

DESIGN AND ACCESS/HERITAGE STATEMENT

GHK ARCHITECTS

Project:	No 7 Gray's Inn Square London WC1R 5AZ Refurbishment & Alterations to No 7 Ground floor (East and West)	Ref/File No:	HK 2065/3.1
Client:	The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn		
Title:	Design and Access/Heritage Statement		
Date:	11th August 2014		

DESIGN AND ACCESS/HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR:-

Internal Alterations and Refurbishment to No 7 Gray's Inn Square Ground floor (East and West)

PHYSICAL/HERITAGE STATEMENT

Introduction

Nos 7&8 Gray's Inn Square date from c.1676 and have been in use as Barristers Chambers / Residential accommodation since that date. The properties were extensively restored in the early 1950's following War damage. Barristers Chambers to Nos 7&8 are now partially linked together internally at Ground and First floor levels –but this Application refers to No 7 Gray's Inn Square, and the detailed proposals forming this Application are located wholly within in No7 Grays Inn Square at Ground floor. The Property is Listed Grade II* as a group with the adjacent No6 and No 8 all have decorative stone Entrance doorcases with attached railings (see listing description below) facing on to Gray's Inn Square.

Internal finishes to No 7 consist of historic timber wall panelling/cornices and similarly in the West part of the adjacent and internally linked No 8 Gray's Inn Square at Ground and First floor levels. The existing Grade II * Listed property of No 7 accommodates Barristers Chambers and Residential accommodation. The Chambers Accommodation comprises Ground/First floors and Residential accommodation is located on the Second and Third floors.

Listing/Description:

Exteriors: 3 Terraced Chambers forming the North end of Gray's Inn Square. c1676, restored (owing to war damage) c1950. Brown brick with red brick dressings. Brick bands between floors. Tiled roof. 4 storeys and cellars. 5 windows each. Stone doorcases with consoles and broken segmental pediments with ball decoration in the centres. Gauged red brick flat arches and dressings to flush frame windows with boxing and glazing bars. Wood block bracketed eaves cornice.

The properties are set in the North side of Gray's Inn Square and are an important part of the scale, character and quality of the formal setting of the square both within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn and The Bloomsbury Conservation area.

Interiors: retain some panelled rooms Nos 6&8, stairs with turned balusters and column newels. No.7, dog-leg stairs, No 8 carved wood fireplace.

Subsidiary features: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to Basement lightwell areas to Gray's Inn Square.

Planning/ Economics:

This Listed Building Consent Application applies to the proposed alterations and refurbishment of the Ground floor areas of No7 Grays Inn Square East and West and is an alternative to the Granted Listed Building Consent approval ref: 2014/1901/L which included No7 Ground floor West. This was to be linked to the First Floor Barristers Chambers Accommodation.

The Ground floor Chambers accommodation to No7 East and No8 Gray's Inn Square was refurbished in the past few years but the recently vacated No7 West accommodation is in need of modernisation/upgrading whilst retaining historic fabric/features.

The refurbishment and the alterations to the First floors of Nos 7 and 8 Gray's Inn Square were the subject of Planning and Listed Building Consents 2013/4255/P and 2013/4370/L to enable the re letting of these Chambers. Since those consents the occupiers of No7 Gray's Inn Square Ground Floor West expanded and found themselves with insufficient space to house their new staff but The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn were able to move these Chambers to alternative larger premises still within The Inn.

Following this relocation, Listed Building Consent was applied for/granted to the Ground Floor West No7 Gray's Inn Square, and additional room on the First Floor East to No7. The objective behind this application was to create a Ground floor Reception area to replace a planned Reception area at First Floor, which was included in the consented Nos7&8 Grays Inn Square First Floor Refurbishment & Alterations.

When The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn proceeded to seek lease applications for the refurbished No 7&8 First Floor Chambers the existing occupier of No7 Ground Floor East and 8 Ground Floor East and West Gray's Inn Square made a very strong case to extend into the available Chambers of No 7 Ground Floor West. This particular set of Barristers has experienced steady organic growth over the past few years and is keen to remain in, and expand in Gray's Inn. For business operational reasons this selected future tenant wishes to link the "new" Ground Floor No7 West with its existing Ground Floor No7 East and Ground Floor space in No8 They also have a demand for more Barrister rooms, as opposed to a Reception area in No 7 West.

This current application differs from the alterations previously consented for No7 Ground Floor West Gray's Inn Square - Listed Building Consent 2014/1901/L refers (which had commenced on site, but has not been completed). This Listed Building Consent aims to extend the existing Corridor serving Ground Floor No8 East + West and No7 East Gray's Inn Square into Ground Floor No 7 West Gray's Inn Square, thus creating two Chambers Offices opening off the extended Corridor in No 7 West. In the West side of No7 the application proposals include removing the existing toilet, and previously proposed Tea Point/Lobby (both of which were alterations of existing modern insertions), to create one large Office in the southern part of the No7 Ground floor; the room in the northern part of No7 Ground floor to remain as existing.

Internal plaster and timber wall panelled finishes to No7 Ground floor West are generally painted with carved decorative timber cornices, dados and skirtings to the panelled rooms. Some of the original mouldings to wall panels in the South room to No7 West appear to have been removed in the past and replaced with plywood panel margins surfaced fixed to the original base panels. In No7 corridor paneling is similar but rooms are plainer with some plaster painted decorations with lowered and more modern plasterboard ceilings to the internal Corridor.

At Ground floor to No7 Gray's Inn Square West for this Application it is proposed to generally retain the paneled walls /fireplaces/original doors and remove the previous and more modern insertions and suspended plasterboard ceilings to the Entrance Lobby and Tea point/Toilet. As these proposals consist of forming an internal link through the party wall to No7 East this will give access via the existing Corridor to Toilets/ Tea Points in No 8 Gray's Inn Square at Ground Floor level. These are considered adequate for the whole of the Ground floor accommodation if No7 Ground floor West is added. It is therefore proposed to remove the existing more modern Toilet and Tea point to No7 Grays Inn Square West, but leaving services connections in place for future reversals of these proposals if required.

The properties of Nos 7&8 Gray's Inn Square as noted above, are in a very prestigious setting within Gray's Inn and its location/historic quality contributes to the success of the individual Chambers located therein, as well as those who previously occupied the Ground floor No7 West and First Floors and also for The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn. The efficient operation of the accommodation and sensitive integration of modern services/technology continues to be an essential requirement to the success and economic growth for Barristers Chambers who occupy the existing Ground Floor.

There is also a need for soundproofing and acoustic upgrades for increasing confidentiality requirement between Chambers Rooms/Offices and Meeting rooms, as well as the need to upgrade/modernise the services, heating, electrics and data communications.

The importance of Nos 7&8 Gray's Inn Square within the confines of The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate, and other Historic Buildings, is well understood as being an important element in maintaining the high profile status for The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn and its prestigious Tenants/Residents. It is considered that any alterations within this particular property must be carried out in a manner that enhances, rather than detracts from the existing properties with their Grade II* Listed status, the unique setting and historic fabric, whilst at the same time allowing the Barristers Chambers to operate efficiently in such a way as to meet their Clients requirements/integration of heating and modern communications technology.

As the properties are well above the High Water Level of the River Thames which also protected by the Thames Barrier further downstream and after a review of the Environment Agency Flood Risk mapping it is considered that this Application relating to the Ground Floor internal alterations to No7 Gray's Inn Square only will not require a Flood Risk Assessment.

ACCESS

This Listed Building Consent Application is being made for Nos 7 Gray's Inn Square Ground floor only and with a new internal link in No7 between East & West this will link the whole of the properties of No7&8 together at Ground floor. Entrances to Nos 7&8 Grays Inn Square will be retained as existing, together with the entrances to Chambers from both Entrance Halls and Main staircases.

Following an access audit and security review of the Nos 7&8 Gray's Inn Square properties, taking into account their historic fabric/internal planning of the Grade II* Listed properties, it has been proposed by The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn to retain the Entrances into each set of Ground floor accommodation to both properties and form the proposed link within No7 Grays Inn Square through the party wall as this will give greater access for ambulant disabled Building users to the existing disabled Toilet accommodation in the Ground Floor of No8 Grays Inn Square.

Access to the Ground Floor No7 West accommodation will be retained as existing via a single leaf glazed/ Framed Oak door Main Entrance door which has recently replaced the previous awkward to manoeuvre through very narrow double doors. The Main Entrance Door replacement was approved under Planning Consent 2013/4255/P

Entrances to and from the upper floors will be retained via the existing Staircase. With the historic fabric and the important status of Nos 7&8 Gray's Inn Square as a Grade II * Listed Buildings within the confines of The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate there are limitations on Access for All to the property due to internal planning arrangements and single centrally located original timber staircases. The narrow access from Gray's Inn Square via the Main Entrance door/historic stone doorcase has to be retained as part of the Conservation area status and the lack of secondary access due to the substantial level differences between Ground floor and the Gardens to the rear on the North sides of the properties makes access improvements beyond those noted above difficult to achieve.

Without seriously disrupting the historic character and quality of these fine Grade II * properties and the conservation area settings within the formal layout of Gray's Inn Square/internal planning it is very difficult to provide fully compliant mobility access into all of the Ground floor levels and upper floors of the properties from Gray's Inn Square and maintain the quality/status of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and gardens to the North. It should be noted, however, that full wheelchair access and associated facilities are provided/made available in other Gray's Inn properties within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate, through the Banqueting Contractor, the Inn lets out individual meetings rooms of differing sizes which are fully accessible and may be utilised by Barristers Chambers in the Inn/residents, as and when required.

DESIGN CONSTRAINTS

Alterations and Refurbishment of the Ground floor accommodation No 7 Grays Inn Square West: The constraints on the designs for alterations and improvements/refurbishment to the Ground level of No 7 Gray's Inn Square West is primarily the unique setting as part of Gray's Inn Square, historic fabric, internal planning/layout of the historic accommodation. Existing drainage/services connections are located on the South façade adjacent to the existing Ground floor Toilets and the connections will be maintained for future use and reversal of the proposals contained in this Application. Limited mechanical and electrical/data internal distribution services can be accommodated in the timber floor voids but subject to structural limitations, specific routings and accessible ducts/ceiling voids.

The Design constraints for the installation of new heating/electrical and data services to the Ground floor accommodation are the capacities of exiting mains services to the property, arrangements of the existing floor plans, fine symmetrical external brick elevations/painted timber sash windows to the North and South facades, also the location of the occupied accommodation on the Ground floor of the property.

In reviewing the proposed upgrading/modernizing of the heating to the Chambers accommodation at Ground floor level a number of options have been considered, including underfloor heating with

control manifolds, standard electric radiators (as existing), electric boilers/storage heaters and new modern condensing boilers/flues and radiators. Underfloor and standard electrical forms of heating are difficult to install in historic building fabric and standard electricity heaters are expensive to run for the large volumes of the rooms to be heated, potential boiler/flue locations have also been carefully reviewed with consideration of the existing internal timber wall panelling/external fabric. As a result of these reviews it has been decided to extend the existing heating system into The No7 Grays Inn Square. This will involve minimal disruption to the existing Ground floor accommodation of No7 East to extend and increase pipework. Boiler located on the Ground floor of No8 Gray's Inn has adequate capacity to additionally serve No7 Grays Inn Square West and can be retained as existing.

DESIGN/HERITAGE

A number of internal planning alterations have been considered for the Ground Floor No7 Gray's Inn Square West to provide upgraded Office accommodation, together with integration of modern heating/electrical services/data and telecommunication services within the historic timber floors. Consideration has also been given to the limited floor void space to accommodate floors services alterations within the Ground/First floors and to avoid main services ducts/pipes appearing as bulkheads on the floors below.

The solution that is proposed with this application at Ground floor No7 Gray's Inn Square West is to Link the two parts of the No7 Grays Inn Square Ground floor together and remove the modern partition/wall paneling/cupboard insertions installed previously to No7 Ground floor West. Corridor modifications/alterations will be required to part of No7 East accommodation at Ground floor as indicated on the plans to create the new internal link. The large original panelled room on the North side of the Ground Floor No7 West will be retained as existing with removal of surface trunking and upgraded radiators.

Some limited re-levelling of timber floors is proposed as part of this Application to the central areas of the timber floors to even up some of the previous historic settlement slopes on the finished timber floors (retaining the existing floor boards/timber partitions in their current locations) to assist Health & Safety improvements and for concealing services distribution routes together with installation of electrical floor boxes and electrical/data communication services. This is also proposed avoid extensive surface fixed trunking on walls to panelled rooms.

During the previous occupancies of the Ground Floor surface fixed electrical trunkings cables and pipes were surface fixed/applied to panelled walls and it is proposed to relocate these with concealed services, where possible, repairing timber wall panelling/building fabric. Any alterations and modifications will retain the existing fabric and new materials will be scribed to match existing thus allowing for reversal in the future if required. In the areas of No7 Ground floor West the ceilings are in need of some repair to provide safe working environments, upgraded fire compartment separation, and where uneven plaster/plasterboard cracks/patch repaired ceilings have previously been covered over with heavy patterned ceiling lining paper.

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