

Design & Access Statement

Conversion of offices to 3 residential dwellings at
1-7 Woburn Walk, London WC1H 0JJ

In support of **Planning Application PP-03553035**



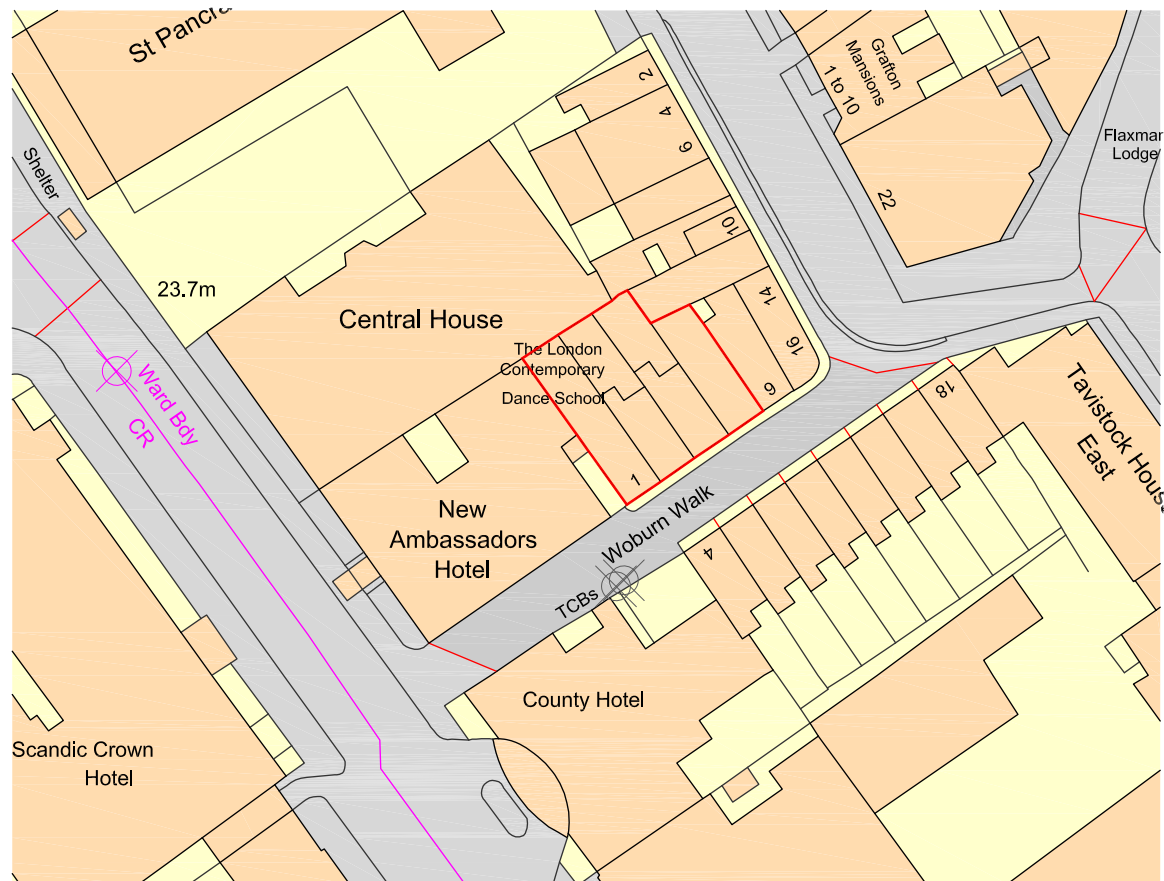
1.0 | Purpose

The purpose of this DAS document is to explain the applicant's intention to create 3no. dwellinghouses comprising 2no. 2 bed and 1no. 1 bed apartments in a Grade II* listed building (of special architectural or historical interest) which is currently of use class (B1a office).

1.1 | Introduction

Martin Ralph Architects have been instructed to redesign the layout of the upper floors of 1-7 Woburn Walk as part of a proposed scheme for the re-classification and re-use of a Grade II* listed building (of special architectural or historical interest) from (B1a) office to (C3a) residential use.

The proposed accommodation will provide 3no. dwellinghouses; comprising 2no. 2 bed and 1no. 1 bed apartments.



Ordnance Survey, (c) Crown Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432

Not to Scale OS Map depicting the location of Woburn Walk. The site sits within the conservation area of Bloomsbury.



Front façade showing the first and second floor windows facing Woburn Walk. The plaque denotes the historic significance of its famous former resident.

2.0 | Heritage Statement

Located south of Euston Station, Woburn Walk is an attractive Victorian pedestrian street at the northern end of Bloomsbury. Designed in 1822 as London's first purpose-built pedestrianized shopping street, much of the architecture has been preserved including the Dickensian bow-fronted buildings, several of which are Grade II listed (including the proposed at No. 1-7, 8, 9 and 9a) and these buildings now house a variety of uses.

The proposed development will make no changes to the overall appearance of the front or rear elevations. The proposed change in use will enable the exterior fabric to be sensitively renovated and improved with existing windows and ironwork retained and made good as necessary.

At roof level the tired PVCu windows (facing the street sitting in dormers behind a parapet wall) are to be replaced with more appropriate units. To the rear, the existing Crittall windows will have suitable replacements or be renovated in line with conservation requirements.



The street in the morning is set up to receive its many guests.

Internal works will maintain the fabric of the building, making good and repairing as necessary. Removal of all redundant adaptations for office use will return the buildings to their former function as homes. This will enhance the buildings charm and character, maintain the mix of tenure within the conservation area of Bloomsbury and add a new chapter to the history of the place.

3.0 | Site and its Surroundings

3.1 | Site Context

Woburn Walk is an attractive, Victorian pedestrian street set within the conservancy of Bloomsbury. The building forms are synonymous with the vernacular of Victorian London, comprising three levels above the Dickensian-type shop-fronts which currently are used as offices including one which sits within the attic space.

The site is within a high accessibility area serviced by numerous road, bus, tube and rail networks. A number of local shops and amenities are set within the street itself, as well as the wider context.

3.2 | Character

Woburn Walk, as the name suggests was designed as a pedestrian street, it is lined with large trees, Victorian street furniture, signage and wide stone paving. The buildings are rendered above timber-clad shop front windows and wear their original Victorian ornament. Well worn but meticulously maintained, the street has

immense charm and sits well amongst its modern neighbours.

The street is home to small independent shops and cafe's which spill out onto the

wide flag-stones. It has its own micro-culture which invites visitors and regulars and is a real asset to the area.

Aerial view looking West over the site.



4.0 | Policy Framework

4.1 | National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government on 27th March 2012. It replaced the previous PPS/PPG system of guidance documents and the new guidelines in favour of a delivery of “wide choice of high quality homes... and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities”.

4.2 | Local Policy

Camden Development Policies forms part of the Council’s Local Development Framework (LDF), the group of documents setting out the planning strategy and policies. The lead Local Development Framework document is the Core Strategy, which sets out the key elements of the Council’s planning vision and strategy for the borough and contains strategic policies.

DP1 - MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

“The Council will require a mix of uses in development where appropriate in all parts of the borough, including a contribution towards the supply of housing.”

The proposed change of use from B1a to C3a will have no bearing on the diversity of uses within the immediate context. Returning the upper floors of the building back to dwellings will only increasing the vibrant mix.

DP2 - MAKING FULL USE OF CAMDEN’S CAPACITY FOR HOUSING

“...this provides policies that seek to maximise overall housing supply... providing homes of different sizes (DP5) ...and other housing...”

The tenants of the offices are nearing the end of their agreements, as such an opportunity to restore the building to its former usage, and provide much needed market housing (DP5), inclusive of CS6 which states that “Housing is regarded as the priority land-use of the LDF, and the Council will make housing its top priority

when considering the future of unused and underused land and buildings.”

Within the remit of this policy we feel that re-classification of the building use from B1a to C3a would be suitable.

DP5 – HOMES OF DIFFERENT SIZES

“The Council will contribute to the creation of mixed and inclusive communities by securing a range of self-contained homes of different sizes. According to the Dwelling Size Priorities Table, there is a ‘Very High’ need for two bedroom Market accommodation.”

The re-classification and subsequent proposed conversion of 1-7 Woburn Walk, from 3no. offices to 2no. 2 bed apartments and 1no. 1 bed apartment will help reduce the local demand for such units.

DP6 - LIFETIME HOMES AND WHEELCHAIR HOUSING

“All housing development should meet lifetime homes standards. 10% of homes developed should either meet wheelchair housing standards, or be easily adapted to meet them.”

(From DP25) “Where listed buildings are being altered for the provision of access for people with disabilities, the Council will balance their needs with the interests of conservation and preservation.

We will expect design approaches to be fully informed by an audit of conservation constraints and access needs, and to have considered all available options.

The listed nature of a building does not preclude the development of inclusive design solutions, and the Council expects sensitivity and creativity to be employed in achieving solutions that meet the needs of accessibility and conservation.”

Whilst we shall try to make the property as accessible to all mobility groups, we are very aware of the sensitive nature of the site and its preservation and that its existing thresholds are inhibiting to non-ambulant persons.

DP13 – EMPLOYMENT PREMISES AND SITES

“Where premises or sites are suitable for continued business use, the Council will consider redevelopment proposals for mixed use schemes provided that ... they include other priority uses, such as housing and affordable housing;”

Please refer to our response of DP2 on page 5.

DP16 – THE TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

Developments should generally be designed to accommodate movements into and across the site rather than as closed blocks with a single entrance/ exit point.

Owing to the nature and scope of the development including its scale, use and adaptability, it is felt that with a reduction in occupants there will be no significant increase in travel demand.

DP17 – WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

“The Council will resist development that would be dependent on travel by private motor vehicles.”

Owing to the available transport links within walking distance of the site, it is not envisioned that private car ownership would be deemed totally necessary within this particular area of London.

DP18 – PARKING STANDARDS AND LIMITING THE AVAILABILITY OF CAR PARKING - CAR-FREE DEVELOPMENT

“The Council generally expect development in Low Parking Provision Areas (i.e. the Central London area, our town centres and other areas with high public transport accessibility) to be car-free.

Camden has been successfully securing car-free housing since 1997 as a way of encouraging car-free lifestyles, promoting sustainable ways of travelling, and helping to reduce the impact of traffic.”

We strongly agree that this area of Bloomsbury is suitably catered for by TfL and other means that private car ownership could well be seen as unnecessary in this area of London.

CYCLE PARKING

Where applicants demonstrate that cycling provision according to these standards is not feasible on a development site, the Council may seek a contribution to off-site provision in lieu of provision within the site.

The provision of cycle storage, owing to the nature of the development will be incredibly difficult to integrate, it is therefore felt that a contribution to off site provision would be the most obvious solution.

DP20 – MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND MATERIALS AND

“The Council will expect development that would generate significant movement of goods or materials by road, both during construction and in operation, to be located close to the TLRN or other Major Roads;”

Prior to any commencement of works we would seek opportunities to minimise disruption to local communities through effective management, including through the optimisation of collection and delivery timings and the use of low emission vehicles for deliveries.

DP22 - PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

“The construction and occupation of buildings are major consumers of resources and can produce large quantities of waste and carbon emissions. The possibility of sensitively altering or retro-fitting buildings should always be strongly considered before demolition is proposed.”

Owing to the listing, all ‘fabric’ changes will be minimal, as such it is the retention of materials which will reduce the climatic impact of the development. The introduction of climate-aware and sustainable approaches is limited in this particular development owing to the nature of the building and its Grade II* listing.

Where appropriate reduced energy consuming technology will be introduced that is not detrimental to the fabric of the building, perhaps through low wattage lighting and heat exchange.

The introduction of water conserving toilets, reduced flow taps and perhaps moisture retaining plants will offset a small but no less important amount of water usage. See also DP24

DP24 - SECURING HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

Core Strategy policy CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage sets out the Council’s overall strategy on promoting high quality places, seeking to ensure that Camden’s places and buildings are attractive, safe, healthy and easy to use and requiring development to be of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character.

Camden has a unique and rich built and natural heritage, with many areas with their own distinct character, created by a variety of elements including building style and layout, history, natural environment including open spaces and gardens, and mix of uses. We have a duty to respect these areas and buildings and, where possible, enhance them when constructing new buildings and in alterations and extensions.

and; DP25 – CONSERVING CAMDEN’S HERITAGE

“To preserve or enhance the borough’s listed buildings, the Council will ...only grant consent for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building;”

Camden’s listed buildings and structures provide a rich and unique historic and architectural legacy. They make an important and valued contribution to the appearance of the borough and provide places to live and work in, well known visitor attractions, and cherished local landmarks.

We have a duty to preserve and maintain these for present and future generations. There are over 5,600 buildings and structures in Camden that are on the statutory list for their special architectural or historic interest. In order to protect listed buildings, the Council will control external and internal works that affect their special architectural or historic interest. Consent is required for any alterations, including some repairs, which would affect the special interest of a listed building.

It is our intention to maintain the integrity, feel and character, both internally and externally with minimum change to the fabric of the building. Any and all alterations are to be sensitively executed and of the highest quality to enhance what is there for our, and coming generations to enjoy.

DP26 – MANAGING THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON OCCUPIERS AND NEIGHBOURS

“[council] will require developments to provide ...an acceptable standard of accommodation in terms of internal arrangements, dwelling and room sizes

and amenity space; ...facilities for the storage, recycling and disposal of waste; ...facilities for bicycle storage; and ...outdoor space for private or communal amenity space, wherever practical.

The layouts as proposed exceed the minima set out in the tables, and owing to the nature of the Listing and its conservancy, amenity space and cycle storage can be offset with contributions. The existing waste management can be adapted to suit the change of use.

DP32 – AIR QUALITY AND CAMDEN’S CLEAR ZONE

With the proposed change of use comes a reduction in tenants and office energy consumption. It can then be expected that air pollutants will decrease.

Although a time-shift of energy consumption will occur, with morning and evening time energy use increased, a significant reduction in day-time energy use can be assumed.

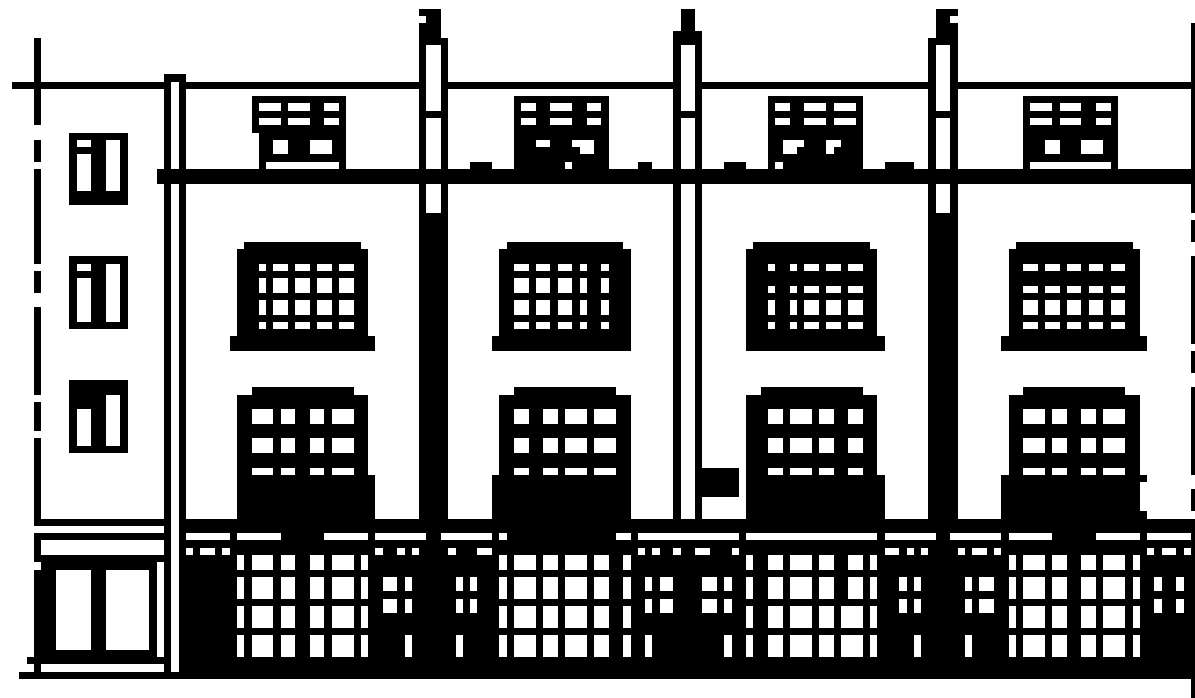
5.0 | Development Form and Layout

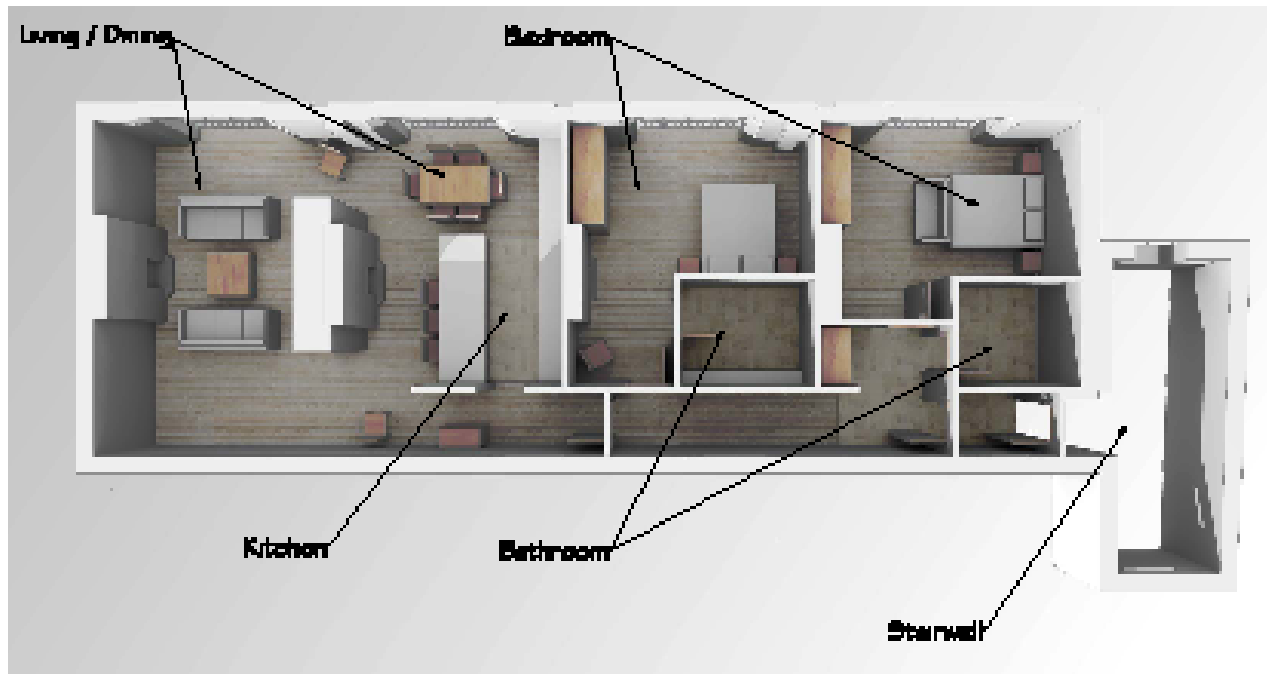
The proposed homes are provided in the form of three single-storey apartments, located horizontally through Numbers 1-7 Woburn Walk. All are accessed from the street via a single discreet entrance to the east of the building. See pages 10 & 11.

The accommodation comprises 2no. 2beds one on each of the first and second floors, and 1no. 1bed on the uppermost floor.

The scale, form and appearance of these dwellings exceeds the minimum requirements as set out in the accommodation schedules and will also go towards reducing the short-fall of market targeted 2bed accommodation.

A 'not to scale' CAD elevation depicting the front façade inclusive of the upper floor which cannot be seen from the street. This elevation will remain unaltered.





An indicative sketch of the two bedroom units layout. The fabric remains untouched, with chimneys and fireplaces retained.

5.1 | Design Detail

An extract from the Listing details describes the building as such:

“Terrace of 6 shops with accommodation over. c1822. Built by Thomas Cubitt, restored late C20. Stucco with wooden shopfronts.

EXTERIOR:

3 storeys and cellars. 1 window each. Party walls of upper floors articulated by narrow recessed bays.

Wooden shopfronts, much restored, with pilasters carrying continuous entablature with anthemion and palmette ornament to architrave; projecting, bracketed shop windows with rounded angles and small panes flanked by panelled and half-glazed doors with overlights.

Upper floors have segmental-arched windows having plain architraves studded with paterae; 1st floor, 4 lights with cast-iron balconies, 2nd floor tripartite. Parapets with plain bands, Nos 3 & 5 having shallow scrolled pediments above.

INTERIORS: not inspected.

HISTORICAL NOTE:

No.5 was the home of William Butler Yeats, Irish poet and dramatist (plaque). Thomas Cubitt was responsible for the development of the Bedford Estate north and east of Russell Square. The coherently designed group of original shopfronts in Woburn Walk and Duke's Road (qqv) is an exceptional architectural composition and survival.”

Such a highly regarded historical building deserves its listing and preservation, and sensitive remodelling and layout alterations will invigorate its tired interior.

Retaining original features and careful removal of office and non era-specific additions will restore this building to its original purpose.

6.0 | Conclusion

It is believed that the proposed redevelopment of Woburn Walk, providing three market dwellings creates an opportunity to increase the provision of housing for people within the area of Bloomsbury. This supports the objectives and selected policies of both Camden Council and English Heritage to contribute towards the vitality of the area, meeting the needs of the community in a sustainable manner, whilst retaining the rich heritage and historical nature of this part of London.

The reclassification of the building from offices to homes brings an appropriate use of the site and will provide housing of a scale and design commensurate with the street setting. It is therefore believed that the proposal is consistent with key planning policies of the Development Plan.



11 Dragoon House,
Hussar Court,
Brambles Business Park,
Portsmouth,
Hampshire
PO7 7SF

Tel. 023 9225 7711
Fax. 023 9225 7712
olaf@martinralph.co.uk
www.martinralph.co.uk

