

15342/LR1

SCHOOL OF AFRICAN AND ORIENTAL STUDIES  
21 & 22 RUSSELL SQUARE



INITIAL LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION  
November 2006                      Revised 19.12.06

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**21 & 22 RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, WC1**

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY THE APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING  
CONSENT**

Revised Version 19 December 2006

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**Introduction**

The purpose of this report, along with the accompanying drawings, is to form the basis of an initial Listed Building Application.

It aims to demonstrate the current state of the building and has been updated to reflect the discussion held on site on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2006 when the extent of the opening-up and strip out works was agreed in principle. The full scope of the building work will be fully defined and the layout and uses for the building finalised prior to submitting a second LB application.

**Background**

Numbers 21 & 22 Russell Square was the former home of The School of Slavonic and East European Studies and has now been taken over by The School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) who wish to renovate and alter the building for continued Academic use, with a new mix of academic office and resource spaces.

The two buildings were built as part of the development of Russell Square by the Bedford Estate in 1808, and are now listed Grade II under a group listing of the whole terrace 21 - 24 Russell Square (see listing below). It is understood that the eastern end of the terrace suffered bomb damage and that subsequent to that, the next-door property (No 20) collapsed. Considerable strengthening work was carried out within numbers 21 and 22, however this is rather crude and very unsympathetic so investigations are required to establish whether alternative structural solutions can be found.

The building is currently in a poor state of repair and has been used as a student Union in the basement, and was also squatted by anarchists until a few months ago. The property has therefore been hoarded off and made secure ready for construction work to start.

**Note**

Philip Vernon Architects are working in conjunction with TFT Surveyors, acting jointly for John O'Neil and Partners who have been appointed by SOAS to undertake the works to the building.

## **Contents of the Initial Listed Building Application**

- I. Architects Report.
- II. Structural Engineers Report.
- III. Photographic survey of key features.
- IV. Proposal for Next Steps in the process.
- V. Asbestos removal quotation and methodology (separate document)
- VI. Specialist report on the roof. (separate document)
- VII. Architects drawings 0620A(LBC)01 to 05 Rev A inclusive. (separate A3 drawings)



## ARCHITECTS REPORT

### Listing Entry

**Location:** (North side) Nos.21-24 (Consecutive) and attached railings\_

**Street:** Russell Square

**Grade:** II

**Reference No:** 798-1-141694

**Date of listing:** May 14 1974 12:00AM

**Description:**

Terrace of 4 houses, formerly a symmetrical terrace similar to Nos 52-60 (qv). One surviving projecting end bay (No.24) and central bay (No.21). c1808. By James Burton, altered c1898 possibly by PE Pilditch. Yellow stock brick with later terracotta dressings. Slate mansard roofs with dormers to Nos 21 and 24.

EXTERIOR: 4 storeys, attics and basements. 3 windows each. No.24 with 4-window return, blind except those above portico, to Thornhaugh Street. Round-arched doorways in square-headed terracotta surrounds with fanlights, side-lights and paneled doors, except No.24 with prostyle, rusticated stucco portico with balustrade. Recessed, architraved sash windows; 1st floor, some casements, with cornices and centre windows on projecting bays pedimented. Continuous cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Cornice at 3rd floor level, projecting bays with enriched frieze. Parapets; Nos 22 and 23 with balustraded parapet. Centre dormer to No.24 with terracotta pediment; No.21 with pedimented dormers, the central one semicircular.

INTERIORS: not inspected.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached mid C19 cast-iron railings to areas.

HISTORICAL NOTE: No.21 was the home of Sir Samuel Romilly, law reformer (plaque). The Duke of Bedford was inspired to add terracotta dressings to these houses following the building of The Russell Hotel (qv).

### Further anecdotal history

The house on the end of the terrace (No 19) on the corner of Bedford Way was bombed during the Second World War and that number 20 collapsed some time after that. The remaining part of the terrace was saved from demolition in the early 1970's since it was due to form the southern wing of the Institute of Education that was designed by Dennis Lasdun for UCL in 1965.

The external concrete buttressing supporting the flank wall of number 21 was built when the Institute of Education building was erected in the 1970's

Judging from old photographs, the railings at the front of the building were removed during the war and were subsequently replaced in replica.

The buildings were believed to have been in commercial use as offices from the war up to 1959 and were occupied by the ship building company Swan Hunter and the Architectural firm of Gollins Melvin & Ward amongst others.



Ariel view of the 18 – 24 Russell Square terrace taken in 1940's

Number 21 is in the centre of the terrace being the left hand house with a mansard roof and dormers. The three properties to the right of number 21 are now demolished. Number 18 on the corner of Bedford way clearly has bomb damage.



## Proposals

The current layout of the buildings is shown on the accompanying drawings nos 0620A(LBC) 001 – 005 Rev A inc. The drawings also show the internal partition walls and modern ceilings, etc which are proposed to be removed. The Photographs of key features are referenced on the drawings.

The two buildings have been previously combined by forming doors through the party walls at each level. This was probably done when the buildings were first converted for academic use, it is intended to retain these connections. Additional partitioning was also installed to sub divide some of the principal rooms.

As noted above, the buildings have had some major structural interventions, probably at the time when number 20 collapsed. A very crude series of timber columns has been inserted through all the floors and steel tie rods and beams inserted across the width. Part of the proposal is to investigate whether these columns and tie rods can be removed and a more sympathetic structural solution devised. We are therefore proposing to do fairly extensive opening up works to understand the structure and condition of the building. A report from the structural engineer is included below.

Asbestos has been identified in the buildings and we wish to have a full Type 3 survey undertaken. This will involve some destructive testing in those areas that are suspect. At present we believe that this is confined to door linings, floor tiles, pipe lagging etc and do not believe that any original fabric will be seriously affected, however this work will be carefully monitored as it progresses. Guidelines for ensuring that original fabric is preserved is included later in this report.

It is not intended to radically alter the layout of the buildings from their current configuration, since the new use requires mostly open plan academic offices. However new services are to be installed throughout including a re-ordering of the toilet accommodation and this will require sub division of some spaces and the installation of new soil pipes.

Where consistent with the clients brief, it is intended to remove some of the earlier partition walls which sub divide the rooms, and wherever possible reinstate the original room proportions. The intention is to concentrate the reinstatement and renovation works to the principal rooms on the ground and first floors of both buildings along with the two staircases. The upper floors and basement are considered to be of a lower importance in conservation terms.

Work to the exterior of the building will be limited to repairs and maintenance of the doors, brickwork, terracotta and windows however it is proposed to replace all the lead and slate roof-coverings as part of the early stage works. A separate report on the roof is included.

Detailed plans showing the proposed changes to the building will be produced and submitted once the opening up and scope of the work and the fire safety issues have been established and the proposals agreed with the client.

The full scope of repairs / reinstatement of the key historic internal features is currently under consideration. A survey of the most important internal features of the buildings follows the Structural Engineers report.

## Opening Up and strip out works

The opening up works agreed on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2006 comprise the following:

1. Asbestos removal  
A report from a specialist company is included with this application. This explains their methodology.  
The removal work will be closely supervised by the main contractor (Jonap). Additional guidance to subcontractors is included below.
2. Structural Investigations to examine the feasibility of removing the columns and Tie rods.  
This will involve opening up the floor around each of the columns, and 600x600 holes in the floors at locations where the steel beams run through the floor and in other areas sufficient to establish the direction and depth of joists in all areas. If original floorboards are discovered these are to be lifted with care and reinstated.
3. General investigation to seek routes for new services.  
This will involve locating the existing soil and vent pipes (some of which are buried in the walls) and making small holes in those areas where new routes are being considered.
4. Removal of the ceilings in those areas that are considered to be modern e.g. first floor front rooms, and where ceilings appear to be failing e.g. top floors.

It is also intended to proceed with the initial stripping out of the buildings as agreed on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

5. Removal of remaining furniture, contemporary shelving, pin boards etc.
6. Removal of fixed items such as Safes, student union fixtures such as the Bar and Stage in the basement.
7. Removal of redundant services: boiler plant, modern radiators, pipework, modern light fixtures, wiring, IT equipment. The operatives carrying out the strip out will be briefed on the importance of protecting the fabric, so where necessary pipes will be cut off and left buried where they pass through sensitive areas.  
Note: "Hospital" pattern radiators to be retained for possible reuse.  
"Senate House" and globe light fittings to be set aside.
8. Removal of floor coverings to determine the extent of any original floor finishes.
9. Stripping out of all redundant sanitaryware, plus the toilet cubicles in the basement.

Other Works to be started prior to full Listed Building Consent:

10. Stripping and replacement of all roof coverings as detailed in the specialist report.
11. Chemical injection/render Works to address damp penetration in the three external walls in the basement and flank wall. Once the injection has been undertaken the walls will be rendered up to 1.2m above floor level with waterproof render.
12. Demolition of the basement toilet block at the rear of number 21.



## 21/22 Russell Square

### Control of asbestos removal and other stripping out work Guidance to be issued to Contractors

The buildings are Statutorily Listed and it is a criminal offence to remove or damage the historic fabric without Listed Building consent from Camden Council.

The following guidelines must be followed by all Sub Contractors:

- The scope of the opening up or stripping out is to be agreed with Jonap before any works commence, who will supervise the work at all stages.
- All areas to be opened up or removed are to be photographed before and after the work by Jonap.
- Great care is to be taken to avoid any unnecessary damage to any features including:
  - Plaster cornices and original lath and plaster walls and ceilings.
  - Any joinery items, particularly original panelled doors, skirtings and architraves.
  - Original floorboards or other original floor finishes which may be discovered.
  - Built in cupboards
  - Fireplaces
  - All features in the panelled rooms.
  - Features in the "oval" room on the first floor
  - Anaglypta embossed wall-coverings.
  - Windows, shutters and architraves
  - Rooflights
  - Stair balustrades and stone treads
  - External brickwork and terracotta
  - External decorative ironwork
- Where existing services pass through sensitive areas such as cornices, these should be cut off flush and left buried rather than causing more damage by fully removing them.
- Protection measures are to be taken to guard against accidental damage to original features.
- If there is any doubt about the items that should be treated with care, or protected, the Architect should be consulted.



## STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS REPORT

Prepared by Simon Smith of Construction Design Services

### Introduction

The Client (The School of African and oriental studies) intends to refurbish the buildings for teaching and related administrative use. An initial visual survey has identified the following potential problem areas that will require further investigation:

1. Excessively deflected floors at 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> floor levels;
2. The presence of retro-fitted structural strengthening works between Ground floor to Roof;
3. Conspicuous lateral restraint ties & bracketry located below existing ceilings;
4. Unsafe staircases to upper levels;

Notwithstanding the above, the aim of the refurbishment is to keep the structural strengthening works to an absolute minimum whilst achieving the client's requirements. This will also satisfy the tenets of the local authority conservation and heritage guidance.

### Purpose

The purpose of the investigation works may be summarised as follows:

- To confirm our understanding of the existing structure and load-paths;
- To establish the purpose & function of the retro-fitted strengthening works;
- To investigate whether the timber columns, lateral restraint ties & brackets can be removed;
- To determine the reason for the sagging floors;
- Provide information that will assist in the preparation of remedial works options.

### Scope of Investigation Works

The attached annotated floor plans identify those areas where invasive exploratory works are desired.

The general methodology will be as follows:

- Define areas for investigation with (non permanent) red spray paint;
- Carefully remove surface finishes using hand-tools. Removed areas to kept to a minimum: maximum anticipated size say 600mm x 600mm. This will entail removal of coverings & boards to expose the joists, studs, posts, beams or masonry walls. Removed coverings will be retained & replaced where practicable.
- The underlying structure will then be examined & surveyed by a Structural Engineer.
- On completion of the survey, the finishes will be replaced to match the existing standard.

### Use of Information

Once the survey results have been collated and interpreted, a report will be prepared. It is hoped that this will provide definitive answers to the four key questions raised in the Introduction section above.

Perhaps more importantly, it will provide the client with greater certainty of the load-carrying capability of the existing floors.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF KEY FEATURES

The locations of the photographs are cross-referenced on the architect's drawings.



Photo 1 Exterior from Russell Square



Photo 2 No 21 Entrance and railings (2004)



Photo 3 External buttress to No 21



Photo 4 Rear view of both buildings





Photo 5 No 22 Front door



Photo 6 No 22 Entrance lobby



Photo 7 No 22 Lobby doors





Photo 8 No 22 Lobby ceiling



Photo 9 No 22 Hall ceiling



Photo 10 No 22 hall newel post



Photo 11 No 22 front room door-head





Photo 12 No22 Ground floor rear room

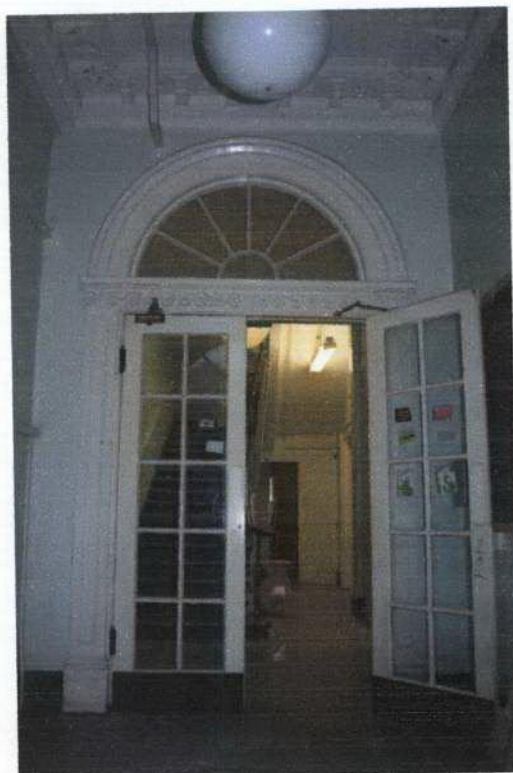


Photo 13 No 21 Entrance lobby



Photo 14 No 21 Stair newel post



Photo 15 No 21 Hall door





Photo 16 No 21 hall ceiling

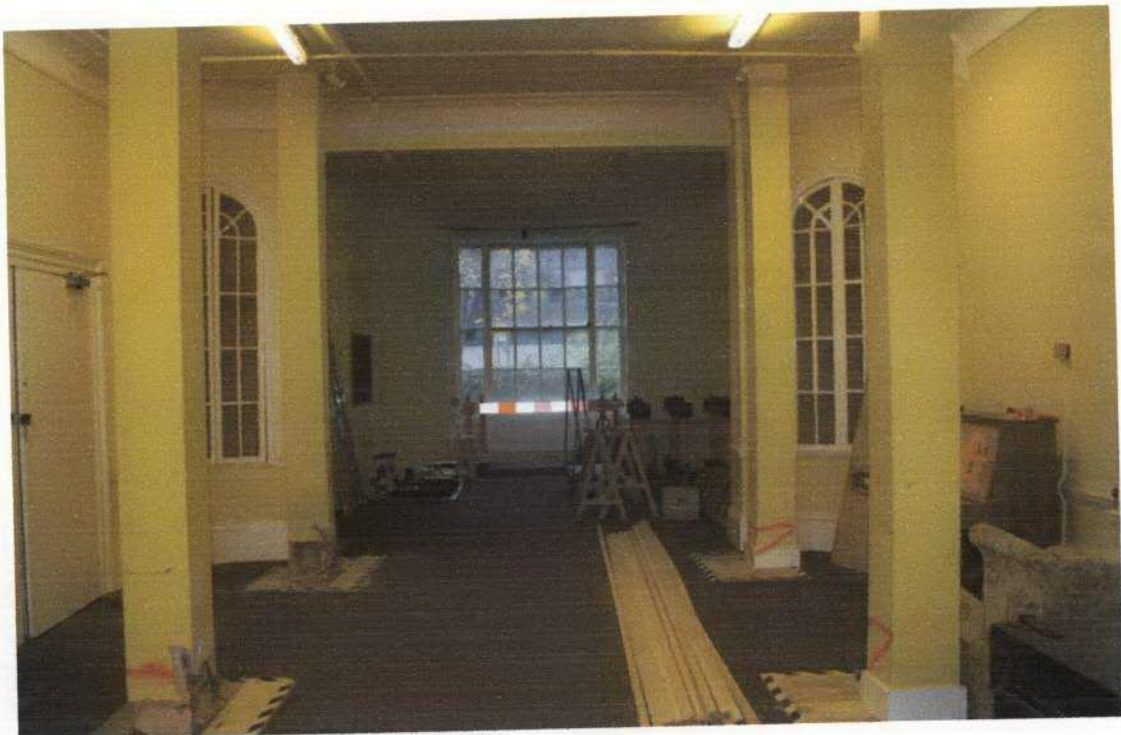


Photo 17 No 21 ground floor front and rear rooms.  
Note the four columns, added to strengthen structure, that are hoped to be removed.



Photo 18 No 21 Ground floor front room niche



Photo 19 No 21 Ground floor front room strengthening and tie rod



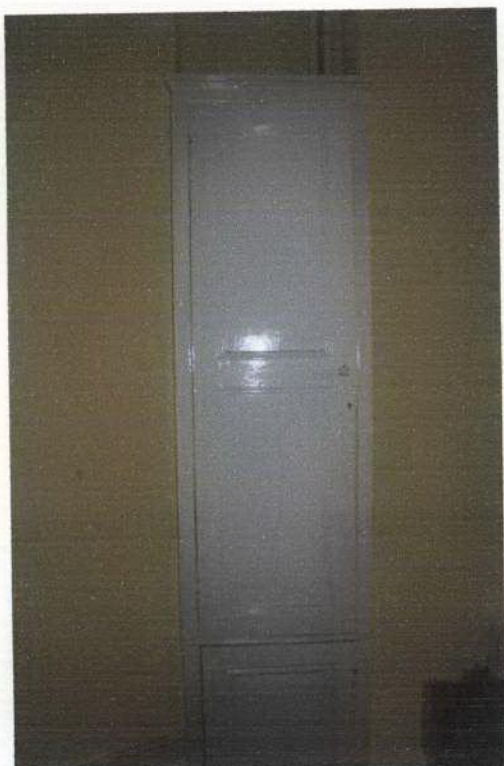


Photo 20 No 21 ground floor cupboard



Photo 21 No 21 first floor landing door



Photo 22 First floor front windows



Photo 23 First floor front and rear rooms





Photo 24 No 21 first floor window shutters

Note columns to be removed



Photo 25 No 21 first floor front fireplace

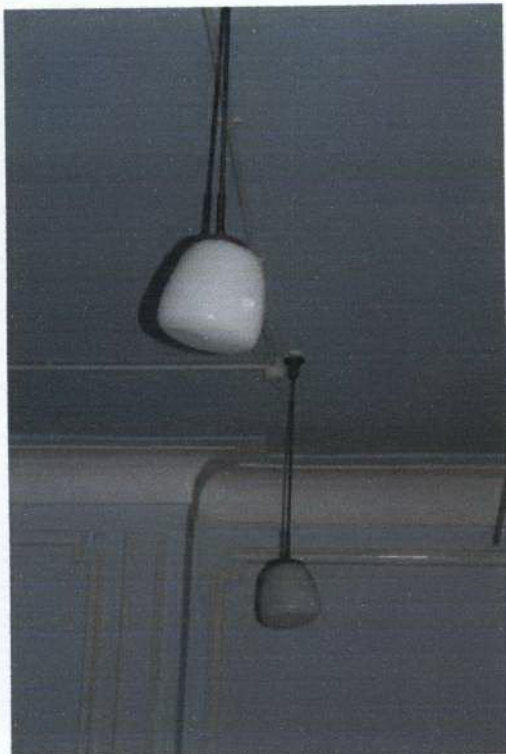


Photo 26 Senate House Light fittings  
Note : The client wishes to remove



Photo 27 No 21 Rear room column/doors  
Note column to be removed

these for future use in the Senate House



Photo 28 No 22 First floor front rooms  
typical modern false ceiling to be removed.



Photo 29 No 22 First floor Oval room showing modern partition  
Note: This is considered to be the most important room to be restored.





Photo 30 No 22 First floor Oval room window

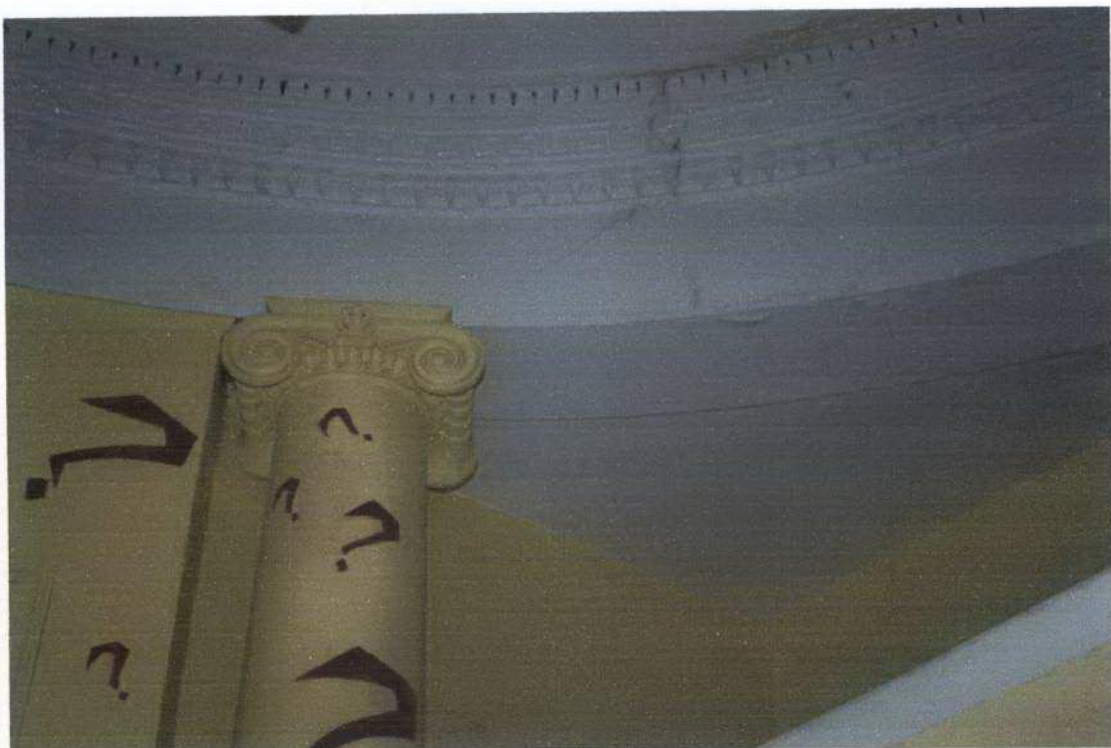


Photo 31 No 22 First floor Oval room detail



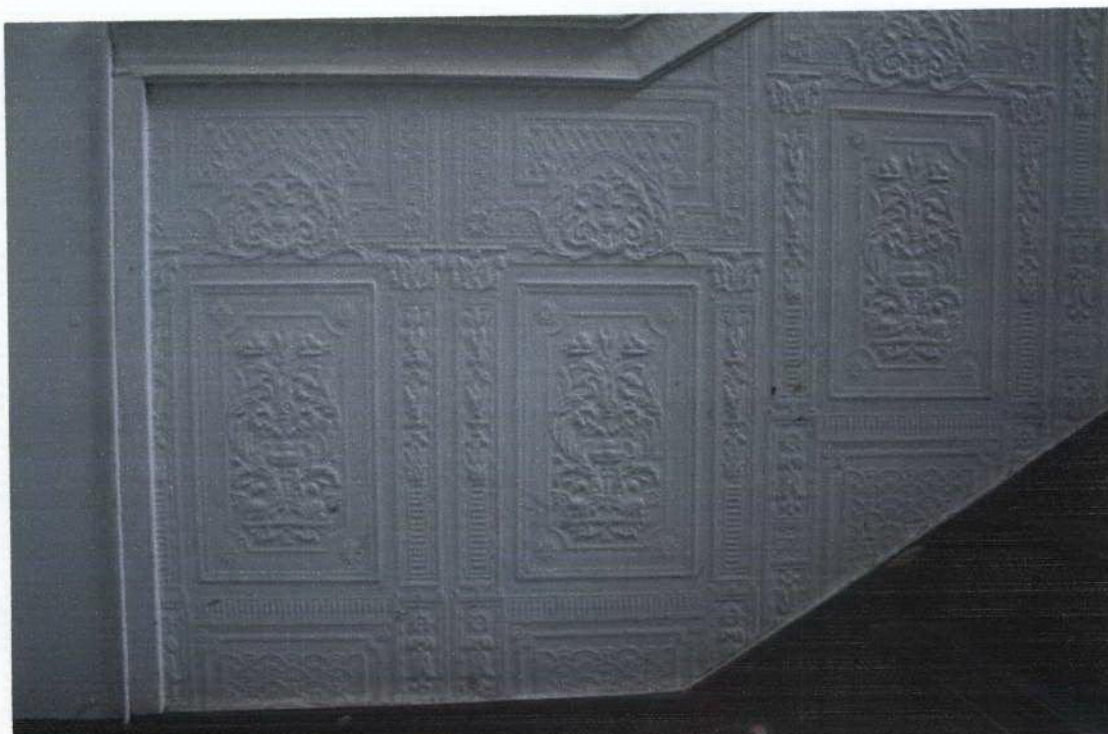


Photo 32 Wall covering First floor stair (Typical of staircase areas)  
Note: This should be retained wherever possible



Photo 33 No 22 Landing WC  
(To be removed)



Photo 34 No 22 Landing WC detail.

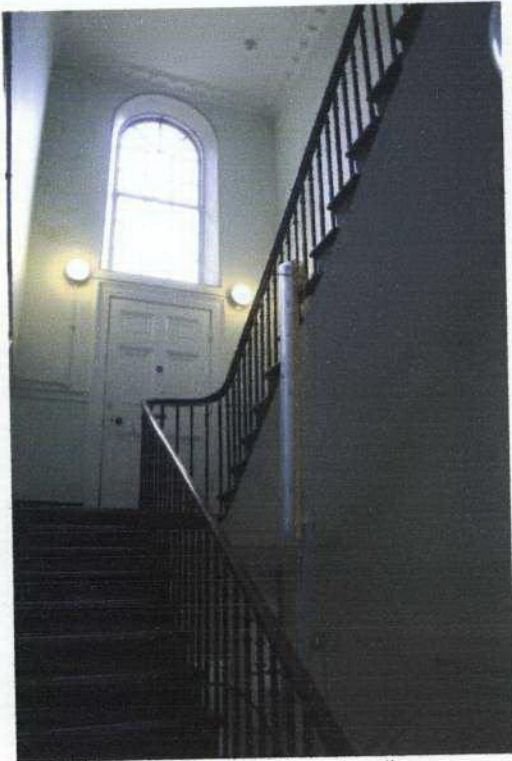


Photo 35 No 22 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor landing



Photo 36 No22 Top of main stair



Photo 37 No 22 Top stair



Photo 38 No 22 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rear bay window





Photo 39 No 21 Top of main stair



Photo 40 No 21 2<sup>nd</sup> floor front window  
Note Inner glazing to be removed.



Photo 41 No 21 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rear marble fireplace



Photo 42 No 21 stair rooflight



Photo 43 No 22 stair rooflight



Photo 44 No 21 Typical top floor fire





Photo 45 No 21 Escape stair over roof from top floor

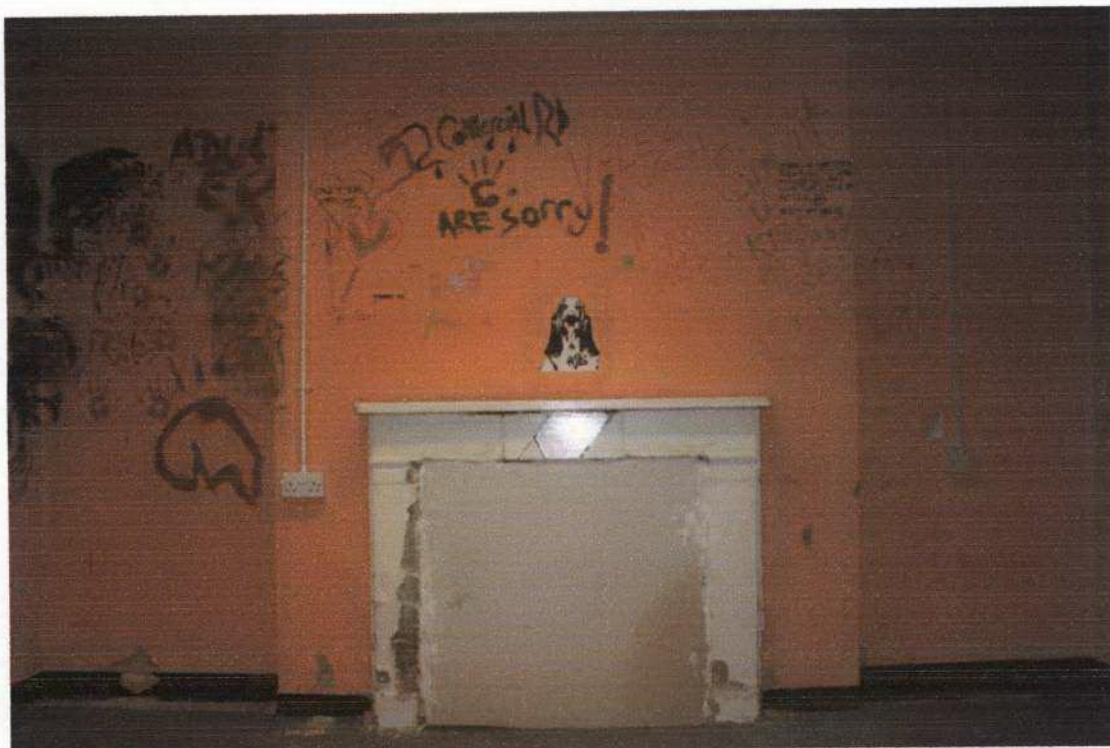


Photo 46 No 21 basement fireplace



Photo 47 Roof of basement modern toilet block to be demolished



Photo 48 Basement toilet interior





Photo 49 No 21 Ground floor rear extension  
Fireplace



Photo 50 No 21 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor front east Fireplace



Photo 51 No 21 3<sup>rd</sup> floor east Fireplace



Photo 52 No 21 3<sup>rd</sup> floor rear Fireplace





Photo 53 No21 4<sup>th</sup> floor rear Fireplace

## NEXT STEPS

1. Proceed with the initial strip out and clearing of the building.
2. Open up to establish the feasibility and scope of the structural works and prepare proposals for any new strengthening works.
3. Architect to produce RIBA Stage C design proposals.
4. TFT to prepare a report on disabled access and its impact on the quality of the buildings.
5. Consult with Building Control to define the Part B (Fire safety strategy), Part M (disabled access) and Part L (Energy conservation) requirements.
6. Establish the scope and schematic layouts of the new services and the principal distribution routes.
7. Agree the full scope of the Conservation and reinstatement works.
8. Architect to produce Stage D proposals.
9. Prepare a full schedule of repairs to the fabric.
10. Client to sign off the proposals.
11. Submit a full Listed Building Application, obtain consent from London University and Bedford Estate.