

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**  
**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT, incorporating**  
**HERITAGE ASSET STATEMENT (Historic Building Impact**  
**Assessment).**

**IN RESPECT OF A NEW TOILET AT BASEMENT LEVEL**

**63 GOWER STREET,  
LONDON, WC1.**



**NOVEMBER 2014**

<b>DESIGN, USE AND AMOUNT:</b>
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- 1.1 The planning and Listed Building Applications have been submitted by Simon Coles (Agent) to Camden Council and is awaiting Validation, pending the submission of, inter-alia a Historic Building Impact Assessment. Camden current file reference is: **2014/6645/INVALID**, and officer at Camden dealing with this validation is **Tony Young**.
- 1.2 We are also aware that the National Planning Policy Framework refers to Heritage Assets as including both non – designated and designated Heritage Assets. Non – designated Heritage Assets are buildings and landscapes that are not formally designated, whilst ‘*designated assets*’ includes, inter-alia:
- **Listed Buildings;**
  - **Conservation Areas;**
  - **World Heritage Sites;**
  - **Scheduled Ancient Monuments.**
- 1.3 In this case, 63 Gower Street is a Grade II Listed Building, and consequently any applications affecting such ‘designated Heritage Assets’ need careful consideration, in accordance with the NPPF, and the invalid letter from Camden dated 5<sup>th</sup> November requires 5 pieces of additional information or amendments to the plans. A Planning and Listed Building application were drawn up and submitted by the Agent, with careful consideration of this sensitive Historic environment/building, but it transpires only Listed Building Consent is required for this new toilet. With this in mind, the modest new toilet would be located in the basement, just below the staircase between the ground floor and basement, which involves the “least – intervention” in this attractive Listed Building.
- 1.4 A complete set of drawings (including any Amended drawings) associated with this application have been provided by the Agent, and were submitted to Camden.

- 1.5 The Agents who prepared the drawings and advised the client are Cubic Building Surveying, a locally based and experienced Chartered Building Surveying Company, with many years experience in London Boroughs, and in particular is cognisant with applications involving Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.
- 1.6 In the meantime, as Chartered Planning Consultants, we have been asked to prepare this supporting Design and Access Statement, to include an Heritage Asset Statement (Historic Building Impact Assessment) in support of the application.

#### THE PROPERTY:

- 2.1 63 Gower Street is an attractive 5 storey Georgian terraced property, forming part of a terrace of identical properties, of a dark red brick with white rendered stucco detailing, and is one of a number of properties in this attractive terraced street. No63 Gower Street is actually now a family run hotel, Jesmond Hotel, and is located on the western side of the street, in this attractive part of Camden, in the heart of London. No63 Gower Street is currently a long-established hotel, run by the Beynon family, and we note that their website states:

*The Jesmond Hotel has been run by the Beynon family for 30 years and the family-run atmosphere is what we hope will make you feel so welcome.*

*Acquired by Terry and Nest Beynon in 1979, both of whom left management jobs at Marks and Spencer to purchase the Hotel, the Jesmond doubled as a family home in the early years where they raised their two sons Glyn and James from the ages of 5 and 3. Along with the family's Old English sheepdog Ben, many happy years were spent here building up the reputation of the business as well as raising two young boys.*

*Glyn, now managing the hotel, has studied part-time and gained a degree in Film, and is also currently studying for a Masters Degree in Building Surveying. Nest and Terry still maintain an interest in the Hotel, and often work at the Jesmond over weekends."*

- 2.2 We have provided this information as background to the application, as the Beynon's still wish to continue to operate The Jesmond Hotel and provide a solid business operation for their two sons, so to emphasise this is not a speculative proposal, but again is further investment in this Listed Building.

- 2.3 An Ordnance Survey extract showing the location of the property (outlined in red) in relation to nearby properties formed part of the original planning submissions. We have provided an extract of the Camden Supplementary Planning Document, which refers to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and will therefore refer to this document, in making this assessment:



The area is predominantly residential, although Jesmond Hotel has indeed been run as such for over 30 years, and the application site occupies an accessible location close to shops, other local services and public transport facilities, so is in a sustainable location, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

We would add that, both the Applicant and their Agent (whom has submitted this application) are fully aware of the Grade II Listed status of this property, and also we can confirm that the Agent also regularly submits applications involving Listed Buildings, which as we know are now referred to as *Heritage Assets* in the recently issued National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). They are therefore fully aware of their obligations to such “designated Heritage Assets”.

#### **PLANNING POLICIES:**

The statutory development plan comprises the **London Plan of 2011**, the **Camden Local Development Framework 2010**, and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

#### ***The London Plan***

London Plan **Policy 3.5** states that housing developments should be of the highest quality internally and externally. The Mayor's Housing SPD lays down detailed standards relating to the size and layout of residential accommodation, and the need to carefully consider the impact of new development upon Camden's Listed and non-listed buildings.

***The Camden Local Development framework was adopted in 2010:***

#### **Camden Local Development Framework**

### **Camden Development Policies**

**Adoption version 2010**

This now includes and brings forward all Camden's previous planning policies, and amongst other planning policies, includes Policy DP25 as the most relevant to Camden's Conservation areas and Listed Buildings:

#### **Policy DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage**

##### **Conservation areas**

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;
- d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and
- e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

##### **Listed buildings**

To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;
- f) 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; and
- g) not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

##### **Archaeology**

The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

##### **Other heritage assets**

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and London Squares.

Then to support and supplement this Policy the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Strategy states: .

**Control over New Development**

- 5.26 It is clear from the Conservation Area Appraisal that there is considerable pressure for redevelopment and new development across Bloomsbury. This pressure comes from a number of sources of different scales:
- i) the expansion and need for refurbishment and redevelopment of buildings associated with the major institutions in the area;
  - ii) a range of small scale change that can, cumulatively, have a significant impact on the character of an area (e.g. roof extensions; rear extensions, satellite dishes and aerials, fire escapes, plant);
  - iii) commercial pressure for new offices and retail-related developments including replacement shopfronts;
  - iv) changes of use; and,
  - v) advertisements.
- 5.27 High quality new development that is appropriate for its context can preserve or enhance the Conservation Area. To secure appropriate new development the Council has adopted a number of detailed policies (see paragraphs 5.28 to 5.34 below) that development will need to comply with. An appropriate level of information will also be required as part of the application submission to enable the Council to determine the effect of any development proposal on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

*General*

- 5.28 Development proposals must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This requirement applies equally to developments which are outside the Conservation Area but would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.
- 5.29 High quality design and high quality execution will be required of all new development at all scales. It will be important that applications contain sufficient information to enable the Council assess the proposals.
- 5.30 Proposals which seek to redevelop those buildings and spaces which are considered to have a negative impact on the special character or the appearance of the Conservation Area with appropriate new development will be encouraged.
- 5.31 Design and Access Statements accompanying applications will be expected specifically to address the particular characteristics identified in the appraisal including the formality and regularity of terraced forms and the prevailing scale, mass, form and rhythm created by the historic pattern of development. The appraisal has demonstrated that a high quality successful



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modern design can be accommodated and enhance the Conservation Area, by carefully assessing and responding to the form and qualities of surrounding buildings and spaces.

5.32 The appearance of all buildings of historic interest (listed and unlisted) within the Conservation Area is harmed by the removal or loss of original architectural features and the use of inappropriate materials. For example, the loss of original joinery, sash windows, porches and front doors, can have considerable negative impact on the appearance of a historic building and the area. Insensitive re-pointing, painting or inappropriate render will harm the appearance and the long-term durability of historic brickwork.

5.33 In all cases the Council will expect original architectural features and detailing to be retained, repaired, protected, or refurbished in the appropriate manner, and only replaced where it can be demonstrated that they are beyond repair.

5.34 In preparing development proposals consideration should be given to whether the development will affect an archaeological priority area (APA) or view corridors to and from St Paul's. Significant local views will also be taken into consideration.

#### THE HERITAGE ASSET ASSESSMENT:

We note that the Jesmond Hotel website provides some interesting background to the property:

*“On the 1st August 1786, an industrious time for house building in the middle of an era now referred to as the Georgian period, a builder of the time, Mr Alexander Hendy was given a contract by Gertrude Duchess of Bedford to build 13 houses on a vacant plot of land. This contract was the contract that contained the building of 63 Gower Street within the terrace now seen today. To the north, Francis Street, now renamed as Torrington Place, and to the west, Chenies Mews, now renamed as Ridgemount Gardens were also constructed.*

*Details of the building style were largely pre-determined by the already existing buildings in the near surrounding areas, and more closely those already built at the north end of Gower Street. The old English language used in the building contract now held at Woburn Abbey home to the Duke of Bedford, describes the requirements put upon the builder by the freeholder selling the land;*

*“Thirteen other uniform houses to front Gower Street aforesaid the said several houses and the front thereof with the windows therein to range in a line and be regular in all respects and correspond with the houses already built in Gower Street.”*

*The reference to the “regular” style of the building, and the fact that these new buildings should “correspond with the houses already built in Gower Street”, gives an indication into the demands of architecture and construction at that time.*

*The façade of the Jesmond Hotel is a key identifier for the Georgian style in many ways, including the six paneled main front door, sash windows, parapet wall concealing the majority of the roof from street level (Georgian architects and builders considered roofs to be ugly and functional), and Flemish bond brickwork. The bricks used were London stock brick. The original colour of these bricks can be seen at the rear of the property from the garden.*

*The black colour of the bricks now seen at the front of the building is as a result of many years of pollution, at its peak in London during the Victorian period and not as many would assume in recent years.*

*The property also represents a typical proportioning building style adopted by the Georgians at the end of the 18th Century. The narrow band at the bottom of the first floor windows divides the ground floor from the rest of the property. Above the second floor windows, and below the parapet wall is the large section of stucco decoration.*

*It is in that way the property complies with a uniformity that is the hallmark of Georgian architecture and building techniques from that period.”*

#### THE CURRENT PLANS:

So it is clear from the above historical background that indeed the property, and the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area that any alterations need to be undertaken sympathetically in this broader historical context. In our view, essentially this minor internal alteration has been extremely well considered and thought out, and we would now like to add our views upon those plans, as a Planning Consultant, and we note that;

- The proposed new toilet would sit below and contained within an existing basement unit (unit 17), within an area partially enclosed as a clothes cupboard, which has indeed been enclosed by a newer more modern partition. So the internal layout will improve as a result of these works.

We wish to refer to the relatively new, Government Guidance, in the form of the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012** which reaffirms the previous PPS1 objectives regarding ‘design’, at Paragraphs 59, 60 and 61, stating respectively:

***“...design codes should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings.....”,***

***“Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles.”***

***“Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”***



Therefore, in terms of this application, it offers a simple replacement of a cloakroom – area with an extremely modest toilet, with little change to the fabric of this listed property, and certainly would not adversely affect any main – party walls or indeed main walls within the basement, between rooms; these would not be affected at all, and would merely involve the removal and re-sting of a newer partition wall.

On the question of Heritage Assets, we note that the NPPF clearly indicates that;

*“The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas...and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.”*

In this case, this extremely modest internal alteration, will enhance the Heritage Asset in both the short and long term, by resulting in an improvement to the internal layout and at the same time, minimal intervention in this attractive listed building.

The NPPF states that, in determining applications, LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, which we have done earlier. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

In determining applications, LPAs should take account of:

*(i) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, (ii) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability, and; (iii) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

The NPPF also recognises that, when considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the

asset's conservation. LPAs should also look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of other heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance, and in this case simply put the scheme achieves this simple objective.

Therefore, it is maintained that this modest internal change will not fundamentally affect the intrinsic historic value of this Heritage Asset, and as such would not conflict with the NPPF, and the more local Planning Policy, Policy DP25:

***Listed buildings:***

***To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:***

- e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;***
- f) 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; and***
- g) not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.***

So, we contend that this modest alteration to a property which has been owned, run (and loved) by the Beynon family for over 30 years now, then we can reaffirm that the Applicant would, without prejudice to the outcome of this application, adhere to an appropriately worded condition or conditions requiring the submission of further detailed drawings and cross – sections where necessary, in accordance with Circular 11/95, 'The use of Planning Conditions'.

On this basis, we are satisfied that this scheme would clearly safeguard this designated Heritage Asset, in accordance with Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and both Adopted and emerging planning policies.