



Heritage Statement

for

Planning Application at

37 and 38 Museum Street, London, WC1A



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This document relates to the application for planning permission at 37 and 38 Museum Street, London, WC1A 1LQ.

The subject premises form part of an attractive French Renaissance style terrace located to the north of Museum Street between Great Russell Street and Gilbert Place. Constructed between 1855 and 1864, the buildings comprise three storeys in Modified French Renaissance style. Notable architectural features include rusticated pilaster strips between each premise and architraved oculi enriched with swags above the first floor windows.

The terrace is notable in that the elevations, particularly the upper front elevation, but also the roof structures and general massing, remain largely unaltered. The terrace is also in generally good condition and along with the surrounding terraces to the opposite and south provides a particularly good example of renaissance revival within central London. The ground floor, whilst not original, also contains good examples of late 19th century shop fronts.

The terrace, along with its aforementioned neighbours, also provides one of the largest and coherent examples of work by Fitch Hill, an architect notable for public houses, music halls and theatres including Museum Tavern adjacent to no. 37. The tavern building (and by extension, the subject terrace) are also credited to Edward Lewis Paraire, who often works with Fitch Hill throughout their partnership during 1856-70.

It is for this reason that the buildings are considered of architectural merit by English Heritage and are therefore grade II listed. The surrounding terraces by Fitch Hill, including the Museum Tavern, are also grade II listed, showing the importance of the street as a whole.

The internal spaces of numbers 37 and 38 also contain a number of original features such as cornices and joinery items which benefit the overall appearance of the premises. The internal layout to both buildings remains largely unchanged, with all floors retaining the spine wall. 37 also retains the original staircase, although the staircase to number 38 has been subsequently altered to remove the winders. Whilst all fireplaces are not believed to be original they are aesthetically pleasing and generally in keeping with the age of the building having probably been replaced in the late 19th Century. Generally the internal spaces are not in good condition and both premises require repairs and restoration. No 38 in particular also contains a number of sub-standard alterations at third floor level as part of conversion to residential accommodation.

During consultations as part of the previous planning application (now withdrawn) we have made a substantial number of changes to the scheme to further recognise the architectural importance of the internal spaces.

The scheme now seeks to create two a two-bedroomed duplex apartment across the second and third floors, whilst retaining the existing B1 use at first floor levels. Both 37 and 38 would be treated identically in this regard. This revised scheme allows for a higher class of redevelopment which is more in keeping with the original intended use of the building whilst retaining a broad mix of uses.

A key benefit of this revised scheme is the retention of bathroom facilities to the half landing levels, removing the need for any alteration to the spine wall. Within 38 Museum Street the existing defective partitioning forming the bathroom facilities at third floor level will be removed and reformed in a sympathetic manner within the front room.

Other sympathetic internal alterations include the installation of suspended ceiling to first floor areas to provide sound thermal and 60minutes fire resistance between office and residential spaces. These new suspended ceilings will be located beneath the existing cornice detail to ensure heritage features are maintained, whilst providing a route for electrical and mechanical services. The existing cornice detail will be replicated on the new suspended ceiling to maintain the character of the internal spaces.

Some alterations are also necessary to the first floor of 37 Museum Street to enable the installation of partitioning between the residential apartment and main stairwell. Alterations will comprise infilling the existing doorway to the front office, with access provided via the double doors from the rear office. The removed door will be sympathetically reused within the office WC accommodation.

At no point will the front elevation or roof be altered, in recognition of the importance of maintaining the elevations and streetscape. The rear elevations will require discreet openings for boiler flues, kitchen extractors and kitchen drainage. The majority of the bathroom drainage will however remain 'as existing'.