

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT to accompany a Planning Application for

# 14 BROWNLOW MEWS

MIKE LIM on behalf of  
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on behalf of

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SUBMITTED 2014.02.02



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## 0.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared for the purposes of describing the proposed alteration to the ground floor layout and the addition of a roof terrace to 14 Brownlow Mews WC1N 2 LD.

This report contains the following:

- 1) Brief site analysis
- 2) Summary of design proposal
- 3) Pre-application feedback

It is to be read in conjunction with the attached drawing package containing:

- 4) Existing building drawing package
- 5) Proposed design drawing package

The primary objective of the proposal is to address issues of modern day usability seeking to make concise alterations to an existing building with the aim to extend and preserve its useful life.

The plans submitted with this application present a carefully considered design approach that aims utilise an existing building to its full potential with sustainable and respectful outcome.

Mr Wieder is the owner and occupier of the property having acquired it in January 2014. His intentions are to raise a family in the house which he believes is currently impractical due to the existing conditions and unaccommodating interior layout.

Having sought pre-application feedback in December 2014 this report presents the revised proposal based on pre-application feedback and council advice and guidelines. The council's response is included in Appendix 1 of this statement.

## 1.1 SITE CONTEXT

The site is located on Brownlow Mews in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, within the Great James Street / Bedford Row sub area.

In general, the area is one of mixed use, with the main thoroughfares such as John Street, Doughty Street and Bedford Row serving as office space whilst in the Mews there is an increasing return to single family dwellings. It is a highly sought after residential area due to its central location and high quality urban condition.

Developed during the Georgian and Regency periods, the overall unique and distinct quality is defined by a series of grand terraced townhouses with rear Mews houses.

Brownlow Mews is one such service street backing onto Grays Inn Road. It is mixed in its character and composition although primarily residential dwellings. It is notable for its cobbled road surface yet there is considerable variation of styles along the Mews in comparison to other more traditional areas of the conservation area perhaps as a result of development along Grays Inn Road. As noted in the Conservation Appraisal and Management Strategy as adopted in 2011, the Mews offer a less rigid and formal aspect to the long enclosing grand terraces.

Furthermore, as detailed in the Conservation guide, characteristically Mews houses tended to be of a smaller scale with large open ground floors and small open upper rooms.

## 1.2 SITE HISTORY

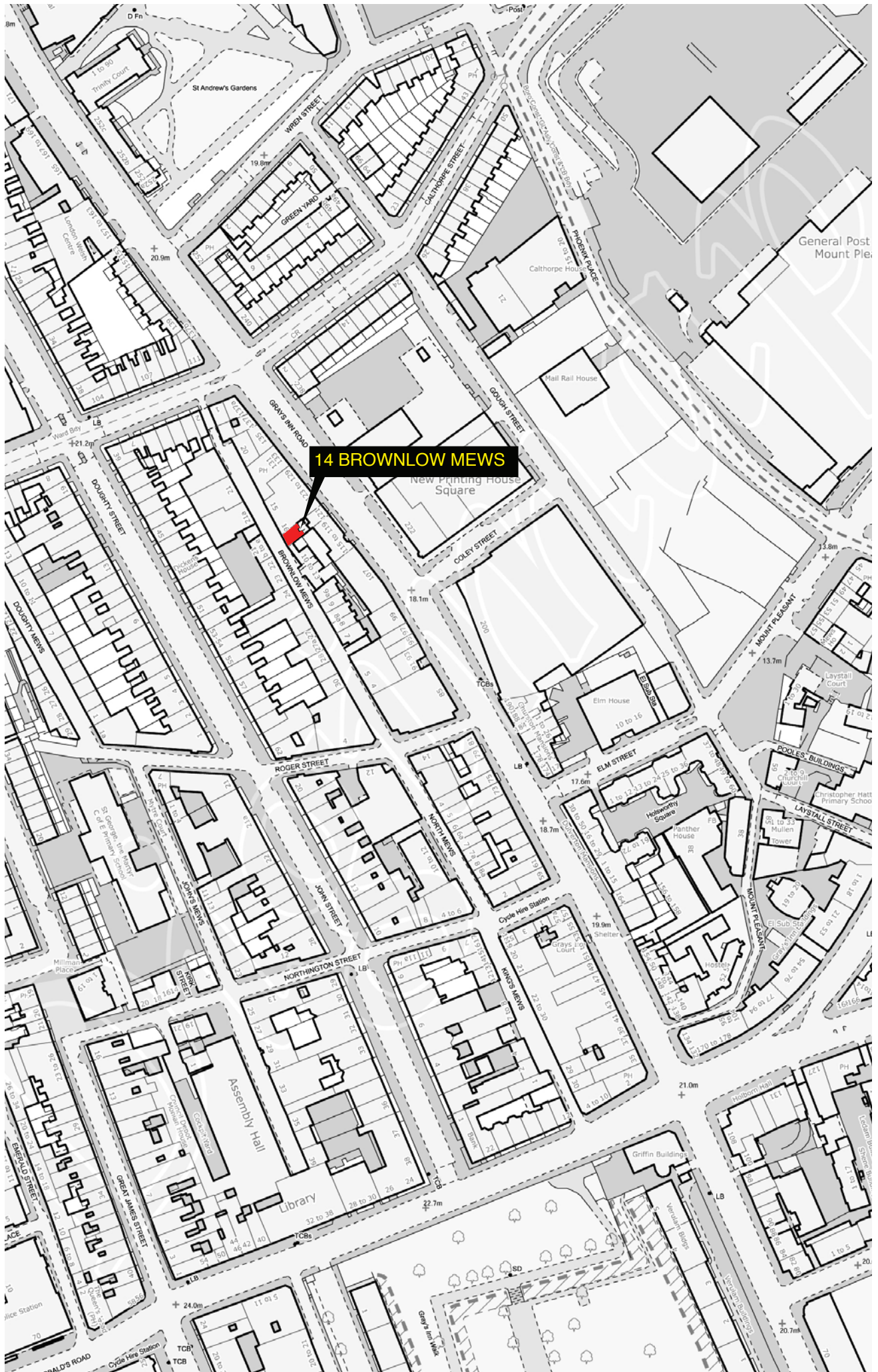
14 Brownlow Mews is an existing three bedroom single family dwelling on the East side of the Mews backing onto Grays Inn Road. The building has no historic or period features on either elevation or internally. Access is via a recessed porch or the front door. There is a single car garage that occupies the majority of the ground floor. It is fortunate to have a small courtyard at the rear and there is a small roof terrace on the 3rd floor. However, the property was initially a service Mews for a larger dwelling on Grays Inn Road and as such has an almost windowless rear elevation and awkward interior layout.

In 1971, planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of 121 Gray's Inn road and 14 Brownlow Mews by the erection of a 5 storey building comprising basement storage, ground floor retail and a carpark. This development did not go through and 121 Gray's Inn road remains a residential townhouse divided into several flats.

The adjacent building 123-133 Gray's Inn road has since been significantly developed and built up to provide 6 floors of retail, offices and residential units.

In 1998, Planning Permission was granted for Change of use to residential (Class C3), alterations and the erection of a roof extension to create a 3 bedroom house with an internal garage. The house has not changed since, however the actual layout differs somewhat from the initial submitted drawings.





14 BROWNLOW MEWS

14 BROWNLOW MEWS

During the design process, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy as adopted in 2011 has been rigorously consulted to inform the outcome.

Within the Great James Street / Bedford Row sub area, key principles of the relationship between the grand terraced townhouses and smaller mews houses are identified.

Within the guidelines, the traditional mews house is noted as historically performing a service role to its larger counterpart. The design proposal presented in this document aims to re-address the property's service role and re-appropriate it for a contemporary single family dwelling without affecting the existing urban or aesthetic conditions.

The design seeks to adhere to the existing scale and proportion of the area whilst maintaining the valued character through consistent material quality. Furthermore, improvements in material finishing and attention to detailing will enhance the design quality of the property which is currently relatively poorly constructed.

Section 5.190 of the guidelines identifies that pressure to change many of the original mews has led to their replacement and that the northern end of Brownlow Mews contains some of the best surviving examples of original mews houses. However, following the alterations made in 1996, Number 14 does not share these high quality preserved characteristics. 14 Brownlow Mews is not currently identified as a positive contributor to Sub Area 10's overall quality.

This design proposal aims to improve the overall quality and usability of the existing house and as such have a positive and beneficial effect on the conservation and preservation of the mews.



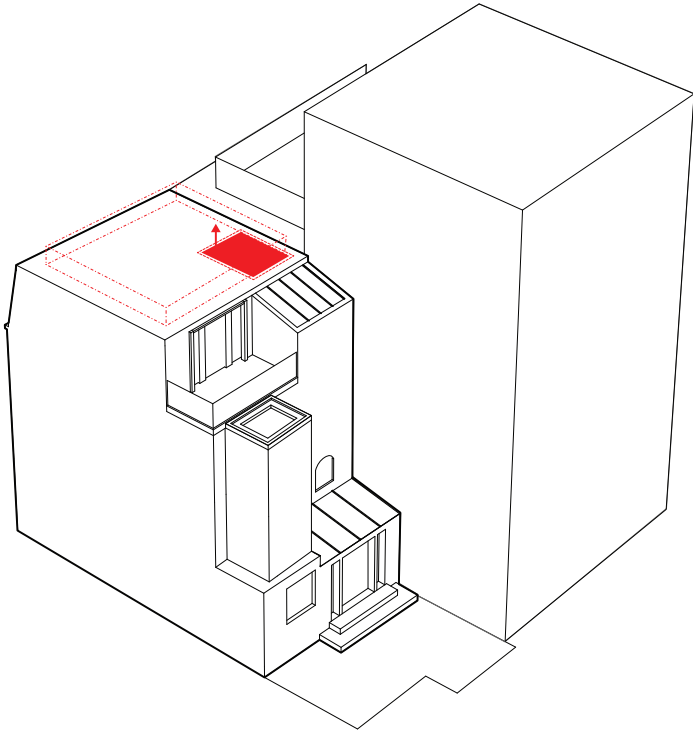


- 1.
- 2.
- 4.
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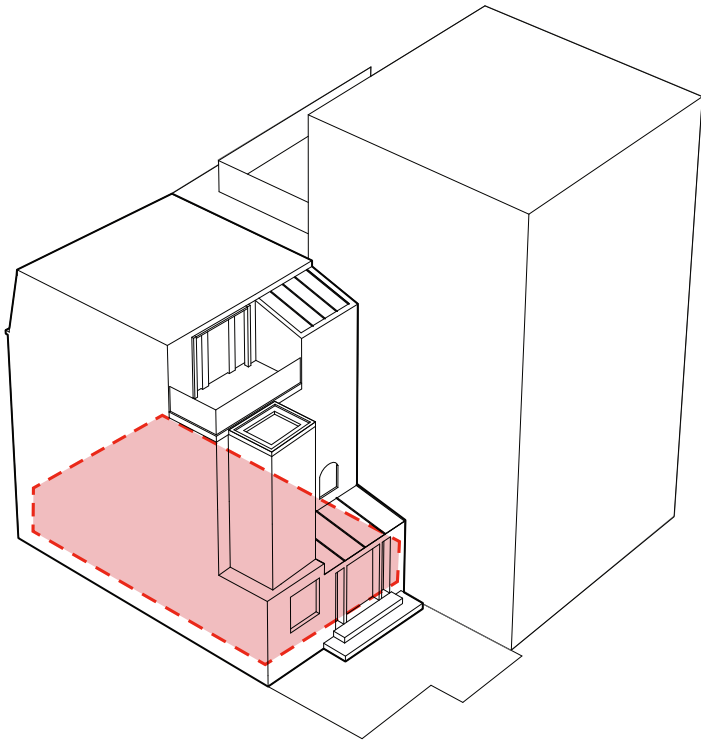
1. VIEW LOOKING NORTH ON BROWNLOW MEWS  
2. ELEVATION TO STREET (WEST)  
3. STREET ELEVATION  
  
EXISTING INTERNAL CONDITIONS  
4. VIEW FROM 1ST FLOOR LIVING ROOM  
5. 1ST FLOOR LIVING ROOM  
6. VIEW FROM 2ND FLOOR BEDROOM  
7. 2ND FLOOR BEDROOM







1) INCREASED AMENITY  
THROUGH ADDITION OF  
ROOF TERRACE



2) RECONFIGURATION  
OF EXISTING INTERNAL  
GARAGE

## 2.1 DESIGN PROPOSAL

The design objectives of the proposal aim to achieve the following:

- Improve the usability of the existing condition whilst utilising the existing character of the existing house as much as possible.
- Provide a house which will be able to adapt for the different stages of the professional life of the owner: from single occupancy, to a family house with children, to providing accommodation for ageing family members.
- Efficiently and sustainably function as an independent occupied dwelling, rather than continue to act as a service house for an adjacent town-house on Gray's Inn Road.

The Client had initially sought to add a rear extension however during pre-application advice it was recommended that due to the tight site constraints and proximity to the adjacent property on Grays Inn Road this would not be acceptable within the Bloomsbury Conservation guidelines.

Based on this feedback the client has chosen not to pursue a rear-extension focusing instead on a more efficient spatial plan and arrangement within.

The amended design focuses on two primary moves:

- 1 - Increased amenity through addition of roof terrace
- 2 - Reconfiguration of existing internal garage

## 2.2 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

The Council's policy position in respect of extensions to existing buildings is set out in our adopted Local Development Framework ("LDF") policies CS14 ('Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage') and DP24 ('Securing high quality design'). As the property lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, Policy DP25 ('Conserving Camden's heritage') is also relevant.

Policy DP24 of the LDF requires all developments to consider the character and proportions of the existing building as well as the setting and context of neighbouring buildings. Policy DP25 of the

LDF requires all alterations and extensions within designated conservation areas to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

## 2.3 ROOF TERRACE

The proposed design seeks to continue the existing interior staircase to grant access to the flat roof of the property. By placing a balustrade set back 1m from the parapet edge, the proposal creates a safe and usable area of outdoor space that is not visible from the street increasing the outdoor amenity of the property. By installing a low profile hatch, the design avoids breaking the existing roof line or being visible from the street.

Both neighbouring properties at 15 and 16 Brownlow Mews currently have roof terraces at the same elevation on their flat roofs accessed via similar methods. During previous consultation with the neighbours, they welcomed the proposed idea for its communal neighbourly benefits creating friendly outdoor space. In addition, they noted what a benefit it was to have a small area of outdoor space in an increasingly urban setting.

Pre-application planning advice indicated that:

*'The proposed roof terrace in principle appears to be acceptable as it retains the overall integrity of the existing roof form. However, the glass is not considered as an appropriate material for the balustrade. It is considered that the use of glass on the roof terrace is not appropriate within this context an alternative such as simple railings as an alternative would be appropriate in this context.'*

Based on this feedback, a balustrade of simple white railings would be used to match vernacular of the adjacent properties.

The pre-app report further identified that neighbouring amenity would not be harmed by the proposed roof terrace.

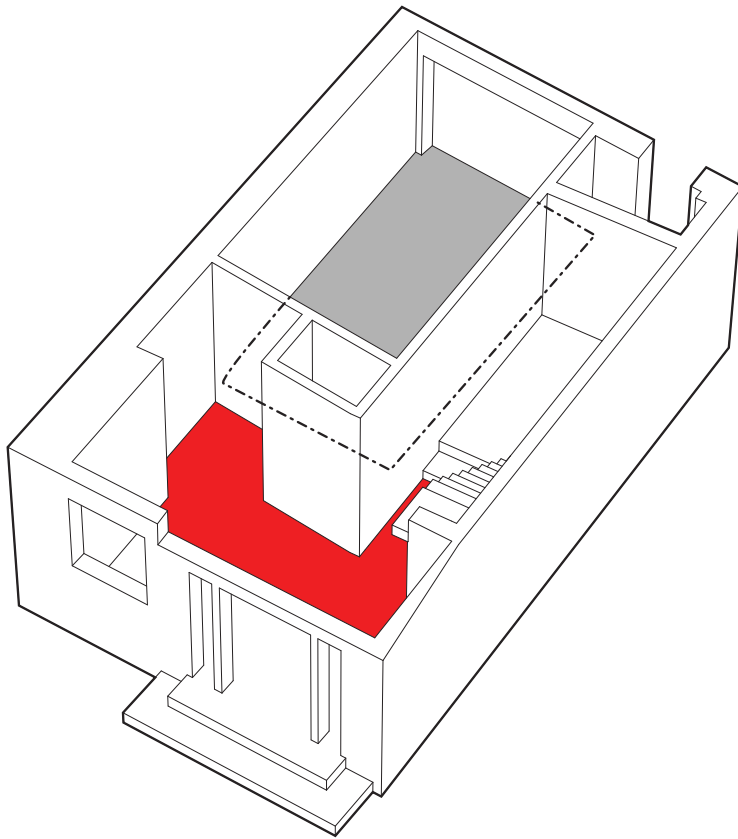








PROPOSED ROOF TERRACE LOCATION - TAKEN FROM NEIGHBOURING ROOF TERRACE



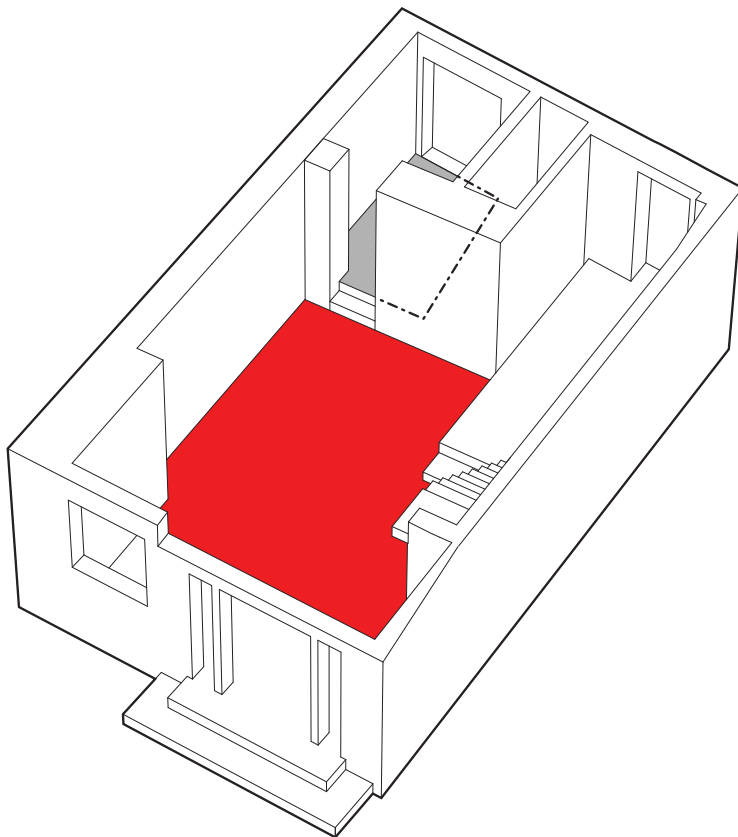
1. EXISTING

■ GARAGE - 16SQM  
(FOR CAR)

■ KITCHEN - 14SQM



1 x CAR



2. PROPOSED

■ GARAGE - 5SQM  
(FOR BIKE)

■ KITCHEN - 23SQM



4 x BIKE



## 2.4 INTERNAL RECONFIGUREMENT

The existing layout of the ground floor plan is loosely based on the 1998 application however there is some variation from the approved design. The proposed interior layout seeks to remove the existing internal garage converting it to usable domestic space. The owner is a strong advocate of a sustainable and environmentally aware lifestyle and does not own or have the need for a privately owned car. By converting the garage into internal storage space the design allows for designated bike storage and an open plan ground floor kitchen and breakfast room.

The 1998 planning approval was granted on the condition of maintaining the parking condition 'to ensure the permanent retention of the accommodation for parking purposes and to ensure that the use of the building does not add to traffic congestion.'

However, in accordance with revised 2004 London Plan an approach is set out in Policy 3C.23 seeking to regulate parking to encourage the use of other, more sustainable means of travel.

The current recommendation suggests all developments in 'areas of good public transport accessibility and/or town centres should aim for less than 1 space per unit.'

The proposal is in-line with the Camden development policies adopted version 2010 19.14 that aim to 'promote more sustainable modes of travel, the Council generally welcomes proposals to reduce the amount of off-street parking in the borough.' In addition, 19.15 'The Council particularly welcomes proposals which include conversion of general car parking spaces to provide cycle parking or designated spaces for more sustainable forms of transport.'

The submitted design aims to increase the usable internal space of the house and its interior quality whilst promoting a more responsible lifestyle in keeping with the overall guidelines for London. Furthermore, the neighbouring property at 16 Brownlow Mews has similarly converted their ground floor garage's into domestic interior space with great success and there are substantial precedents across the conservation area for similar highly successful conversions.

Pre-application planning advice indicated this proposal was in-line with current policy stating:

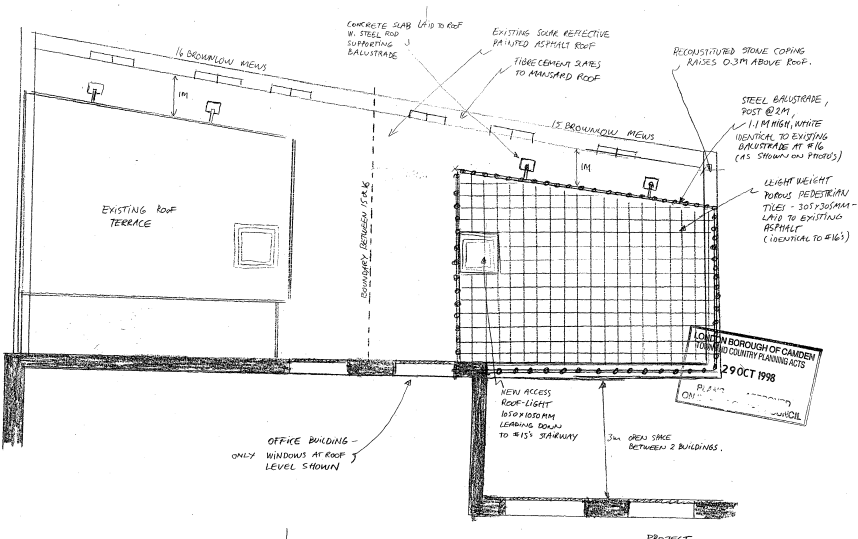
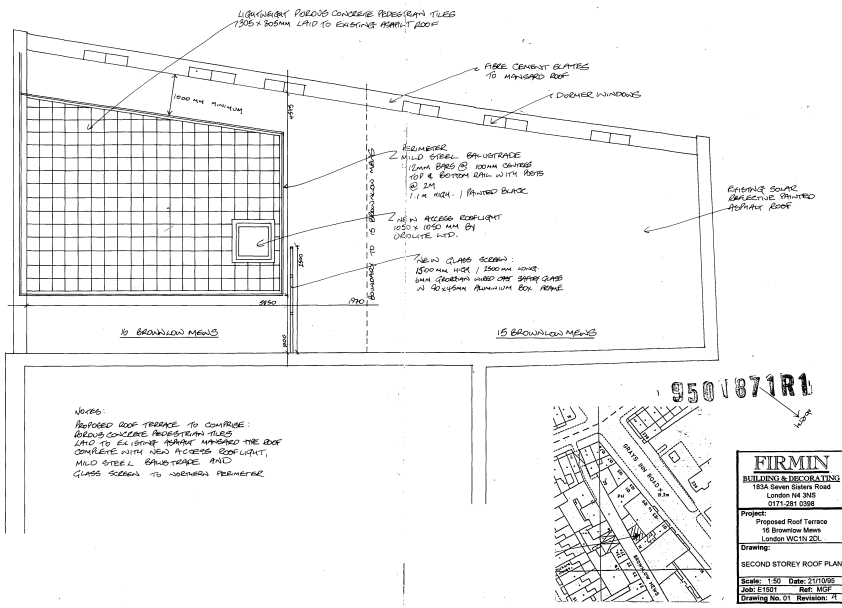
*'With regard to the other alterations proposed to the front façade, it is considered that the replacement of the existing ground floor garage doors with new full-height glazed doors would also be acceptable, re-introducing an element which would have been historically characteristic with this type of mews building.'*

2.5 LOCAL PLANNING PRECEDENT

16 BROWNLOW MEWS - NEIGHBOURING PROPERTY WITH CONVERTED INTERIOR GARAGE - REDESIGNED GLAZED FACADE AND ROOF TERRACE WITH WHITE PAINTED MILD STEEL BAR BALUSTRADE



14 BROWNLOW MEWS



PROWITT





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT.  
NEIGHBOURING ROOF TERRACE 15-16 BROWNLOW MEWS  
CONVERTED GARAGE AT 16 BROWNLOW MEWS (EXTERNAL)  
CONVERTED GARAGE AT 16 BROWNLOW MEWS (INTERNAL)





## 2.6 MATERIAL

### Roof Terrace:

The new roof terrace will be constructed from a hi-quality polished concrete exterior floor tile laid to the existing asphalt roof.

The balustrade will be made from mild steel 12mm bars set at 100mm centres 1.1m high.

Access will be provided by a low level access roof-light product similar to the Bilco service stair access which provides easy movement with a low profiled construction and maintains high thermal performance.

### Facade:

Based on the ground floor reconfiguration the current garage door would be replaced with new full-height glazed doors. This was noted to be acceptable during pre-application.

## 2.7 ACCESS

Access to the site will remain unchanged from Brownlow Mews.



1. APPROVED REDESIGN OF 27 BROWNLOW MEWS FACADE WITH NEW GLAZED WINDOW-DOORS







### 3.0 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the pre-application advice meeting held with the council and their written response, the proposed design has been amended to make it acceptable within the conservation area and to ensure the alterations have no effect on any the amenity of any neighbouring property.

Considering the challenges presented by the site's unique condition and location, in particular its close proximity to 121 Gray's inn Road - as recognised during pre-application meetings, the current proposal utilises a challenging site converting it into a usable, sustainable residence for a young owner-occupier looking to build a family home.

The design fits within the Conservation Area's design guidelines and are considered to be acceptable in design terms.

The alterations to the house are accepted by planning policies and provide amenity space. The renovation will make the house more suitable as a home.

There are permissions and have been approved works for similar improvements and alterations in the immediate locality.

Based on the listed above and the proposal's compliance with other relevant Camden Council policy guidelines, we respectfully request that planning permission be granted.



# **APPENDIX A**

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE. - RECEIVED 14.12.23





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Dear Mr Lim,

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**  
**Re: 14 Brownlow Mews, London, WC1N 2LD**

Thank you for your enquiry received on the 18 November 2014, regarding the extension and alteration with the addition of a roof terrace and possibly a basement at 14 Brownlow Mews.

This letter represents the Council's initial view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage. It should not be interpreted as formal confirmation that your application will be acceptable nor can it be held to prejudice formal determination of any planning application we receive from you on this proposal.

**Planning History and Overview of the Site**

Planning permission was originally granted on 23 September 1971 the redevelopment of 121 Gray's Inn Road and 14 Brownlow Mews for the erection of a five storey building comprising basement and storage, a ground floor showrooms and car park, 1 floor offices with 4 floors of residential.

The site comprises a mid-terrace four storey building (including a small roof terrace) located on the north east side of Brownlow Mews. Brownlow Mews consist of predominantly two, three and four storey buildings and includes a mix of residential and small commercial units, including a public house. The building is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

**Relevant Planning Policies**

**Design**

The Council's policy position in respect of extensions to existing buildings is set out in our adopted Local Development Framework ("LDF") policies CS14 ('Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage') and DP24 ('Securing high quality design'). As the property lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, Policy DP25 ('Conserving Camden's heritage') is also relevant.

Policy DP24 of the LDF requires all developments to consider the character and proportions of the existing building as well as the setting and context of neighbouring buildings. Policy DP25 of the

LDF requires all alterations and extensions within designated conservation areas to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

Paragraph 5.1 of Camden Planning Guidance 1 states that: “The Council will seek to ensure that roof alterations are sympathetic and do not harm the character and appearance of buildings or the wider townscape in the borough”. Paragraph 5.8 of CPG1 states that roof alterations are likely to be unacceptable where buildings have a roofline that is largely unimpaired by extensions.

Paragraph 5.4 within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy states that “Inappropriate roof level extensions - particularly where these interrupt the consistency of a uniform terrace or the prevailing scale and character of a block, are overly prominent in the street”

The proposals involve the infilling of the existing balcony on the rear elevation and erection of a roof extension. It is considered that number 14 Brownlow Mews forms part of a terrace of four storeys Brownlow Mews. The current rear extension at ground floor level is secondary to the building proposed to be extended. The proposed rear extension as it is currently being proposed would add unacceptable bulk to the rear of the building and detracts from the appearance of the host building and the terrace. The proposed roof terrace in principle appears to be acceptable as it retains the overall integrity of the existing roof form. However, the glass is not considered as an appropriate material for the balustrade. It is considered that the use of glass on the roof terrace is not appropriate within this context an alternative such as simple railings as an alternative would be appropriate in this context. Overall, it is considered that the proposal to the extension would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury conservation area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to LDF policies CS14, DP24 and DP25 and the guidance set out in CPG1.

With regard to the other alterations proposed to the front façade, it is considered that the replacement of the existing ground floor garage doors with new full-height glazed doors would also be acceptable, re-introducing an element which would have been historically characteristic with this type of mews building.

## **Amenity**

Protecting the amenity of residents and visitors is also a key Council priority. Policies CS5 (‘Managing the impact of growth and development’) and DP26 (‘Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours’) set out the Council’s stance in this respect.

The Council’s adopted planning guidance provides further advice on the application of the Council’s policies. Supplementary guidance document CPG1 (Design), CPG6 (Amenity) and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) are of particular relevance to the proposed scheme.

Policy DP26 seeks to ensure that the amenities of neighbouring occupiers are not unduly impacted by development in terms of overlooking, loss of daylight/sunlight, poor outlook and enclosure. The proposed extension would be harmful particularly and the residents at 121 Gray’s Inn Road would be impacted by the proposed extension.

The proposed roof terrace would not be harmful to neighbouring amenity, though the absence of harm of the roof terrace does not outweigh that described above.

## **Basement Excavation/Structural Issues**

The site visit indicated that excavation works would be required in order to create a proposed basement. Camden has a comprehensive policy framework dealing with basement applications. Policy DP27 (basements and lightwells) requires developers to demonstrate that proposed basements will not harm the built and natural environment or local amenity, result in flooding or lead to ground instability to both the host and nearby buildings.

Policy DP27 is supported by CPG4: Basements and lightwells. Any application would require a 'Basement Impact Assessment' (BIA) to be submitted, clearly identifying any potential impacts of the proposed scheme on structural stability and the water environment and sets out mitigation measures.

Independent verification of Basement Impact Assessments, funded by the applicant, is now also required (since CPG4 was updated in September 2013) in the following situations:

- Where a scheme requires applicants to proceed beyond the Screening stage of the Basement Impact Assessment (i.e. where a matter of concern has been identified which requires the preparation of a full Basement Impact Assessment);
- Where the proposed basement development is located within an area of concern regarding slope stability, surface water or groundwater flow; or
- For any other basement applications where the Council feels that independent verification would be appropriate (e.g. where conflicting evidence is provided in response to a proposal).

A full scoping study is required as part of any application, identifying the potential impacts for each of the matters of concern. We would advise entering into consultation with local residents and the Bloomsbury CAAC at this stage, in order to fully understand and address their concerns before an application is made.

Detailed guidance is available within CPG4, which is available to view on the Council's website. In particular, it is imperative that the BIA is carried out by suitably qualified professionals and is fully comprehensive of stages 1-4 of the BIA process.

## **Transport/ Highways**

The main highways issue in this case is the potential impact of construction / delivery vehicles associated with the basement excavation on the local highway network, particular as the site is located in a mews, and no access is possible from the northern end (Guilford Street). A draft Construction Management Plan (CMP) would also be required to be submitted with any application setting out how construction matters would be dealt with, for example deliveries, how material will be stored and construction waste removed from site etc. This is particularly the case owing to the busy nature of Gray's Inn Road and the type of proposal sought, it is likely that the applicant would also be required to enter into a S106 Legal Agreement in order to ensure the measures set out in this plan are adhered to. Please see CPG7 for details of the particular elements required to be included in the draft CMP. For ease of reference however I also attach a slightly updated list of CMP requirements, which transport planners have prepared more recently than the CPG guidance.

It is also likely that transport planners may seek for a highways contribution to be secured as part of any redevelopment of the site. In practice, this would seek to repave the highway adjacent to the site, to make good any damage that may occur as a result of the construction works at the site. This financial estimate would be calculated at the time of any application and be secured via S106 Legal Agreement.



You are strongly encouraged to engage with neighbouring occupiers at an early stage in the process, given the likely concerns residents and business will have with the comings and goings of construction / delivery vehicles along this narrow mews, particularly if any basement construction is proposed. Although adjoining occupiers will be notified of any application by us, initial consultation may help offset any concerns neighbours have before any application is submitted. Based on officers' previous experiences of planning applications along Brownlow Mews, it is known that nearby occupiers pay close attention to planning applications and are particularly interested in restricting possible noise/disturbance in the locality. Hence the engagement of local residents prior to any application is strongly encouraged.

### **Conclusion and next steps**

The change to the front façade and the roof terrace is broadly acceptable. However, there are concerns with the extension in terms of its design and impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers as outlined above. If a basement construction will come forward, then concerns with regards to the impact on the highway and the method of basement construction will need to be addressed as part of any application.

I trust the above provides a useful summary; however should you have any queries about the advice contained in this letter please contact Zenab Haji-Ismael on **020 7974 3270**.

Please note that the information contained in this letter represents an officer's opinion and is without prejudice to further consideration of this matter by the Development Management section or to the Council's formal decision.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

Zenab Haji-Ismael

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