

**HERITAGE STATEMENT**  
7 Great Ormond Street, London, WC1N 3RA  
October 2014



**GOS7.02**

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# 1. Introduction

This application covers the proposed internal alterations to number 7 Great Ormond Street, London, WC1N 3RA

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings and documents;

GOS7.02/ Design and Access Statement REV A

GOS7.02/1000 – Plans as Existing

GOS7.02/1200 – Rear Elevation as Existing

GOS7.02//1300 - Ground Floor Front Room Internal Elevations as Existing

GOS7.02/1301 – Ground Floor Rear Room Internal Elevations as Existing

GOS7.02/1302 – Ground Floor Utility Room Internal Elevations as Existing

GOS7.02/1303 – First Floor Front Room Internal Elevations as Existing

GOS7.02/2000 – Plans as Proposed

GOS7.02/2200 – Rear Elevation as Proposed

GOS7.02//2300 - Ground Floor Front Room Internal Elevations as Proposed

GOS7.02/2301 – Ground Floor Rear Room Internal Elevations as Proposed

GOS7.02/2302 – Ground Floor Utility Room Internal Elevations as Proposed

GOS7.02/2303 – First Floor Front Room Internal Elevations as Proposed

GOS7.02/3000 – First Floor Front Room Chimney Piece Panelling Detail

GOS7.02/400 – Location Plan

The House is Listed Grade 2\* and lies in the Bloomsbury conservation area

## 2. Brief History of the Building and Description

### 2.1 Building Description

7 Great Ormond Street was built as part of a terrace of 4 houses between 1710 and 1715. It is a 4 Storey terraced house constructed in brown London stock brick in a Flemish bond with red brick dressings. The front façade comprises 3 bays of tall sash windows with flat red brick voussoirs set within narrow load bearing brick piers. The house has a wide front area with large basement sash windows and a landing connecting the front door and the street. At ground level the entrance door is framed with a timber Doric door case with original painted cast iron railings and lamp holder.

The original 4 storey house is split into 3 separate tenures. No. 7 comprises ground, first and second floors as well as the garden to the rear. There have been 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations to the ground floor, comprising a WC in the rear room and 20<sup>th</sup> century panelled wall and doors.

Internally the building has original raised and fielded panelling to the principle rooms throughout. The ground floor front room has original dado panelling and cornice with a timber chimney piece dating from around 1930. The 'victory arch' (separating rooms G-02 and G-03) has been in-filled with a 20<sup>th</sup> century plasterboard partition.

### 2.2 Building History

The site was leased by the Rugby Estate to a Nicholas Barbon in 1688. He was responsible for redeveloping the area of Bloomsbury around Lamb's Conduit Street following the Great Fire of London (1666) The terraced houses to the east side of Great Ormond Street, of which Number 7 is a part, are the last survivors of this redevelopment.

The building is a Georgian terrace house with rooms laid out en-suite with a rear closet wing to all floors. The terrace was constructed as a set of single, individual, large, family dwellings. As the wealthy moved to new suburbs the buildings became increasingly sub divided and let as flats. The buildings were subdivided into smaller units and therefore carried greater loads than they were originally intended to. They eventually fell into disrepair with loss of maintenance funding and increased loading. This damage was exacerbated during two World Wars which left the buildings heavily damaged. Despite their listing the Great Ormond Street terrace was scheduled for demolition to be replaced with contemporary and safer accommodation. The terrace, including number 7 was sold to Camden council to be used as part of their social housing stock. Number 7, along with the rest of the street was conserved and restored by Donald Insall Associates in 1972 and subdivided into flats. The houses remain subdivided in this arrangement today.

Originally the interiors were left to be finished and fitted out by the individual lessees. The structural walls of the terrace are formed with 3 No. load bearing walls running parallel to Great Ormond Street; an external front and rear wall and a structural spine wall through the middle. Originally this offered alternative structural openings for the tenant's choice of doorway through to the rear of the building. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century a practice of opening up the front and back rooms of properties was common. This was undertaken at the properties on Great Ormond Street in the form of arches. These arches were nicknamed 'victory arches' in celebration of the Battle of Waterloo. The arch at 7 Great Ormond Street has since been in filled with 20<sup>th</sup> century plasterboard. The current partition is of low quality plaster board and skim on timber stud work.

## 3. Architectural Significance

### 3.1 The House

7 Great Ormond Street has a significant group value as one of four handsome and high quality Georgian terrace houses. The terrace represents a rebuilding of London after the Great Fire and was designed to give a new urban unity to London. The listing description does not include detailed information about the interior panelling. Nevertheless the extent of rich classical detailing and timber panelling throughout the house is of high significance.

### 3.2 Previous Alterations

The houses on Great Ormond Street, including No. 7, were conserved and rebuilt in the 1970s by Donald Insall Associates after threats of demolition but were saved by the London Borough of Camden deciding to convert into social housing. As part of these alterations the houses were subdivided into flats of varying sizes. The existing 20<sup>th</sup> century ground floor WC formed part of this work.

A previous application in 2006 by Donald Insall Associates (2006/2641/P,) proposed to remove the existing ground floor WC and insert a new double door in the partition under the arch separating the front and rear rooms. These works received permission but were not undertaken and the permission has lapsed.

The ground floor rear room has been subdivided to accommodate the 20<sup>th</sup> century WC off the existing hallway. The rear room to ground floor has original panelling to 3 No. walls except the north wall. From site inspection and investigations the north wall is seen to be a 20<sup>th</sup> century alteration to integrate the new WC behind.

Paint investigations taken from this room (appendix 1) confirm this wall and timber panelling are of 20<sup>th</sup> century origin.

## 4. Design Principles

Any proposed development must seek to preserve and enhance the building's use as a family home. The successful preservation of the building in the 1970s illustrates the value of the terrace and its importance in the local area to continue to function as homes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The best way to enable 7 Great Ormond Street to continue to serve its original function as a family home would be to make alterations to it with sensitivity to the existing building, taking into account its grade 2\* listing.

As part of the effort to save the building from demolition in the 1970s a number of interventions had to be made. These include the ground floor WC which divides the originally large ground floor room.

The present proposals envisage reuniting the ground floor front and rear rooms with the removal of the 20<sup>th</sup> century WC and partition which currently divides them.

## 5. Impact on Historic Building

The building would maintain its function as a single private family dwelling.

Investigations have shown that the partitions and suspended ceiling forming the ground floor WC are all of 20<sup>th</sup> century origin. The existing WC G-05 currently subdivides the rear room G-03. The removal of this WC would enhance the architectural significance of the building by returning the room to its original layout. It is suspected that the original plaster cornice exists above the suspended ceiling. This can only be confirmed after careful opening up.

The client has undertaken paint investigations of the existing panelling to the north wall of room G-03. A sample was also taken from panelling suspected to be original in the same room. These investigations on the suspected modern panelling uncovered a single layer of white paint and undercoat over a modern softwood moulded dado and modern timber panels. The paint investigation on original panelling in contrast uncovered many more layers of paint over notably older and more worn timber. This investigation confirms the panelling that would be removed in the proposals is of 20<sup>th</sup> century origin and removal would not therefore cause harm to the building's historic significance. Please see Appendix 1 for images.

The opening up of the victory arch and removal of the WC G-05 would cause no harm to the significance of the building and would enhance the buildings function as a family home by allowing a large and flexible ground floor room.

The existing chimney piece in the ground floor front room G-02 could be removed without harming the integrity of the building as it is of 20<sup>th</sup> century origins. The existing chimney piece in the first floor front room is non-original. It is likely dated mid 18<sup>th</sup> century and its removal would not harm the significance of the room.

The proposal to relocate the chimney piece from room 1-01 to the ground floor front room G-02 would be more appropriate than the existing 1930s chimney piece and it is of similar dimensions.

The proposal to fit the salvaged 18<sup>th</sup> century timber chimney piece in room 1-01 would not detract from the architectural significance of the room as it is also 18<sup>th</sup> century in origin and the existing chimney piece in this location is also non-original.

The over mantel panelling in room 1-01 would be re-formed to accommodate the new, taller chimney piece. The alterations would be to the 2 No. existing side rails and associated beads and the existing panel field. The raised and fielded panel field and 2 No. side rails would be reformed to reduce their overall height, retaining as much of the original fabric as possible. The existing bottom rail and bead would be reinstalled above the chimney piece. The alteration of the panelling would not be detrimental to the historic significance of the room. The panelling would be reformed using only the original materials and would allow the salvaged chimney piece to be integrated into the room 1-01. Please refer to drawings 2303.

The installation of new sanitary fittings would make use of the currently redundant ground floor closet wing G-04 whilst also allowing the provision of extra WC facilities to be relocated from the existing, low quality WC room G-05.

The reinstatement of the chimney piece in the utility room G-05 would enhance the room by restoring its original appearance.

## 5.2 Review against the NPPF section 12

129. Please see section 3.0 above

131. The alterations are all internal. The proposals would enhance the existing house allowing it to function in its use as a 21<sup>st</sup> century home. Opening up the ground floor would make the space flexible whilst returning the rooms to their early 19<sup>th</sup> century layout. The fireplaces are all non-original. The relocation and installation of new surrounds would not harm the significance of the building

132. The proposals are conservative and seek to return the house to an earlier layout by removing some 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations and repairing and replacing panelling where required

134. The proposals would lead to little change to the original fabric, notably the alteration of the over mantel panelling to room 1-01 and the alterations to the panelling in room G-03 following the removal of the existing panelled partition wall. These alterations would be designed in such a way as to integrate them into the existing fabric and as much of the existing timber panelling as possible would be used to achieve these proposals.

## 6. Conclusion

The proposed alterations would neither cause harm to the existing historic fabric nor affect its significance. They have been designed to cause as little impact as possible. In cases where historic fabric would be altered it is done so in a sympathetic way, using as much of the original materials as possible. The proposals to open up the ground floor would give the house its pre-restoration layout which would restore the overall significance of the house and allow it to better function as a family home.

## 7. Appendix 1 Paint Investigations



Dado rail to north wall of ground floor rear room: Revealed modern joinery



Paint investigation on panel field of north wall of ground floor rear room: Revealed modern joinery



2 No. Paint investigations into original panelling on west wall of ground floor rear room



## 8. Appendix 2 Listing Description

Q3082SE GREAT ORMOND STREET 798-1/96/664 (South side) 24/10/51 Nos.1-7 (Odd) and attached railings and lamp-holder (Formerly Listed as: GREAT ORMOND STREET Nos.1-15 (Odd))

GV II\*

4 terraced houses. c1710-15, restored c1980 by Donald Insall & Associates for Rugby Estates. No.1: built by J Ritchbell, J Walker and J Hiron. Brown brick with red brick dressings. 2nd and 3rd floor refaced in multi-coloured stock brick. 4 storeys and basement. 3 windows. Wooden Doric doorcase with fluted pilasters carrying entablature; square-headed radial patterned fanlight and panelled door. Gauged red brick flat arches to flush frame sashes with exposed boxing. Parapet. INTERIOR: not inspected but noted to retain panelling and staircase with spiral balusters. Nos 3, 5, 7: altered. Built by J Cooper and E Chapman. Brown brick with red brick dressings. 3rd floor rebuilt in multi-coloured stock brick. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Wooden Doric doorcases with fluted pilasters carrying entablature; square-headed radial patterned fanlights and panelled doors. No.7 with fine carved, foliated brackets and hood. Gauged brick flat arches to sash windows; No.3 with flush frames and exposed boxing, No.5 recessed with exposed boxing and No.7 recessed. Moulded stone bands at 1st and 2nd floor levels. Stone cornices at 3rd floor level. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected but noted to retain panelling and original staircases, No.3 with spiral balusters and carved brackets. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn and torch flambe finials to areas; No.7 with cast-iron lamp-holder.

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