# Planning Application Design and Access Statement

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Refurbishment of Grade II* Listed Office Building

**6 Bloomsbury Square**
**London**
**WC1A 2LP**

Prepared on behalf of:

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## Contents

## 1.0 Introduction

**1.1** 6 Bloomsbury Square is a Grade II* Listed terraced office building, originally constructed as a residence in 1744, within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It has a total net internal area of approximately 4818 sq.ft. and gross internal area of 8,300 sq.ft. It is arranged on 5 levels, basement to third floors. It has a main staircase linking ground, first and second floors only, and a small secondary staircase connecting all floors. A 3 person lift has been installed in the stairwell of the secondary staircase, reducing the stair width to 700mm.
The building will remain in commercial use after refurbishment. It may be let floor by floor or as a whole.

**1.2** Our initial proposal as shown in the Pre-application Proposal (ref.9647719)-2014/5950/PRE-6 was to remove the lift and secondary stair, replacing them with a new wheelchair accessible eight person lift and two new stairs, ground to basement and second to third floors, as shown on the Flanagan Lawrence Design Drawings lodged with that application. This would have greatly improved wheelchair access within the building. The pre-planning scheme also proposed using the central basement vault as a disabled WC and shower room, improving facilities for non-ambulant staff.

**1.3** On consultation with the Conservation Officer and English Heritage, and following site inspections, it became evident that the secondary stair is the original stone service stair for the building and as such it must be retained to preserve the integrity of the original building. The basement disabled WC and shower room was also discounted as converting the basement vault would necessitate the removal of low level existing brickwork partitions and the existing steel safe door, which are regarded by English Heritage as essential to the history of the building. English Heritage also proposed the restoration of the closet rooms at the rear of the building with their interconnecting doors to the larger adjacent rooms.

These considerations became the basis of our current design proposals.

## 2.0 Design

**2.1** Our design aims to make minimum intervention to the existing building fabric while restoring original features, upgrading staff facilities and improving mechanical and electrical services.

**2.2** There are various existing lavatories, showers and kitchens in several locations throughout the building. We intend to remove these and restore the spaces they inhabit to their original state – in particular the closet rooms at the rear of the building with their interconnecting doors, and the second floor landing of the main stair.

The new WCs, shower rooms and kitchens will be located in the basement and within the connecting corridors between front and back rooms at first, second and third floor levels.

**2.3** The basement design includes a proposal for a glass extension into the garden to create a new multi-purpose area. This will become a communal staff facility.

The extension design aims to have a minimum impact on how the existing building is seen. Maximum floor to ceiling glass panel sizes allow good visibility of the existing brickwork and windows. The brickwork currently painted white, will be stripped back to its original condition.

The south side party wall brickwork will be extended to form the solid end wall of the extension.

Steel structure sizes and window frame sections are to be kept to a minimum and these, along with fascia and gutters, will be finished in high quality anthracite grey metallic powder coated finish.

The flat roof will be seeded with grass or sedum planting to present an attractive surface when seen from above. There will be a section of glass roof at the junction between the green roof and the building to emphasise the separation of the old and new structures and to further reveal the building above.

The existing lift with its large lift motor room in the basement will be replaced by a new lift with a smaller motor located at high level above the existing shaft. The existing roof light above the shaft will be raised by 1 metre to accommodate this. The existing shaft and lift pit will remain the same dimensions.

Existing building services will be overhauled with new water services and drainage, electrical wiring, heating ventilation and cooling. Again the design seeks to minimise disturbance to existing fabric of the building. A full description of the proposals is given in the services engineers report.

## 3.0 Restoration

**3.1** 6 Bloomsbury Square has been left in a state of disrepair and neglect for many years. It is our client's wish that the building is faithfully restored to a fine condition, renewing and replacing as many original features as possible. A high quality of workmanship will be demanded from the chosen contractors.

**3.2** A full schedule of works is provided later in this report, but a summary of the main items is listed below.

**3.2.1** **External work** – clean brickwork, remove white paint from rear elevation, on the front elevation replace two ground floor windows with sash windows containing glazing bars to match windows above, make good stone steps at entrance, reconnect lamp in metalwork arch above entrance, and restore existing door without glazed panels. Paint and redecorate doors, windows and window reveals to match existing.

**3.2.2** **Floor finishes** – all existing floor boards will be kept unless found to be damaged beyond repair. These will be lined with plywood and new finishes laid on top. The white marble tiled floor with black cabochon tiles at ground floor entrance and stairwell is not original and it is proposed to replace this with a Portland stone floor in a traditional irregular repeating pattern. The board room on the first floor facing the square has a laminate timber floor finish. This will be replaced by high quality engineered parquet oak panels. The main staircase and landings will be carpeted, as will all other office areas. The basement corridor and new extension will be floored in a good quality, large format, non-slip porcelain ceramic tile.

**3.2.3** **Ceiling finishes** – there are no remaining decorative ceilings in the building. Exiting lath and plaster ceilings will be repaired. Existing suspended plasterboard ceilings will be removed and ceiling heights raised where possible. New ceilings will be constructed of two layers plasterboard.

**3.2.4** **Wall finishes** – timber wall panelling will be maintained and restored. Any existing lath and plaster walls will be also be repaired and restored. All plaster and timber mouldings will be kept and repaired where damaged. New partition walls will be constructed of metal studwork and plasterboard, skimmed and painted

**3.2.5** **Doors** – existing doors, frames and architraves will generally be maintained and repaired. New doors will be panelled to match existing.

**3.2.6** **Windows** – windows, frames, sills and shutters will be repaired as required and two ground floor windows replaced as outlined in section a.

**3.2.7** **Paint finishes** – interior doors, walls, ceilings, panelling and woodwork will be painted in a matt finish using "Common Colours" from the Traditional colour range of "Paper and Paints" or similar. Metalwork will be painted black gloss finish.

**3.2.8** **Fireplaces** – most of the fireplaces in the building have been removed and the flues covered. It is intended to open flues and reinstate reproduction Georgian fireplaces where originals are missing.

**3.2.9** **Ironmongery** – Existing internal door ironmongery is not original. It is proposed to specify a contemporary interpretation of black cast iron hardware throughout.

**3.2.10** **Light fittings** – there will be no recessed down lights installed in ceilings. Existing roses for chandeliers will be used to fit contemporary pendant fittings. In office areas a mixture of contemporary wall lights, suspended linear up/down lights and floor lights will be used to achieve necessary lux levels.

**3.2.11** **Switches and sockets** – metal cover plates will be specified, finish and models to be agreed. There will be no visible white plastic switches or sockets.

**3.2.12** **WCs and shower rooms** – new contemporary white sanitary ware with chrome fittings will be installed. Floor and wall finish to be white or stone plain colour ceramic tile or mosaic.

**3.2.13** **Coffee points** – contemporary units will have a small sink, storage and power points for kettles, microwaves, coffee machines etc.

**3.2.14** **Services cabinets** – fan coil units will be encased in low, custom made MDF cabinets sitting against walls below the level of dado rails. They will include skirtings and mouldings and will be painted to match the wall colour. Service risers will be enclosed in full height cabinets with hinged access doors, also detailed and painted to match walls. Locations are shown on plans.

**3.2.15** **Roof** – the current means of access to the roof is via a non-original timber stair in a third floor room, within its own vertical enclosure. It is proposed to remove this, make good the room and install an opening glazed roof light with a retractable ladder for access. There is a flat area of roof in this location and the remains of a hipped roof to the south of the enclosure. The hipped roof will have a new vertical end and the flat area will be repaired and will be used to locate new HVAC equipment. The new condensers and fans will be surrounded by an 1800mm high acoustic screen. See services engineer's submission for details.
The large roof light over the main staircase will be refurbished. The existing Georgian wired glass will be replaced with clear glass and the existing side vents will be motorised to allow opening and closing from indoors.
The small roof light over the second staircase will be raised by 1000mm to allow the installation of a new motor above the lift shaft. The extra height will be achieved with vertical glass sides similar to the main rooflight.
Existing safety rails will be repaired or replaced as necessary.

**3.2.16** **Main staircase** –The shower and storage room occupying the second floor landing will be removed and the landing restored. The windows looking into the stairwell will have their original glazing bars and clear glass reinstated except at WCs where obscure glass will be installed. The horizontal metal mesh below the roof light will be removed.

**3.2.17** **Second staircase** – the existing stair and lift shaft will be repaired along with balustrades and handrails. New carpet and nosings will be installed.

**3.2.18** **Security vault** – existing brickwork and steel door will be maintained. The space will be split into two rooms – an IT services room accessed through a post room. Brickwork will be painted white.

**3.2.19** **Basement front area and pavement vaults** – non –original door and glass over-panel under front steps, exposed on both sides, to be removed completely. Other non-original doors to pavement vaults and basement will be replaced with new doors. Existing white glazed brick to be cleaned and repaired. AV unit to be positioned under main entrance steps as shown on services engineers submission. Vault 1 will be waterproofed, lighting will be installed and it will be used as a bicycle store. Vault 2, which is lined and mostly dry, will be relined, rewired and used to locate water tanks.

## 4.0 Access

### 4.1 General

**4.1.1** The Access Statement is intended to support the Planning Application for this development. A further version of this document will be submitted to support the Building Regulations Application submission at the appropriate time. The Design Team will consult with the Local Authority Access Officer before this report is submitted for Building Regulations Approval.

This Statement is to support and inform the Planning Application submission only and is not intended to address the occupier's duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (hereafter referred to as the DDA) which may not be the same as what is necessary to comply with the Building Regulations.

An Access Statement is intended to advise those people involved in the design process (Designers, Engineers, Local Authority Officers etc.) as to the access philosophy and approach to design as well as the practical implications for disabled people of the design proposal.

**4.1.2** This Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance on the preparation of Access Statements as follows:-

- "Access Statements – Achieving an inclusive environment by ensuring continuity throughout the planning, design and management of building spaces" published by the Disability Rights Commission.
- "Design and Access Statements – How to Write, Read and Use Them" published by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.
- Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide – Published by The Department for Communities and Local Government.

**4.1.3** The client is positive about disability and in his brief to the Design Team he has stressed the need for inclusive design to all public areas where possible.

Based on the client's brief the design criteria chosen to inform the detailed design stage are as follows:-

- The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005
- BS8300:2009 - Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of Disabled people – Code of Practice.
- Approved Document M 2004 Edition – Access to and use of buildings (ADM).
- BS9999:2008 - Code of Practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings.

**4.1.4** By adopting these criteria, and regularly reviewing them, this should result in a fully inclusive design. However, it is recognised that the management of the premises will still be important to ensure the accessibility of facilities is maintained and as such management issues will be dealt with in the Post Occupancy Access Statement.

**4.1.5** The client has appointed Paul Eggleton of MLM Building Control to give Building Control advice for the project.

**4.2 Site**

**4.2.1** 6 Bloomsbury Square is located at the south corner of Bloomsbury Square, adjacent to 24 Bloomsbury Way, in the London Borough of Camden.

The nearest underground station is Holborn on the Central and Piccadilly Lines. Currently, the nearest underground stations with lift access between street and platforms are Euston Square and Kings Cross St. Pancras, however access to the property will benefit from the completion of the nearby Crossrail development at Tottenham Court Road station in 2018.

The site is well served by bus routes,19, 38, 55, 98, N19, N35, N38, N41, N55, N207 which all stop at the east corner of the square, and by numerous other bus routes with stops nearby.

Parking spaces are available underground at Bloomsbury Square Car Park (450 spaces 2 of which are designated disabled spaces) with lift access to the street. There are also spaces at Car Park on Bloomsbury Square (20 spaces)

**4.3 Access into Buildings Other Than Dwellings**

**4.3.1** The pavement to the building is no steeper than 1:21 and therefore for the purposes of Building regulations this is a “Level Approach”

**4.3.2** The site lies within parking Zone CAC for Covent Garden. There are street parking restrictions between 8.30am and 6.30pm Mondays to Saturdays.
This application will not alter current parking provisions.
Setting down by car or taxi is on the pavement in front of the property.

**4.3.3** Permanent ramped access is not proposed for the site.

**4.3.4** Access to the main entrance of the building is via 3 shallow steps (total level change 390mm) and a landing. A temporary wheelchair ramp to the BHTA code of practice kept in the building will be used to negotiate these steps.
There are also winding stairs from the pavement down to the basement entrance which would have been the servants and tradesmen’s entrance to the property.

**4.3.5** There are no existing handrails to the main entrance steps. No new handrails are proposed.

**4.3.6** There is an existing lamp post facing the entrance steps which restricts setting down by vehicles and which may be a hazard on approaching the kerb.

**4.4 Entrances and Lobbies**

**4.4.1** The main door has a threshold which is approximately 150mm above the entrance landing and is clearly visible in its position on the approach. The threshold is level with the finished floor level inside the building.
It is not proposed to install specific access signage as this entrance is accessible to all.

**4.4.2** The existing solid panelled single leaf entrance door has a clear width of over 800mm and is therefore in line with the guidance laid down in BS8300.2009 Table 2.
It has two glass vision panels, but too high to serve any useful purpose in terms of access. As these are a later addition to the door, it is proposed to restore the door to its original state, without glazing.
The door will not incorporate power assistance but will be fitted with a self -closing device capable of achieving a maximum 30 Newtons opening force for the first 30$^{o}$ of the opening cycle and then not more than 22.5 Newtons for the next 30$^{o}$ of the opening cycle, in accordance with Clause 6.5.2 of BS8300:2009.
Ironmongery to the door will be appropriate to the Early Georgian period, but will be chosen to contrast against the door surface which will be painted black.

**4.4.3** There is an existing weather lobby immediately inside the main entrance. Its glass and painted timber door and screen do not appear to be original, but the lobby will be kept to prevent draughts and heat loss from the hallway. The doors will be re-glazed with additional glazing bars to match the side panels. The distance to the main door and the width of the lobby door are adequate for wheelchair access.

**4.4.4** A contrasting mat well will be used to highlight the entrance/exit. It will be fitted with firm surface matting, rather than fibrous matting, to allow ease of access by wheelchair users.

**4.5 Horizontal and Vertical Circulation**

**4.5.1** The main reception desk will be set directly in front of the entrance in the main stair well and will be well identified by way of design, making it easily seen by all users approaching from the entrance.
The reception desk will be designed in detail at a later stage, however its top will be set at a single level, and will incorporate a desk height and knee recess in full accordance with the requirements of ADM.
As the reception desk is located in the main stair well, adequate manoeuvring space is available in front of and around the desk.

**4.5.2** All new internal doors will have a minimum of 864mm leaves, thus achieving a minimum clear width of 800mm throughout.
Self-closing devices will be specified to achieve an opening force of no more than 30 Newtons for the first 30 degrees+ of the opening cycle and 22.5 Newtons for the next 30 degrees.
All door furniture will be chosen to contrast against door surfaces.
New doors will be designed to comply with the requirements of ADM.

**4.5.3** New corridors to the basement entrance and extension outside the staircase enclosure will achieve a minimum clear width of 1200mm.
Within the existing staircase enclosure, the landing width is 900mm and the stair width is 700mm.
While it is conceded that this does not comply with the Approved Document it is argued that given the historic nature of the building, and its low occupancy, in normal circumstances few people will be travelling along these corridors at any one time.
Equally, corridor lengths are very short, with passing places available close by and thus the likelihood of two wheelchair users meeting without a suitable turning space nearby is considered minimal.
All other doors from corridors open inwards, causing no obstruction to the clear corridor width.
Finishes to corridors will be chosen to achieve a high degree of contrast between floor and wall finishes as well as door openings and walls.
Floor finishes will avoid confusing patterns and will be specified to be slip resistant.

**4.5.4** Lift lobbies. See corridors above.

**4.5.5** There are no significant level changes on any one floor. Floor levels across the building vary by a maximum of 50mm but there are no internal steps, thresholds or ramps to negotiate.

**4.5.6** The existing 3 person lift is too small for wheelchair use. Our initial designs, as outlined in the pre-planning application, proposed the installation of a larger 8 person lift which would have been ADM compliant. However it is evident that the structural changes required accommodating this would greatly compromise the historical integrity of the building and therefore it will not be possible to install a larger lift.

**4.5.7** There are no platform lifts proposed.

**4.5.8** There are no platform stair lifts proposed.

**4.5.9** Detailed design of internal stair finishes including lighting, contrasting nosings has not yet been developed, but it is confirmed that these will be designed in full accordance with ADM.

**4.5.10** There are no ramps proposed inside the building.

**4.5.11** Existing balustrades and handrails to stairs are not being replaced.

**4.5.12** Means of escape for disabled people will be designed in accordance with BS9999:2008
Positions on each floor will be allocated as refuges for the purpose of means of escape for disabled people. This will be part of a phased evacuation regime whereby Fire Marshalls will manage the escape and evacuate disabled people, with assistance, at the appropriate time.

**4.6 Facilities**

**4.6.1** Office spaces on every level are located to the front and rear of the grand staircase. These spaces are linked on all floors by an existing corridor to the side of the main stairwell which can be used to travel between rooms without crossing the staircase landing. Currently these corridors are variously used as store rooms and kitchens. It is proposed to remove all fittings from these corridors at ground and basement floors to improve accessibility.
At first, second and third floor levels, these spaces will be used to create new WCs and coffee points.
Similarly in the basement, an existing kitchen which is on an escape route at the front of the building will be removed to allow a new exit corridor to be formed.

**4.6.2** The main communal facility for the building will be a fully glazed multi-purpose area located in the new basement yard extension. This will be on level with the basement and the outdoor area, which will be accessed via sliding glass doors.
There is no reason why this space should not comply fully with ADM.

**4.6.3** Sleeping accommodation is not being provided in the building.

**4.6.4** The height and positioning of all switches and controls will comply with ADM.
Switch and socket plates will be chosen so as to achieve adequate tonal contrast against wall surfaces.

**4.6.5** Design and the positioning of signage is subject to detailed design but it is confirmed that signage will be designed in full accordance with the Sign Design Guide.
The fire alarm system will be fitted with combined sirens and flashing beacons to provide a means of warning to a deaf or hearing impaired user.

## 4.7 Sanitary Accommodation

**4.7.1** There is one unisex toilet cubicle on each basement, first, second and third floors and there are two combined unisex WC and shower rooms in the basement.

**4.7.2** There is space for a wheelchair accessible WC to be installed at a future date in the corridor space between front and back rooms at ground floor level, should this be required by a tenant. The inset plan on Flanagan Lawrence drawing A- PL-100 shows how this would be arranged.

**4.7.3** There are separate-sex toilets/shower rooms in the basement but no washrooms with multiple cubicles in the building.

**4.7.4** There are no wheelchair accessible showers or changing facilities in the building.

**4.7.5** There are no wheelchair accessible bathrooms in the building.

## 5.0 Information Provided

### 5.1 A3 Document

Topographical Survey Drawings: Greenhatch Group

- *Drawing No. 20556_01_P rev. 0 date 07.08.14*
- *Drawing No. 20556_02_P rev. 0 date 07.08.14*
- *Drawing No. 20556_03_P rev. 0 date 07.08.14*

Design Drawings: Flanagan Lawrence Architects

- *Site Location Plan*

- *Basement Floor Plan A-PL-099*
- *Ground Floor Plan A-PL-100*
- *First Floor Plan A-PL-101*
- *Second Floor Plan A-PL-102*
- *Third Floor Plan A-PL-103*
- *Roof Plan A-PL-104*

- *Building Cross Sections A-PL-200*

- *Building Front Elevation A-PL-300*
- *Building Elevations A-PL-301*

- *Site Photographs*
- *3D Images of Extension*
- *Benchmark Projects*

### 5.2 A4 Document

- *Schedule of Works*