural significance. The second part discusses the local and national planning policies relating to the historic built environment and considers the effects of the proposed works on the fabric and significance of the listed buildings.

The assessment and justification elements of this report have been carried out with reference to criteria laid out in current statutory guidance on listed buildings and conservation areas. These include Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (referred to as PPG15), the London Borough of Camden's Replacement Unitary Development Plan, 2006 (the Replacement UDP), and the Supplementary Planning Guidance contained within the London Borough of Camden's Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement.



Location Map, showing 34 & 35 John Street (outlined in red)

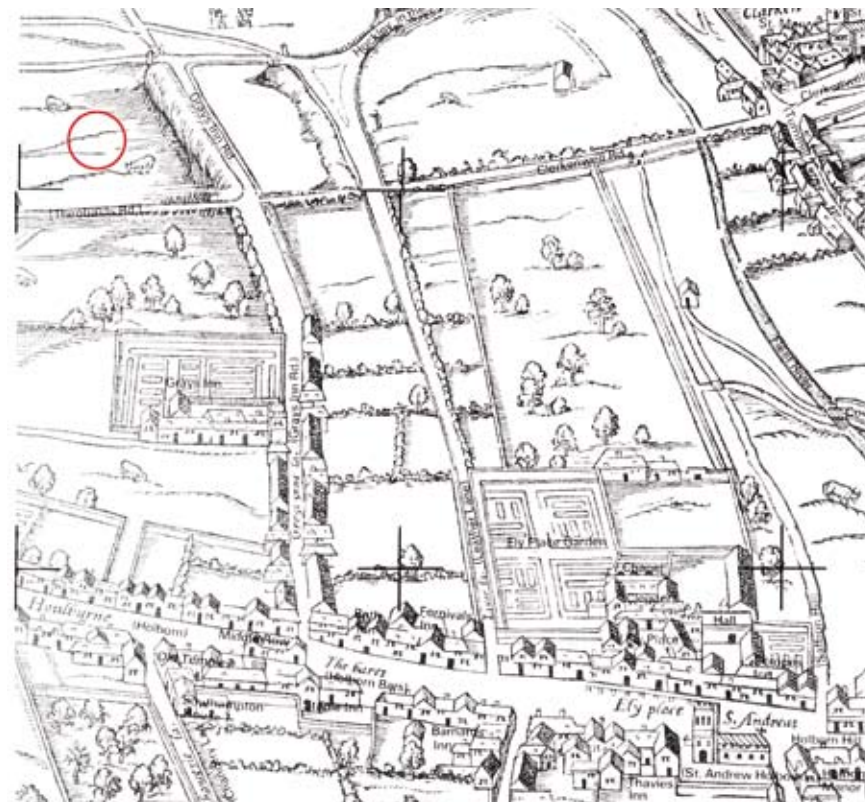
2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET

2.1 Historical development of John Street

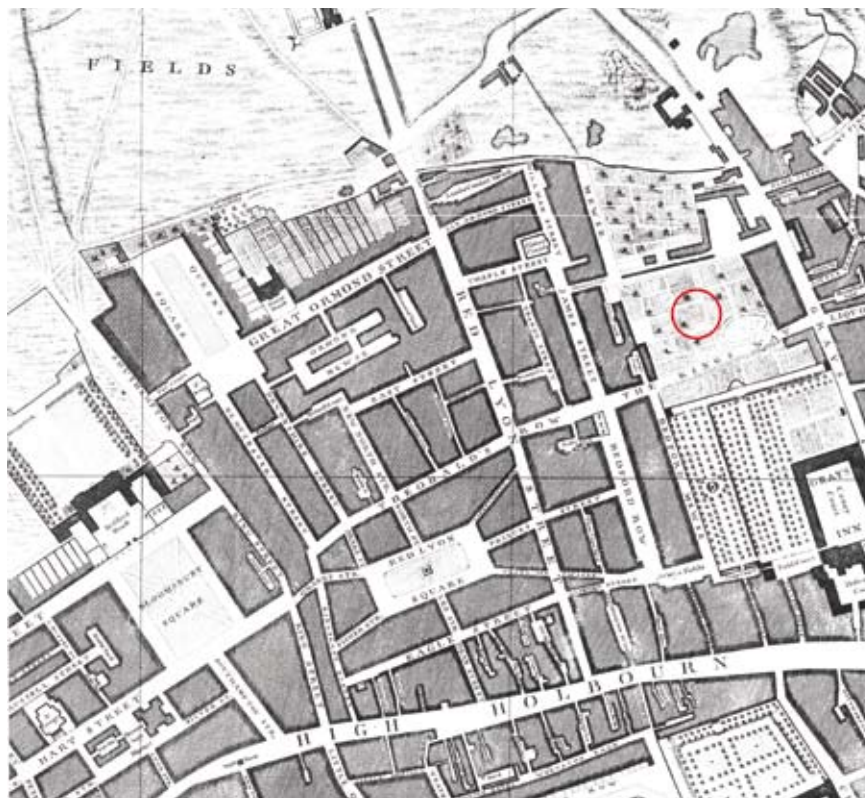
The area north of Grays Inn was mainly open farmland until the 18th century, when streets began to be laid out north of Theobalds Road. Great James Street was built up in the 1720s, during one of the boom periods in London's expansion, but there was then a slump in activity for several decades. Only from the later 1760s did the pace of building pick up once more, with most of Bloomsbury being built up by the 1820s. The lower half of John Street, built in the 1750s, is therefore a rare survival from a period when little building was going on.

34 and 35 John Street were built as part of a speculation of 35 houses, put up between 1754 and 1759 on the estate of Henry Doughty by the builder John Blagrove (or Blagrove). They followed the prevailing trend for houses with minimal façade decorations but having Palladian mathematical proportions, arranged into uniform terraces. As well as fifteen houses on Theobalds Road arranged either side of the entrance to John Street, 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, Nos. 6 and 33.

Today, Nos. 2-5, 7-9, 29, 30, 33-36 are wholly or partly original, while most of the others were damaged in the war or fell into disrepair, and were rebuilt afterwards to match their neighbours. No. 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. No. 37, however, was replaced with a large block reaching down to Theobald's Road. 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). No. 33 appears to be largely original. Several of the houses other than 34 and 35 are noted in the list description as having original stairs and balusters, with some panelled rooms also remaining.



Elizabethan London, 1567 (approximate site of John Street circled)



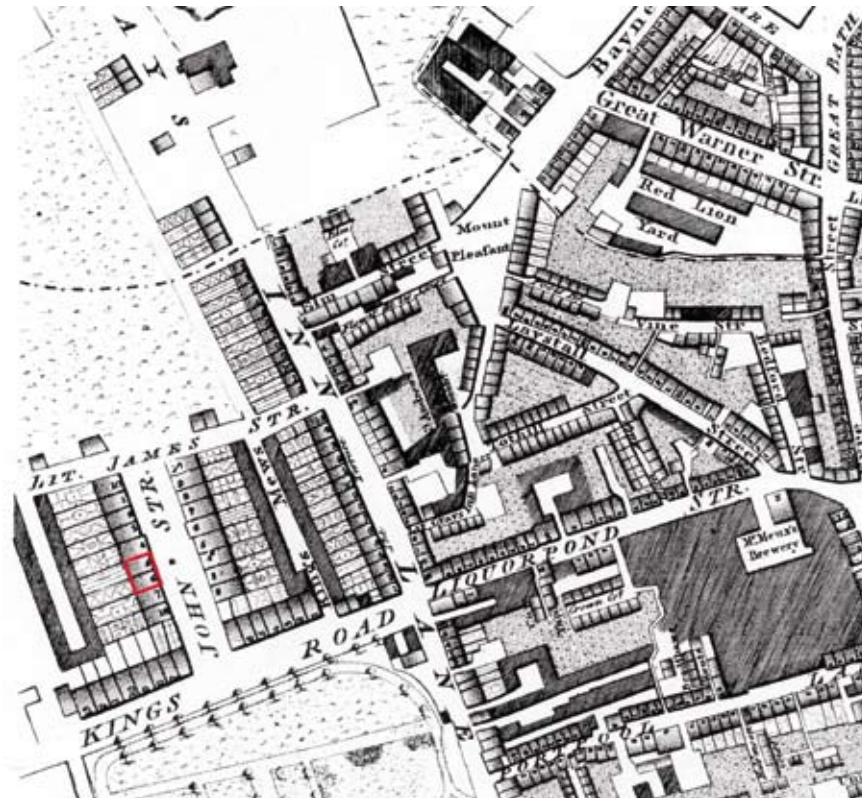
Georgian London, 1740 (site indicated in red)

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.

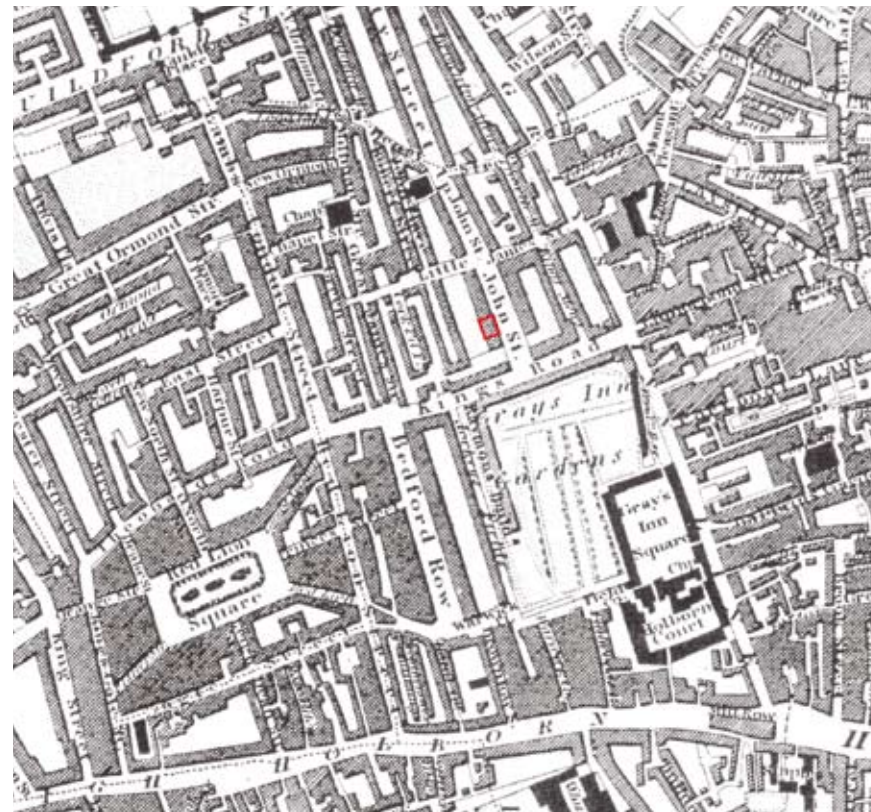


Map showing listed buildings and the boundary of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area

- Boundary of Bloomsbury Conservation Area
- Orange square: Grade II Listed Buildings near the site
- Green square: Grade II* Registered Gardens



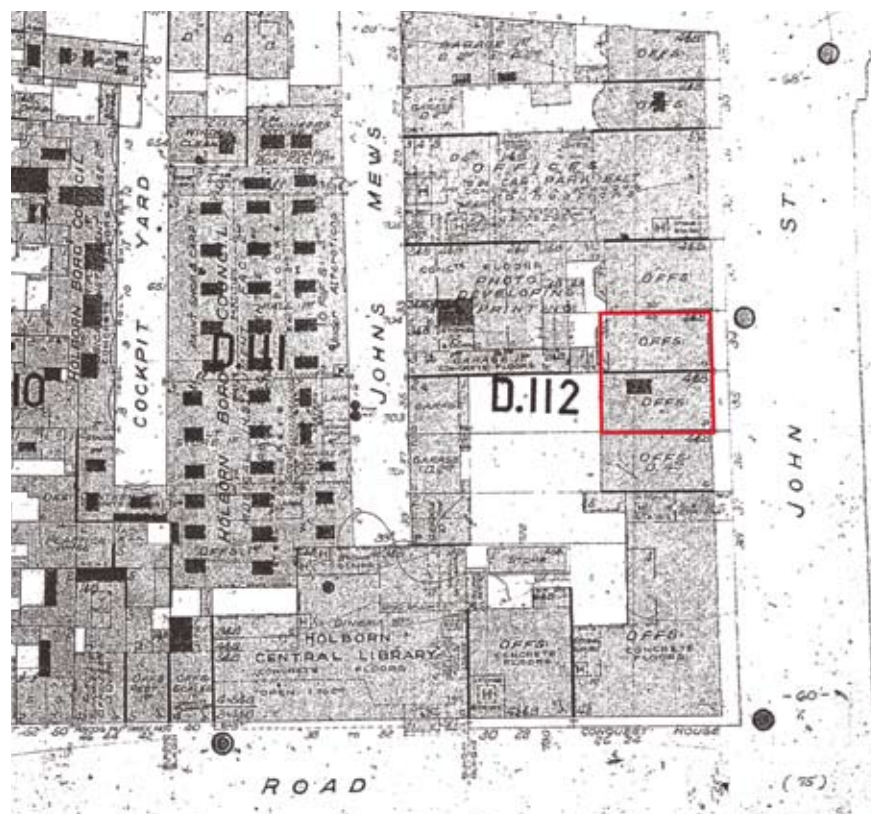
Horwood, 1792 (site indicated in red)



Greenwood, 1824 (site indicated in red)



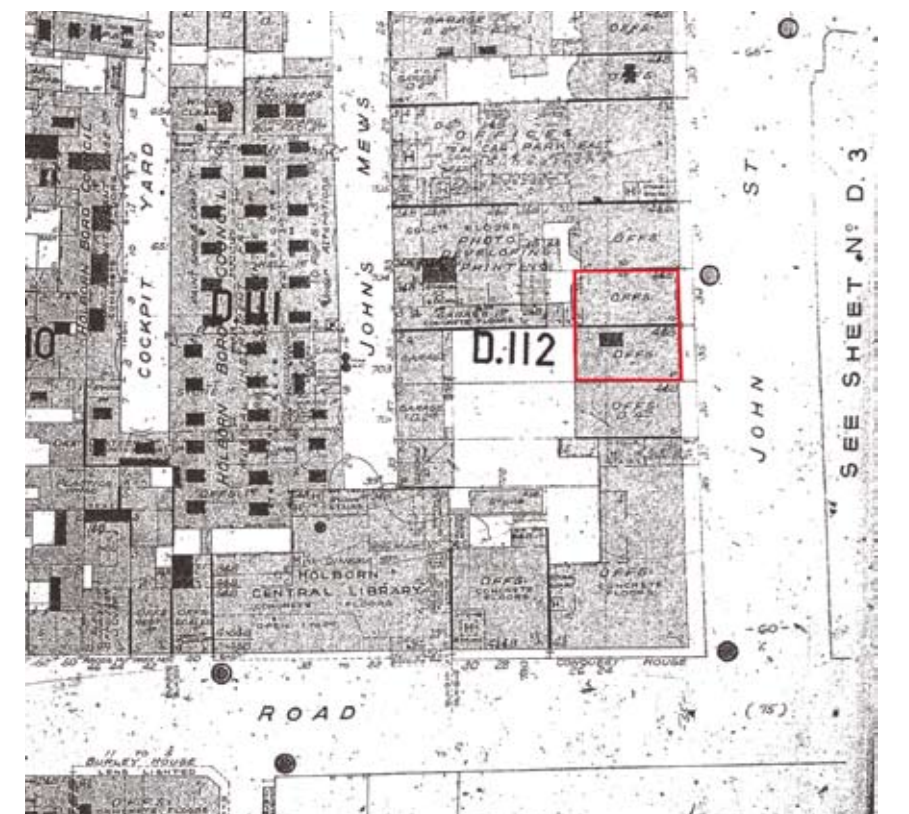
Ordnance Survey 1873 (site indicated in red)



Goad insurance map, 1901 (site indicated in red)



Ordnance Survey 1914 (site indicated in red)



Goad insurance map, 1960 (site indicated in red)



LCC Bomb damage map, 1945, (site indicated in red)



Ordnance Survey, 1983 (site indicated in red)

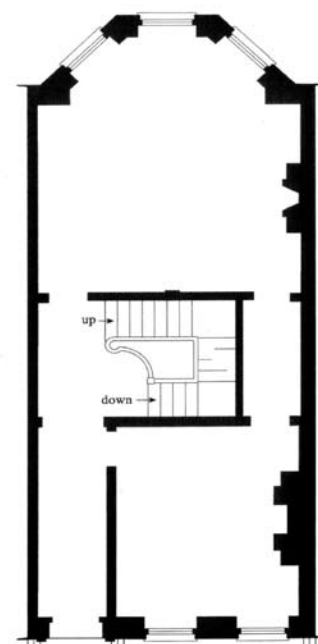
2.2 History of numbers 34 and 35

(For phasing plans and images of features discussed in the text see the figures on pp. 9-11.)

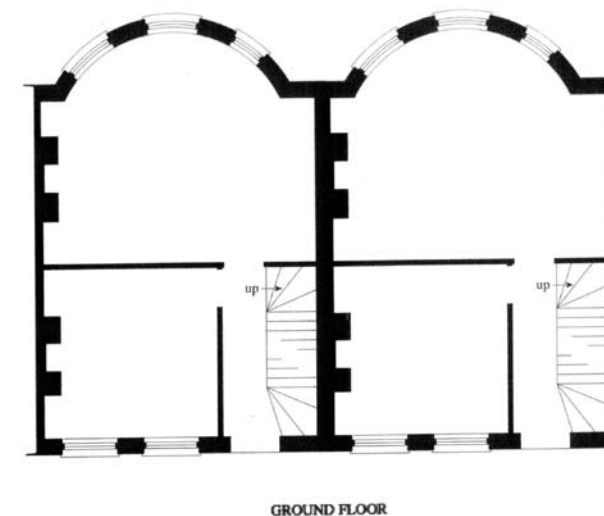
Initial use as private houses

These houses were built with almost identical facades of four main storeys, each three windows wide, and faced in stock brick. As described above the facades were subordinated to the overall architectural composition of nine houses in a row, centred on the wider and slightly projecting pedimented house at No. 33.

34 and 35 were built to different plans: 34 has a staircase along the side of the entrance hall, whereas 35 has a well stair set in the middle of the house between the front and back rooms, and lit from an overhead skylight. It is possible that the variation in plan was intended to cater for different tastes among potential buyers, as the central well-stair was a 17th century feature that was beginning to go out of fashion, in favour of the side stair cantilevered out from the party wall. The layout of No. 35 perhaps gives the more luxurious impression to the visitor, as the entrance hall is wider and both first floor rooms stretch the full width of the plot. By contrast, the staircase of No. 34 rose through the first and second floors at the front of the house, reducing the size of the front rooms on



20 Langham Street, Fitzrovia c.1770, A similar plan to 35 John Street and a late example of the central well stair (from Guillery & Burton)



162-164 New Kent Road, Southwark, c.1790. Houses of similar plan form to 34 John Street, with the increasingly common arrangement of stairs to the side (from Guillery & Burton)

each of those floors, although the staircase is much better lit on the lower floors as a result.

Following contemporary practice, the houses would originally probably have functioned as several separate zones. Servants would have worked in the kitchen and ancillary rooms in the basement, and slept on the third floor. The ground floor may have contained a reception room or library at the front, and a dining room to the rear. There would have been a drawing room at the rear on the first floor, while the front of the house would probably have been divided into a bedroom suite (in the case of No. 34, a closet could have opened from the front room into the area now occupied by the lavatory and kitchenette). The second floor would have been occupied by family bedrooms.

Of the surviving features the staircases and plasterwork on the rear first floor room of No. 35 are particularly fine. Some of the chimneypieces and panelling may be original; they are of good but not outstanding quality.

These houses would probably have been occupied by well-to-do families at least until the construction of the first railways from the 1840s enabled the wealthy to move to new developments in the outer suburbs and commute to the City and West End by train. Little evidence of early alterations has come to light, and it is uncertain at what date the rear bay of No. 34 was rebuilt (it could have been any time in the later 19th or early 20th century).

Conversion to office use

The flight of wealthy families from southern Bloomsbury in the later 19th century would have presented an opportunity for the expanding legal profession or other businesses to take over the leases on these houses, and convert them into offices. The Goad insurance map suggests that by 1901 both 34 and 35 (and all other neighbouring houses) were in use as offices, and it also indicates that their plot outline was roughly the same as today. The only real difference is the rear extension behind No. 34, which was presumably the plain brick structure demolished in 1987.

If the moulded surround of the blocked doorway on the first floor between Nos. 34 and 33 is a late Victorian or Edwardian pattern, it would suggest that these buildings were linked together around 1900 in office use. Several chimneypieces, dado mouldings and other door architraves are also similar in style, but these could either be Georgian originals or Edwardian revivals of them. If the latter, it would indicate that a major refurbishment was carried out around the turn of the century, although it is not clear whether or not the buildings had been converted from residential use some time before. If so, the alterations seem to have been only the minimum required to return the buildings to good order, since in the ground floor rear room of No. 35, two walls have one kind of moulding while the other two have much plainer ones.

It would appear likely that most of the panelling in the ground floor rooms is not original, as there are hollows behind for services, and the panelling on the modern partitions exactly matches that on the other walls. In the rear ground floor room of No. 35, where the wall panelling has been designed to match the existing original panels on the back of the door, there are nonetheless differences between the two which show they cannot have the same date (for example, the acanthus leaves disguising the mitre joints of the egg and dart mouldings on the rear of the door are not reproduced on the wall panels).

Postwar reconstruction

During the Second World War No. 37 and the houses south of it were completely destroyed by bombing, while Nos. 36 and 35 also seem to have suffered some damage. A photograph from 1942 also shows the front of No. 35 missing its top storey, with a newly constructed temporary parapet. The top two storeys of No. 35 were reconstructed in facsimile in 1951. A photo from 1950 shows that No. 34 was also heavily reconstructed, with the top two storeys at the front rebuilt in matching style. The canted bay at the back may also have been rebuilt at this time. The roof structures of both houses were replaced according to their original M-shaped configuration, with a modern version of the Georgian skylight over the stair of No. 35.



John Street in 1950, showing No. 37 destroyed, No. 36 rebuilt, and No. 34 with the top two floors rebuilt.



36-31 John Street in 1942; note the mid 19th century railings and original doorcases in situ



35 & 34 John Street, showing variations in the brickwork

An interior photo of the rear first floor room of No. 35, dated 1960, shows the cornice to the rear wall missing. This could indicate that the exterior wall on the first floor was rebuilt before that date, with the concrete or stone lintels visible in the photo of 1973. It seems likely from these photos that the first and second floors at the rear of No. 35 were rebuilt around the 1950s.



Rear first floor room of No. 35 in 1960

It is less certain what alterations were carried out to the interiors of the houses at this time, although it is probable that the secondary staircases on the second and third floor were put in during the 1950s when the wartime damage was repaired. The lack of chimneypieces on the upper floors suggests that the ones lost during the war were not replaced, presumably as the installation of central heating made them unnecessary.

Subsequent alterations

Photographic evidence shows that both houses had hidden dormer windows or mansard roofs on their rear elevations as late as 1968. In the five years to 1973, the third floor of No. 34 was rebuilt at the back to provide a new elevation, with a very different arrangement of windows all across the wall.



Photo from 1968 showing the back of No. 34 before the basement and third floor extensions



Photo from 1973, showing the 3rd floor of No. 34 rebuilt, left. No. 35 has stone or concrete lintels on the first floor, and a much altered ground floor.



Rear elevation of No. 34 2007



Rear elevation of No. 35 2007

Following the acquisition of the leases of both houses in 1973 by a new tenant, several alterations were made to improve the suitability of the buildings for office accommodation. At the rear the unsightly facade of No. 35 was altered by the replacement of the concrete or stone lintels above the first floor windows with red brick. The third floor was extended right out to a new wall at the back of the building, in line with the storey below. On the ground floor, the blocked doorway on the southern side of No. 35 was restored, and the previous door on the north side was converted back into a window. (The neighbouring house, No. 36, was extended to the rear with a single storey addition at some stage after 1973 – see photo.)



Rear of No. 35 today, showing the third floor extension. Note also the recent rear extension to the rear of No. 36 on the right

Inside both buildings, the current wall panelling and chimneypieces seem all to have been in place at this date, and were not removed. However, several areas of ceiling plaster and wall panelling, especially on the ground floor of No. 35, were suffering from water ingress and had to be replaced. At an unknown date in the 1970s or 1980s new partitions, both solid and glazed, were inserted on all floors. Numerous other alterations were also made, including the insertion or upgrading of kitchenettes and lavatories, and related services, on all floors. In general, pipework and electrical trunking has been hidden behind studwork, hollow skirtings and dadoes.

Listed building consent was granted 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 is not known whether this proposal was actually carried out, but its impact on the historic plan form of the building would have been negligible. In the case of No. 34, by contrast, it would appear that the rear cross-wall 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, which would be consistent with typical plan forms of the period. However it is not known when this wall was inserted to create the subdivisions we see today.

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 was the erection of a 'conservatory'. This latter structure may be the rooflit basement extension that was added around that time. It was also presumably at this time that the basement as it now appears was laid out and the original plan form of the basements of both houses was lost. This involved the removal of the original stairs from the entrance hall of No. 35 down to the basement, although at the request of English Heritage two short sections of typically 1750s 'Chinese Chippendale' balustrading that originally flanked the first few steps were retained and set up close to their original positions, to indicate the original layout of the ground floor.



Photo from 1960 showing original basement stair in No. 35. Compare this with the remaining balustrading shown on the diagram overleaf



Door opening, post 1973



Panelling, probably C20



Edwardian style chimneypiece



Modern cornice (copy) routed around services box



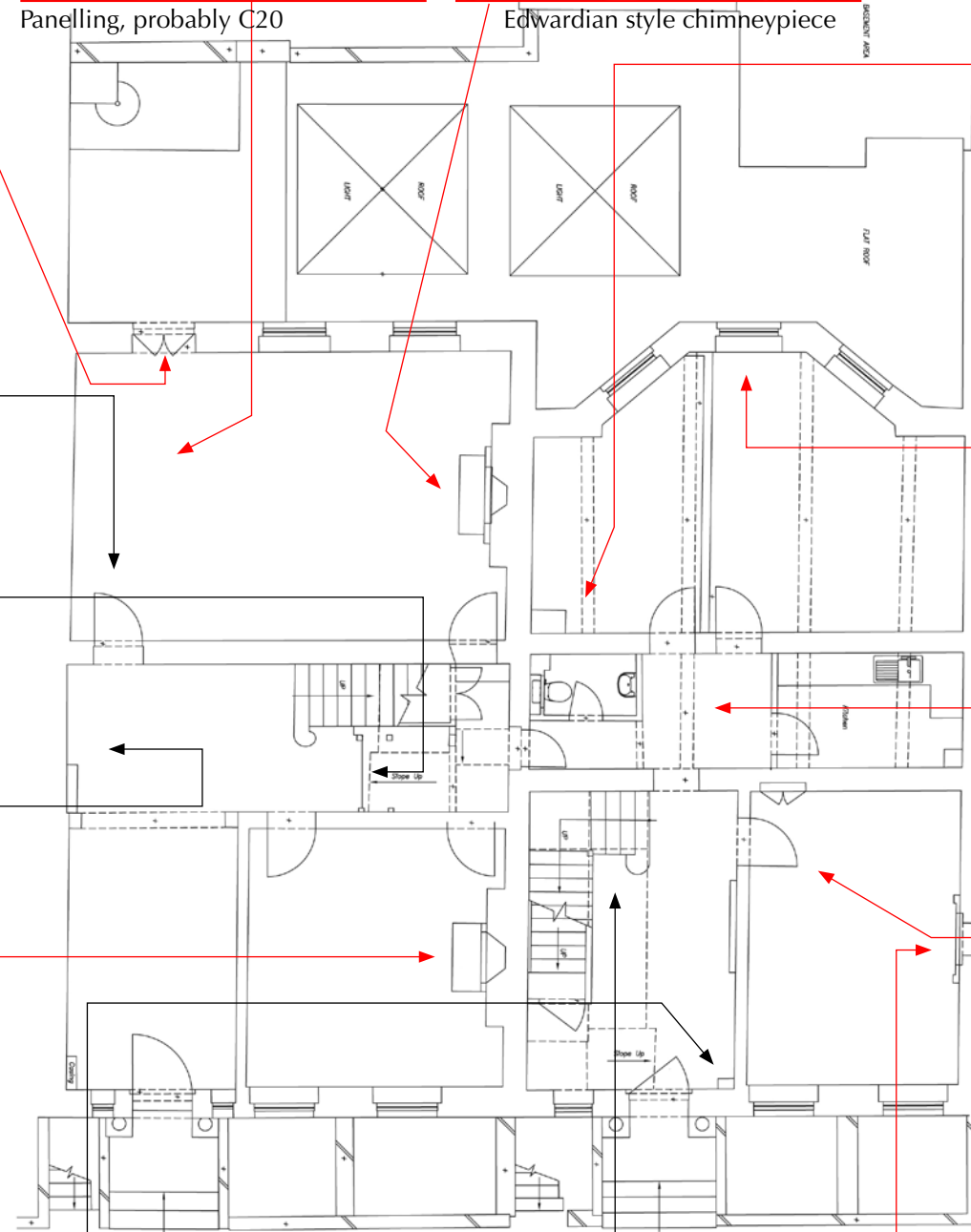
Original door and architrave, probably with later overdoor



Entrance hall



Remains of basement stair balustrading



C20 partition and panelling



Downstand - presumably C20



Chimneypiece - probably early C19



Panelling - presumably C20

KEY	
	ORIGINAL
	NOT ORIGINAL
	UNCERTAIN



Original corning with modern services box



Original stairtreads and balusters



Original stairwell



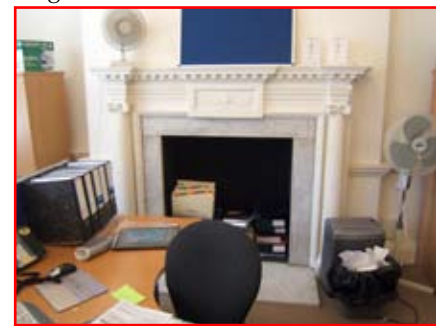
Chimneypiece - probably C20

34 & 35 JOHN STREET
UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET

FEATURES OF INTEREST:
GROUND FLOOR



Plasterwork ceiling may be partly original



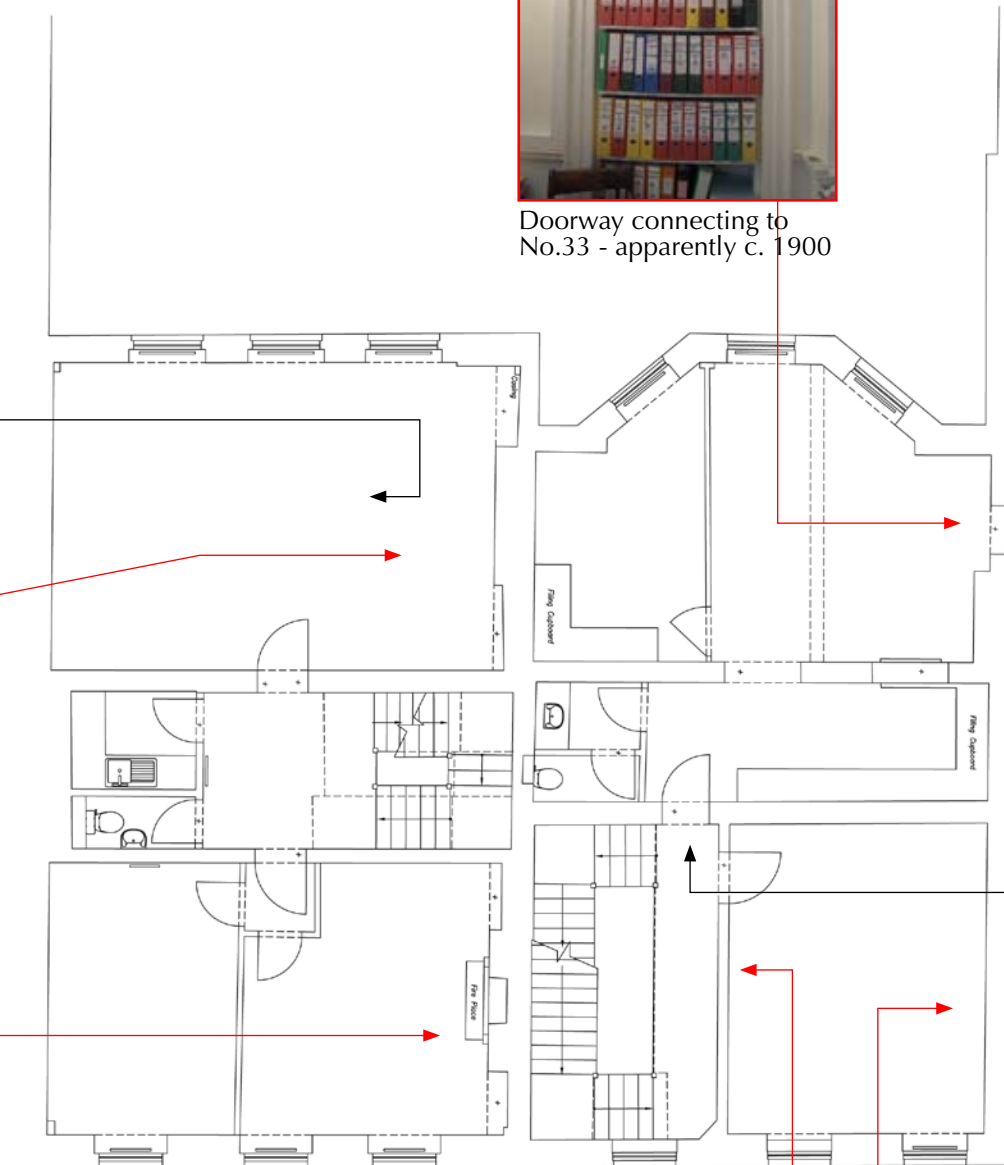
Chimneypiece - possibly Edwardian



Chimneypiece - probably c.1800



Doorway connecting to No.33 - apparently c. 1900



Original cornice






Modern facsimile cornice



Chimneypiece - early C19

KEY

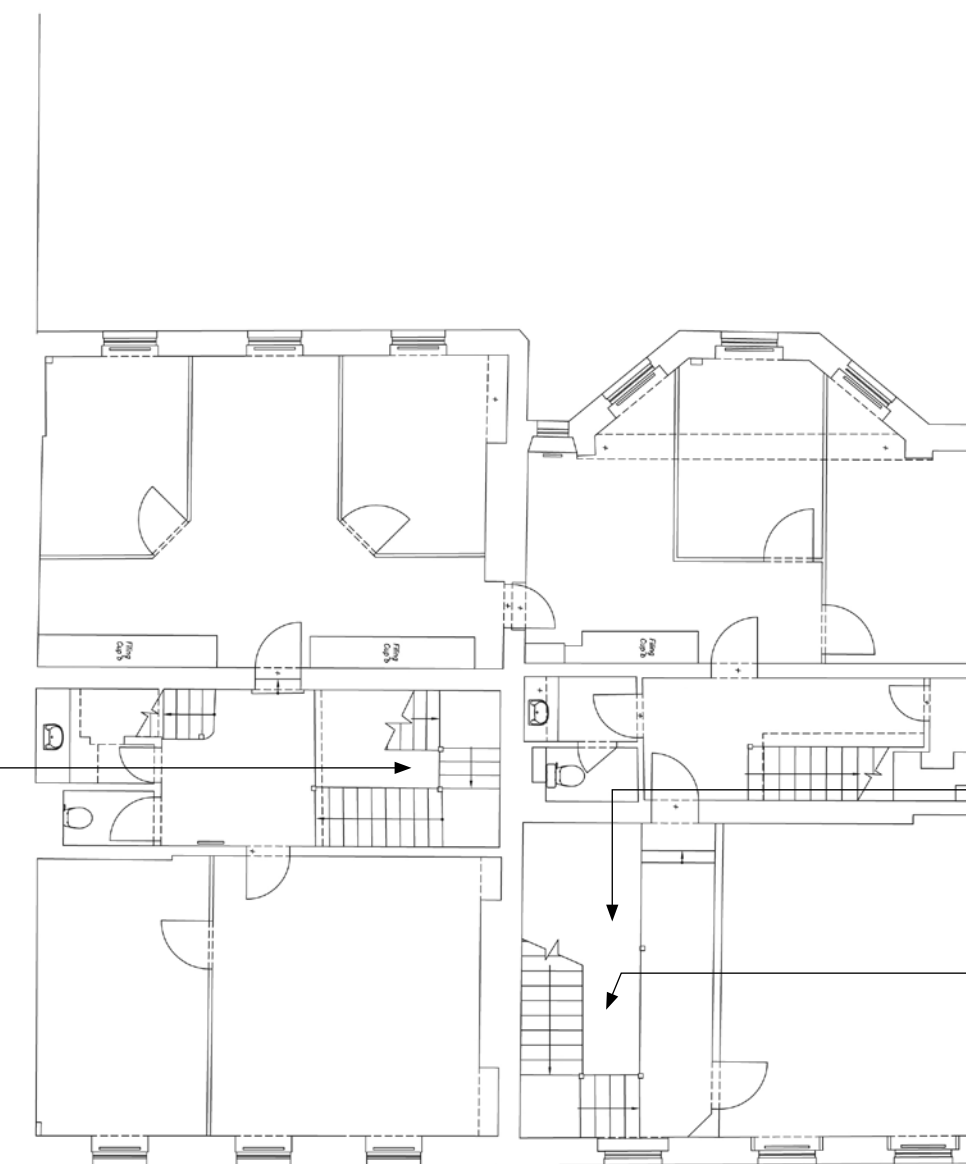
-  ORIGINAL
-  NOT ORIGINAL
-  UNCERTAIN

34 & 35 JOHN STREET
UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET

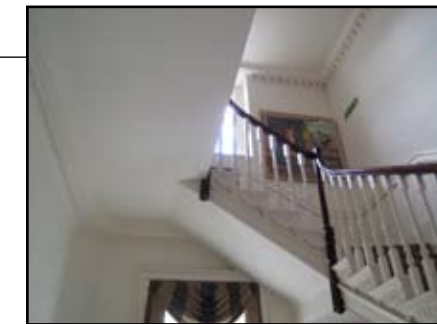
FEATURES OF INTEREST:
FIRST FLOOR






Upper part of stairwell, possibly reconstructed



Original cornice



Original stairwell

KEY	
	ORIGINAL
	NOT ORIGINAL
	UNCERTAIN

34 & 35 JOHN STREET
UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET



FEATURES OF INTEREST:
SECOND FLOOR



BASEMENT

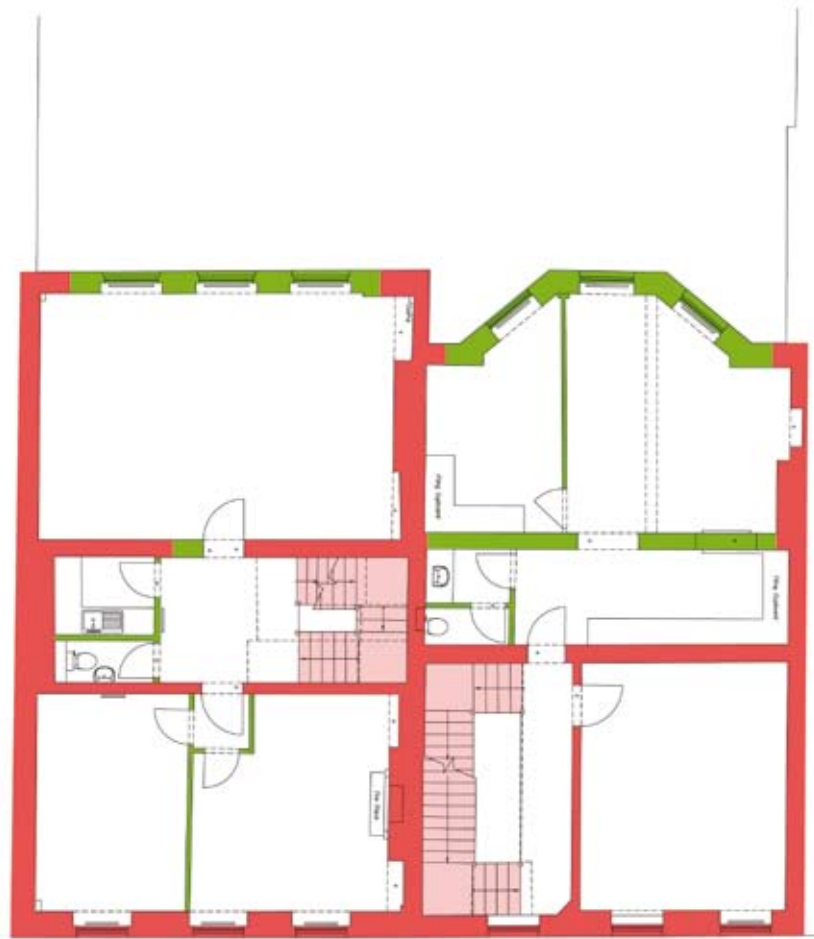


GROUND FLOOR

-  1750s - Also includes some later historic additions, such as fireplaces
-  20th Century

34 & 35 JOHN STREET
UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET

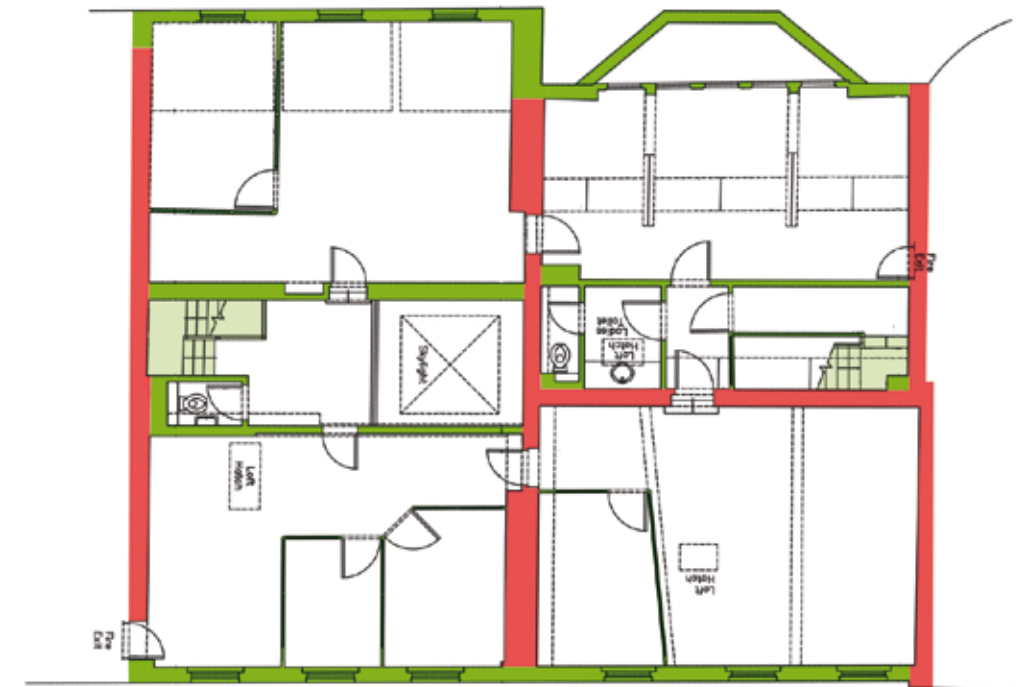
BUILDING PHASES





FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

-  1750s - Also includes some later historic additions, such as fireplaces
-  20th Century

34 & 35 JOHN STREET
UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET

BUILDING PHASES

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Nos. 34 and 35 John Street have been listed Grade II in recognition of their architectural and historic importance. This chiefly consists of their rarity as large terrace houses built during a slump in building activity in the middle of the 18th century. They also have value as part of a largely surviving group of dignified Georgian houses. The houses formed a part of the relatively homogeneous development of greater Bloomsbury during the 18th and early 19th centuries, and this is recognised in their inclusion within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Both of the above forms of heritage designation indicate the overall interest and value of the two buildings, but stop short of describing what particular elements are of importance, and to what degree. They also fail to mention any parts of the buildings that may actually detract from their special interest, the removal or alteration of which would create a positive impact on the listed building and the historic environment of Bloomsbury. To enable a more nuanced understanding of the significance of 34 and 35 John Street, and thereby to make possible an informed analysis of the impact of the current refurbishment proposals, this section assesses the degree to which each element of the buildings contributes to the architectural and historical interest of the buildings, as outlined in paragraph 6.10 of PPG15.

Façades to John Street

Although they are individually quite self-effacing, 34 and 35 are part of the large 'palace front' formed by neighbouring properties, and their external appearance is therefore extremely important to their group value. The upper parts have been very carefully reconstructed and restored, and are close to their original appearance. The front facades are therefore of high architectural and historic significance, contributing strongly to the character of this part of the conservation area. The only detracting factors are the variations in glazing patterns caused by the piecemeal replacement of some of the windows.

Rear façades

No. 34 has been almost completely rebuilt to the rear, with only thin strips of original brickwork remaining either side of the canted bay from ground to second floors. The canted bay itself is very crudely keyed into the older brickwork. However, the reconstruction works have largely been sympathetic in materials and details, so that the overall significance is not much harmed by the changes to what was always a private and 'unarchitectural' façade. The exceptions to this are the third floor rear elevation, which is not sympathetic in its fenestration, and the basement extension, which has obscured the original arrangement. Both of these alterations detract from the significance of the façade. While as a whole the rear elevations are broadly in keeping with the Georgian nature of Bloomsbury, as they are modern approximations of the original appearance of the buildings they are therefore only of some significance.

No. 35 has also been considerably altered, such that only parts of the ground floor and the small areas of the first floor brickwork remain as originally built. The basement has been extended, hiding the original form of the building at this level; the ground floor windows have been altered on more than one occasion; the first and second floor brickwork has largely been rebuilt, and an entirely new third floor façade has been created. In addition, the window heads on the upper floors consist of soldier courses of modern brick, rather than gauged brick voussoirs. Nevertheless, despite these changes the present rear façade is sympathetic in form to the Georgian architecture of neighbouring buildings. However, due to the nature and extent of the alterations this façade is only of neutral significance – with the exception of the ground floor which is of some significance.

Plan form

The basement areas of both houses have been almost completely denuded of their original plan form and no interior features of any significance appear to survive.

The ground floors of both houses retain their original internal walls, although in No. 34 the modern partitions in the rear part detract and could beneficially be removed. No. 35 retains its original plan form almost intact on the ground floor, which is therefore of high significance.

On the first floor of No. 34, partitions interrupt the space to the rear of the staircase. In No. 35, the rear room exhibits the original plan form, while the partitions at the front of the house detract.

On the second floor, partitions have subdivided the original rooms in all areas, except for the staircase of No. 34.

The third floors of each house have been completely rebuilt. Although they are in line with lower storeys the original layout at this level would probably have involved several stud partitions.

Overall, the original plan form of the ground and first floors is of the most significance, as these spaces were always the most important in the house and mainly retain their original walls. Where this original plan form is currently interrupted by later partition walls it would be beneficial to restore it. The second floor plan of both houses is of some significance and would benefit from being clarified by the removal of some partitions. The third floor plan form is neutral in significance, being entirely modern.

Interior features

The basements of both houses are of neutral significance as they have lost any original features they may once have possessed.

The staircases of both houses, running from the ground to the second floors, are highly significant as they retain their original treads, and for the most part their original turned balusters, newels and handrails. Correspondingly, the entrance halls as a whole are largely original in their cornices and mouldings, and of high significance. Several of the doors appear to be original and are highly significant, but it is likely that the panelling is later (although it could be quite old).

The first floor room at the rear of No. 35 is highly significant due to its plaster ceiling; it has probably been altered at least once and its date is unknown, but it is quite possible that it is in part an original feature from the 1750s. The other rooms on the ground and first floors are significant, as despite later partitions they contain good panelling and some fine chimneypieces, although none are definitely known to be original. The presence of original features such as doors and architraves, and some cornices, adds greatly to the value of the interiors. However, the later partition walls, lavatories and kitchenettes do detract.

The rooms on the second floor are of low significance as they are plain, and have mostly been rebuilt or comprehensively refurbished. It is probable that no original features remain. The rooms on the third floor are 20th century reconstructions and are of neutral significance.

4.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

The designation of 34 and 35 John Street as listed buildings, and their position within a conservation area, mean that any proposals that might affect their special interest will be subject to particular controls, in addition to normal planning regulations and procedures. These include the statutory policies set out in the Government Circular PPG15, as well as local policies included within the London Borough of Camden's Replacement UDP (2006) and the Supplementary Planning Guidance set out in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement.

4.1 Relevant statutory controls

Listed building controls

Any proposal to alter, extend or demolish a listed building, or to affect its setting, must be tested by the local planning authority according to the criteria set out in PPG15. In particular, local planning authorities should 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of architectural or historic interest that it possesses' (PPG16, para. 3.3).

Local authorities are advised to consider applications for listed building consent according to the criteria in paragraph 3.5 of PPG15, which are:

- i) the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity, in both national and local terms;
- ii) the particular physical features of the building (which may include its design, plan, materials or location) which justify its inclusion in the list;
- iii) the building's setting and its contribution to the local scene, which may be very important, e.g. where it forms an element in a group, park, garden or other townscape or landscape, or where it shares particular architectural forms or details with other buildings nearby;
- iv) the extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment (including other listed buildings).

Paragraph 3.10 states:

The best use [for a listed building] will very often be the use for which the building was originally designed, and the continuation or reinstatement of that use should certainly be the first option when the future of a building is considered.

Paragraph 3.13 gives guidance on how local authorities should consider applications to alter or extend listed buildings:

Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the historic of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings, and the merit of some new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long-term ownership, should not be discounted. Nevertheless, listed buildings do vary greatly in the extent to which they can accommodate change without loss of special interest. ...

Conservation area controls

Paragraph 4.1 of PPG15 describes conservation areas as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The local authority is required to pay special attention 'in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area' (PPG15, paragraph 4.14). The London Borough of Camden's policies with regard to conservation areas are outlined in the Replacement UDP (2006) and set out in more detail in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement, both of which are discussed below.

4.2 Relevant local authority controls

Replacement UDP – Section 3: Built Environment

Policy B1 – General design principles

The Council will grant planning permission for development that is designed to a high standard. Development should:

- a) *respect its site and setting ...*

Explanatory notes to Policy B1 include:

3.7 *A good design will take account of its natural and built surroundings...*

- 3.9 *...careful consideration of the characteristics of a site, features of local distinctiveness, and the wider context is needed to achieve high quality development which integrates into its surroundings. Designs should respond creatively to the site and its context within the policy framework set by this Plan.*

Policy B3 – Alterations and extensions

A – Alterations and extensions

The Council will not grant planning permission for alterations and extensions that it considers cause harm to the architectural quality of the existing buildings or to the surrounding area. The Council will consider whether:

- a) *the form, proportions and character of the building and its setting, including the garden and nearby trees, are respected;*
- b) *extensions are subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation;*
- c) *original features are retained or restored;*
- d) *high quality materials that match or complement existing materials are used;*
- e) *unsympathetic alterations or extensions are removed or improved;*
- f) *the architectural integrity of the existing building is preserved; and*
- g) *buildings services equipment is appropriately located.*

Explanatory notes to Policy B3 include:

3.31 *Alterations and extensions should follow the form, proportions and character of the building to which they relate. The setting of the building, including any trees, garden or other amenity space should also be respected. Opportunities should be considered to provide roof or terrace gardens above ground level. Development should not undermine any existing uniformity of a street.*

3.32 *Extensions should be carefully sited and proportioned to respect the historic form of the area, the integrity and proportions of the original building and the amenities of adjoining occupiers.*

3.33 *Alterations and extensions should be carried out in materials which match the original building, or, where appropriate, in materials that complement or enhance a building.*

3.34 *Roof alterations and extensions, including terraces, can often have a significant effect on the appearance of the existing building and its surroundings. Special care is needed in their siting, design, size, proportions and materials...*

Policy B6 – Listed buildings

To preserve or enhance the character of listed buildings as buildings of special architectural or historic interest, the Council will only grant listed building consent for: ...

- b) *alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building.*

The Council will only grant planning permission for the change of use of a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to its special architectural or historic interest. The Council will not grant planning permission for development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

Explanatory notes to Policy B6 include the following:

3.55 *Listed buildings, conservation areas, our archaeological heritage and strategic and important local views require protection to ensure that the special values they bring to the Borough are not harmed or lost.*

3.59 *The best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active use. The best use for a historic building is usually the use for which the building was originally designed, and wherever possible this should continue or be reintroduced if at all possible. ... Proposals that would cause harm to the special interest of a building, for example through the loss of important architectural features, changes to the original plan form, layout or structural integrity of the building will be resisted, unless there are other overriding considerations.*

3.60 *The setting of a listed building is of great importance and should not be harmed by unsympathetic neighbouring development.*

Policy B7 – Conservation areas

A – Character and appearance

The Council will only grant consent for development in a conservation area that preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement

This document sets out the key aspects of the character of the conservation area which the Council desires to be preserved or enhanced during future development. The Statement was produced in 1998 and quotes from previous versions of the UDP, which are now obsolete and have been replaced by the Replacement UDP (2006). The relevant policies in the Replacement UDP are quoted above.

The general character of the conservation area is stated as consisting of terrace houses of 3 or 4 storeys arranged in a rectangular pattern of streets and squares in the ‘classical’ tradition, often with mews behind. Although stucco is used occasionally the predominant facing material is stock brick, with rubbed and gauged brick lintels.

Section 7.5 Erosion of Character makes clear that use of modern pointing techniques can ruin the appearance of Georgian brickwork. Flush and tuck pointing are therefore preferred to weatherstruck and ribbon pointing.

Section 9.10 states:

Changes of use will be permitted where they are consistent with maintaining the viability and historic character or appearance of the area. ...some types of residential such as single family dwelling are easier to accommodate than a conversion to flats.

Alterations must respect their historic context in volume, scale, form, materials and quality.

Section 9.13 includes the following:

Circumstances in which roof extensions will be discouraged
(b) *Complete terraces or groups of houses where the existing roof line is largely unimpaired by any extensions or alterations and where it is considered important to retain the integrity of the group as a whole.*

Section 9.16:

Rear extensions

(ii) *Any proposed extension should be clearly subordinate to the main building. In general rear extensions should not extend rearwards beyond the line of any neighbouring extension, or intrude on any garden space or above the height of neighbouring extensions. Important landscape features such as walls, railings and trees should be left undisturbed.*

(iii) *Full width extensions are not normally allowed except in some cases at basement level. As a general guideline, rear extensions should comprise no more than half the width of the house and should not rise higher than one storey beneath the original main rear eaves or parapet line. Where a distinct rhythm of rear extensions exists any new proposals should follow the existing scale and character.*

(iv) *Extensions should be designed to complement the plan form, period architectural characteristics, materials, and detailing of the original buildings. New windows, arches, openings and doors should be designed to match the existing or original detail found on the main buildings. Brickwork should also match the existing in respect of colour, texture, facebond and pointing.*

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS

This assessment is carried out in accordance with the criteria on the alteration, extension or demolition of listed buildings, and of buildings in conservation areas, as set out in PPG15, the London Borough of Camden's Replacement UDP (2006), and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement. The drawings used as the basis of this assessment are given in the Design and Access Statement which accompanies the application.

5.1 Overall assessment

The decision to return these two houses to single family use is extremely positive, and is in line with the guidelines on the best uses for historic buildings set out in paragraph 3.10 of PPG15, paragraph 3.59 of the Camden Replacement UDP, and Section 9.10 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement. In tandem with the proposed refurbishments and the removal of office partitions and furniture, this change of use will approve the appearance of the buildings and secure their future as sustainable family homes.

The alterations have been planned with specific regard to the desirability of preserving features of special historic or architectural interest. All new works in the more significant areas will be carefully detailed to exactly match existing features in form, colour and scale. Where some original fabric will be lost, such as in the creation of new openings and the removal of some windows in favour of French doors, these losses are more than offset by improvements in the appearance of the buildings from the rear, and in the upgrading of the interiors.

The proposed works involve substantial change in only three areas: the basements, the first floors, and in the rear extension of No. 35 - and in all of these intervention has been kept to a minimum. As noted in paragraph 3.13 of PPG15, many listed buildings can sustain appropriate levels of change, and as demonstrated in the foregoing Assessment of Significance Nos. 34 & 35 John Street have gone through several phases of considerable alteration. The alterations necessary to return the houses to single ownership will undo many of the more unsympathetic alterations, thereby improving the historic character of the buildings.

The proposed extensions and alterations are of high quality and carefully designed, and therefore preserve the special interest of the buildings, as requested by Policies B3 and B6 of Camden's Replacement UDP, and Sections 9.10 and 9.13 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement. They also preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area as desired by paragraph 4.14 of PPG15, Policy B7 of Camden's Replacement UDP, and Section 9.16 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement. They also respect the setting of the listed buildings nearby, in line with Camden's Replacement UDP, Policy B1.

5.2 Individual elements of the proposed scheme

Basement

The alterations meet the requirements of Camden Replacement UDP Policy B6, as they do not harm the special interest of the building. The current basements are almost entirely modern, and the staircase of No. 34 will remain in place. The reintroduction of a staircase in No. 35, in the same position as the original stair removed in the 1980s, accords with Camden Replacement UDP Policy B3A c), and will enhance the building.

Some original stretches of wall will have to be removed, although such losses are the minimum necessary for a workable conversion. The removal of the rear walls of the houses to accommodate the basement extension is acceptable, as both have been altered, and the wall of No. 34 is a later rebuilding. The alterations respect and preserve the character and integrity of the rear of the buildings, are subordinate to the existing buildings, and use appropriate materials, in line with Policy B3A a), b), d), e), and f) of Camden's Replacement UDP. They also meet Policies B6 b) and B7 of the Replacement UDP, and accord with Section 9.16 (ii) and (iii) of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement.

The Structural Engineering Method Statement which accompanies this planning submission gives details of how the alterations will be constructed. It demonstrates that the proposed works can be carried out without detriment to the structure of the historic buildings, and therefore that their integrity and historic interest will be safeguarded.

Ground floor

The ground floor alterations to No. 34, including the removal of later partitions and the kitchenette, are entirely positive. The sash windows at the rear will be replaced by French doors, so as to allow access to the garden. This will be a considerable improvement in physical amenity, and will also remove the unsightly current arrangement of basement lightwells and rooflights. As well as respecting the relevant parts of PPG15 with regard to preserving and enhancing the special interest of the building (i.e. paragraph 3.3), the proposals accord with Policies B1, B3, B6 and B7 of the Camden Replacement UDP.

No. 35 is the subject of more extensive proposals. The restoration of a basement stair and the blocking of the two non-original doorways are a considerable enhancement and satisfy Policies B3 and B6 of the Replacement UDP. The removal of the windows from the present rear room and the creation of a rear extension beyond will alter the character of the listed building, but in a way which accords with the relevant policies and respects the character of the building. Paragraph 3.13 of PPG15 states that many listed buildings can accommodate considerable alteration, and the Assessment of Significance in Chapter 3 of this document demonstrates how the house has a history of considerable but sensitive alterations and reconstructions, as well as some less sympathetic interventions such as the modern partitions. The rear elevation has been extensively altered in the past and the current proposals are therefore acceptable.

The rear extension does respect its site and setting in line with Policy B1 of the Replacement UDP, and paragraphs 3.7 and 3.9. It largely satisfies the requirements of Policy B3, with regard to respecting the form and character of the building, being subordinate to the original building, retaining or sensitively copying original features, using high quality matching materials, improving the present unsympathetic rear extension, and respecting the architectural integrity of the existing building. In line with the explanatory paragraph 3.31, the opportunity has also been taken to provide a roof terrace above the extension at first floor level, which will be screened from the neighbouring properties in line with paragraph 3.32.

With regard to the guidance contained within Section 9.16 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement, the proposals clearly satisfy (ii), as the extension is subordinate to the main building, and does not extend beyond the line of the neighbouring rear extension. Part (iii) contains a general presumption against full-width extensions, but the situation in this case would suggest that this presumption is inappropriate here. In fact, the houses on John Street have a character that relies upon a flat or full-width rear elevations (and No. 37 has a full-width extension which fits well with the character of the group of buildings). It is probably right to say that a half-width extension would actually be inappropriate here, and would harm the character of the rear elevations of this group of buildings by ruining their symmetry. The proposed extension has therefore been designed to complement this characteristic - as well as the detailing and materials - of the original building, and therefore accords directly with part (iv).

These alterations and extensions do not detract from the special interest of the building, or the appearance of the conservation area, and therefore the proposals for this floor accord with Policy B6 and Policy B7 of the Replacement UDP.

First floor

The proposals for this floor include the removal of later partitions, and the insertion of new ones in new locations within the two front rooms. These will be more sympathetic to the character of the listed interiors, as they will be very plain in character, and will stop some way short of the ceilings. This will enable the historic room volumes to be preserved and understood. Walk-in wardrobes will be incorporated in the spaces between the main front and rear rooms, and double as passageways between the two, reducing the impact of the changes on the main rooms themselves. The new openings created in the walls will be sensitively designed to complement the existing Georgian openings. The new terrace at the rear of No. 35 will provide increased residential amenity in line with paragraph 3.31 of the Replacement UDP.

These alterations are sensitively designed and carefully sited, and therefore accord with the relevant policy guidance, including paragraphs 3.3 and 3.13 of PPG15; Policy B3A c) e) and f), and Policy B6 b) of Camden's Replacement UDP; and Section 9.10 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement.

Second floor

The alterations here include the removal of the office partitions to restore the rooms to their original proportions, thereby improving the integrity of the plan form. En-suite bathrooms will be inserted into the subordinate spaces, together with new secondary staircases to the third floor of each house. These new features will be carefully detailed to respect the existing building (which in any case has been considerably altered and rebuilt at this level), with openings in the walls being designed appropriately. The changes on this floor constitute an enhancement of the listed buildings and meet the requirements laid down in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.13 of PPG15; Policy B3A c) e) and f), and Policy B6 b) of Camden's Replacement UDP; and Section 9.10 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement.

Third floor

This floor has been completely rebuilt in the 20th century and bears little resemblance to what must have been its original appearance and plan. However, the layout does broadly follow the floors below, and it is the intention of the proposed scheme to continue this. Office partitions will be removed and replaced with more sensitive insertions, while the stair will also be replaced. Given the reconstructed nature of this floor, and the character of the scheme, these proposals are entirely acceptable. They are in keeping with all the relevant policy guidance, such as paragraphs 3.3 and 3.13 of PPG15; Policy B3A c) e) and f), and Policy B6 b) of Camden's Replacement UDP; and Section 9.10 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement.

Exteriors

The facades to John Street will remain unchanged, and their positive contribution to the settings of the listed buildings nearby, and to the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, will therefore be preserved. The rear facades of each house will be improved by the scheme, as described above. In particular, the rear extension of No. 35 will improve the physical amenity of the house while maintaining a sympathetic architectural style in its elevations. Further consideration of the extensions and terrace are included above as part of the discussion of the ground and first floors.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This report has outlined how Nos. 34 and 35 John Street have been through several periods of considerable alteration; some of great sensitivity but others with much less regard to their Georgian character. While there is considerable survival of historic fabric and plan form, the upper two floors have been almost completely rebuilt, as have the rear facades of both houses.

The proposed scheme has the laudable aim of returning these two buildings from office to residential use – the use for which they were originally built – and contributing to an increase in their special interest. Further benefits include the removal of insensitive modern partitions, kitchenettes and services.

Three elements of the proposals will have a significant effect on the present nature of the buildings. The first is the set of works to the basements, to create family kitchen and dining areas. The second consists of the creation of new openings and partitions on the first floor of each house, to accommodate the master bedroom suites. The third involves the creation of an extension at the rear of No. 35. In all these modifications, the new insertions will be sensitive to the original materials and style, while maintaining the original room volumes by appropriate design. They involve only the minimum possible level of fabric removal, consistent with a workable scheme, while all necessary care will be taken to make good any damage to mouldings caused by the removal of later partitions.

The proposals are in broad accordance with all relevant national and local policies on the historic built environment, except on the subject of the rear extension. However, it is felt that in the particular case of this row of houses, the requirement (in the Replacement UDP, 2006) that extensions should not be the full width of the plot contradicts the character of these houses, and that the proposed extension is more appropriate.

Overall, the proposals are, therefore, in line with national local guidance, and respond effective and appropriately to the challenge of returning these buildings to single family use.

APPENDIX 1 List descriptions



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CAMDEN TQ3082SE JOHN STREET 798-1/96/942 (East side) 24/10/51 Nos.2-9 (Consecutive) and attached railings GV II Terrace of 8 houses. 1754-59. Built by J Blagrove with W Barlow, J Bosworth, S Room and R Meel. No.6 rebuilt in Neo-Georgian style, restored 1989. Multi-coloured stock brick with evidence of tuck pointing and later patching. Plain brick bands to 1st and 2nd floors except No.6. 4 storeys and basements; No.6 with attic dormers. 3 windows each except No.6 with 4. Gauged red brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars. Parapets. No.2: Greek Doric wooden doorcase with mutule cornice; patterned fanlight and double panelled door. Cast-iron overthrow with lamp. INTERIOR noted to retain panelled ground floor and good marble fireplaces on ground and 1st floors. Modillion cornices. Staircase at front of house with cast-iron trellis pattern with continuous balustrade. Iron balustrade to stone stairs. No.3: round-arched doorway with architraved, stucco surround, small head on keystone and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain staircase with curly wrought-iron balusters in panels under continuous timber handrails. No.4: Doric wooden doorcase with open pediment, archivolt with keystone, arched fanlight and panelled door. Original lead rainwater head with lion mask. Large bay to garden front. INTERIOR: noted to be partly remodelled although retaining stairs with turned balusters, shaped ends, column newels and scroll brackets to treads. No.5: wooden Ionic doorcase with modillion cornice and pediment, pulvinated frieze, panelled reveals and panelled door. Original lead rainwater head with lion mask and pipe. Refronted from mid 1st floor. Large bay to garden front. INTERIOR: noted to retain panelled rooms and original fireplaces. Chinese balustrade and scroll bracket to treads of stairs. No.6: slightly projecting. Stone Greek Doric doorcase. Stone band and iron balconies at 1st floor level. Stone cyma bracketed cornice at 3rd floor. No.7: ground floor refaced. C20 reproduction Doric wooden doorcase with triglyph frieze, dentil cornice, open pediment, archivolt with keystone, radial fanlight and panelled door. Wrought-iron lamp-holder on railings. INTERIOR: noted to retain open well stairs with turned balusters and carved brackets to treads. Plain moulded fireplace on 1st floor. No.8: Doric wooden doorcase with triglyph frieze, dentil cornice, open pediment, archivolt with keystone, radial fanlight and panelled door. Cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Wrought-iron overthrow with lamp. INTERIOR: noted to retain carved wood fireplace to 1st floor back room; elliptical arch on fluted Ionic columns on ground floor. Stairs with turned balusters and shaped ends. No.9: Doric wooden doorcase similar to No.8. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces to ground and 1st floor rooms and egg-and-dart mouldings. Stairs with turned balusters. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with torch flambe finials to areas.

IoE number: 478522
Location: NUMBERS 2 TO 9 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 2-9 JOHN STREET (east side)
CAMDEN TOWN, CAMDEN, GREATER LONDON
Photographer: Mr Anthony Rau
Date Photographed: 06 July 2005
Date listed: 24 October 1951
Date of last amendment: 24 October 1951
Grade II

TQ3082SE
798-1/96/942
CAMDEN
JOHN STREET
(East side)



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IoE number: 478523
 Location: NUMBERS 10 TO 20 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 10 TO 20 JOHN STREET (east side)
 CAMDEN TOWN, CAMDEN, GREATER LONDON
 Photographer: Mr Anthony Rau
 Date Photographed: 06 July 2005
 Date listed: 24 October 1951
 Date of last amendment: 24 October 1951
 Grade II

TQ3082SE
 798-1/96/943

CAMDEN
 JOHN STREET
 (East side)

CAMDEN TQ3082SE JOHN STREET 798-1/96/943 (East side) 24/10/51 Nos.10-20 (Consecutive) and attached railings GV II 11 terraced houses. 1799-1824. No.20, facade rebuilt in facsimile c1950. Multi-coloured stock brick with yellow stock brick patching. Rusticated stucco ground floors with band at 1st floor levels. No.20 stucco facade to John Street with rusticated ground floor; return to Roger Street, yellow stock brick. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each; No.10 with 3-window (blind) return to Northington Street. No.20, 3 storeys and basement. 2 windows and 3-window return with 2 storey, 3-window rear extension. Gauged brick flat arches (No.10 reddened) to recessed sashes, mostly with glazing bars. Cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows of Nos 12-19. Parapets. Original fluted lead rainwater heads and pipes. No.10: round-arched doorway with mutule cornice-head, sidelights, radial fanlight and panelled door. Moulded cornice to parapet. INTERIOR with stick baluster stair in entrance hall with modillion cornice. No.11: round-arched doorway with fanlight and C20 door. INTERIOR: altered but noted to retain wooden fireplace with dentil cornice on ground floor, marble fireplace on the 1st floor. Stairs with shaped balusters and shaped ends in hallway with cornice formed of paired modillions. No.12: round-arched doorway with fluted surround, mutule cornice-head, radial fanlight and panelled double doors. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplace in ground floor rear room. Shaped ends to stairs. No.13: similar doorway to No.12. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces ground floor front and 1st floor front and rear rooms. Stairs with square balusters and shaped ends in hallway whose cornice has guttae decoration. End wall with round-headed niches each side of landing window. Some added partitions. No.14: similar doorway to No.12 with patterned radial fanlight. INTERIOR: noted to retain stairs with square balusters in front hallway with guttae cornice decoration. Round-headed niches each side of landing window. No.15: slightly projecting. Round-arched doorway with wooden, attached Greek Doric columns carrying cornice-head; fanlight and panelled door. 1st floor windows in shallow round-arched recesses linked by moulded impost bands. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces to ground and 1st floor. Stairs with square balusters. No.16: similar doorway to No.12. INTERIOR: noted to have additions but to retain marble fireplace in ground floor front room and stairs with square balusters. No.17: similar doorway to No.12 with patterned radial fanlight. INTERIOR: noted to retain stairs with square balusters. Marble fireplace, with contemporary iron centre, ground floor rear room. Marble fireplace with sculptured leafwork, 1st floor front room. Contemporary china bell pulls and door plates. No.18: similar doorway to No.12 with patterned radial fanlight. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces with sculptured leafwork, 1st floor rooms. No.19: round-arched doorway with sidelights, fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain good marble fireplaces in ground and 1st floor rooms. No.20: stucco entrance portico on return with moulded cornice and parapet; radial fanlight and panelled double doors. Rounded brick angle. John Street elevation with pilasters rising through 1st and 2nd floors to carry entablature and blocking course. Architraved, recessed casement windows; ground and 1st floor with console-bracketed cornices. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

CAMDEN TQ3082SE JOHN STREET 798-1/96/944 (West side) 24/10/51 Nos.22-28 (Consecutive) and attached railings GV II Terrace of 7 houses. c1800-19. Yellow and multi-coloured stock brick with stucco bands at 1st floor levels. Nos 27 & 28 with slated mansard roofs and dormers. 4 storeys and basements; Nos 27 & 28 with attics. 2 windows each; Nos 26 & 27, 3 windows each; No.28 double fronted with 5 windows. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars; 1st floors with cast-iron balconies, except No.28. Parapets. No.22: square-headed, arched doorway with patterned rectangular fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on ground and 1st floors. Stairs with square balusters. No.23: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on 1st and 2nd floors (original centres covered in). No.24: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces with original centres on ground floor. No.25: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces on ground floor. Good marble fireplace 1st floor front room with bas relief on front panel, reeded and with rosettes; original iron centre. Nos 26 & 27: round-arched doorways with reeded doorframes, lion mask stops, mutule cornice-heads, patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. No.27 with lamp-holder incorporated in fanlight. No.26 with fluted lead rainwater head. No.28: round-arched doorway with attached Doric columns carrying entablature; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Cornice and blocking course. Wrought-iron overthrow lamp-holder. Return to Northington Street with 1 window and mid C19 entrance with stucco surround and console-bracketed cornice. Dentilled cornices. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

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798-1/96/944

CAMDEN
JOHN STREET
(West side)

CAMDEN TQ3082SE JOHN STREET 798-1/96/945 (West side) 24/10/51 Nos.29-36 (Consecutive) and attached railings GV II Terrace of 8 houses. c1754-59. Built by J Blgrave with W Barlow, J Bosworth, S Room and R Meel. Nos 31 & 32 rebuilt C20 in facsimile (except for addition of dormers). Multi-coloured stock brick; Nos 31 and 32, brown brick with slated mansard roofs and dormers; No.36, reddened brick. Plain brick bands at 1st and 2nd floor level; No.33 with stone band at 1st floor level. 4 storeys and basements; Nos 31 and 32 with attics. 3 windows each; No.33, 4 windows; No.29, 1 window return to Northington Street. Gauged red brick flat arches to recessed sashes, except No.33, most with glazing bars. Parapets. No.29: round-arched doorway with radial fanlight, pilaster-jamb carrying cornice-head and panelled door. INTERIORS: noted to retain panelled rooms and stairs with turned balusters. Nos 30 & 31: wooden Doric doorcases with triglyph friezes, dentil cornices, open pediments, patterned fanlights and panelled doors. INTERIOR: of No.30 noted to retain panelled rooms and stairs with turned balusters and carved ends in hall with heavy timber archways. Dentilled cornices on first floor. No.31 included for group value. No.32: wooden Ionic doorcase with modillion cornice and pediment. HISTORICAL NOTE: plaque with bronze bas relief roundel of a bust commemorating Sir John Kirk, JP, Christian philanthropist. No.33: slightly projecting with evidence of tuck pointing. Mid C19 stucco doorcase with attached columns. Cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Cyma-bracketed cornice on 3rd floor with pediment across attic storey and oculus in tympanum. Attached mid C19 cast-iron railings to area. INTERIOR: noted to retain moulded ceiling to 1st floor. Turned balusters and carved ends to stairs. Nos 34-36: wooden Ionic doorcases with modillion cornices and pediments, pulvinated friezes and panelled doors. No.34, mid C19 cast-iron railings; No.35, entrance flanked by wrought-iron lamp brackets. INTERIORS: noted to retain panelled rooms, marble fireplaces and dentilled moulded ceilings. Stairs with turned balusters and carved ends. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with torch flambe finials to areas.

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CAMDEN
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