

# 6 Bloomsbury Square

London WC1A 2LP

## Heritage Statement



February 2015

Consultancy for the  
Historic Built Environment

KMHHeritage

## Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
	Purpose .....	3
	Organisation .....	3
	Author.....	3
2	The history 6 Bloomsbury Square .....	4
	Background .....	4
	No. 6 Bloomsbury Square .....	6
3	The heritage significance of the site and its context.....	14
	The heritage context of 6 Bloomsbury Square.....	14
	Unlisted buildings of merit.....	14
	The heritage significance of the site and its context .....	15
	The relevant heritage assets.....	15
	Assessing heritage significance.....	15
	‘Historic interest’, ‘Historical value’ and ‘Evidential value’ .....	16
	‘Architectural interest’, ‘artistic interest’ or ‘aesthetic value’.....	16
	Summary .....	17
4	The policy context.....	18
	The National Planning Policy Framework .....	18
	Camden’s Local Development Framework .....	21
5	The proposed scheme and its effect .....	24
	The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance .....	24
6	Compliance with policy and guidance .....	26
	The level of ‘harm’ caused by the proposed scheme .....	26
	The balance of ‘harm’ versus benefit.....	26
	The National Planning Policy Framework .....	27
	Camden’s Local Development Framework.....	27
7	Summary and conclusions.....	42
	Appendix A: List Description.....	43
	Appendix B: Sources of information.....	44



## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to support the application for planning permission and listed building consent for 6 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2LP.

### Purpose

- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to set out the history and heritage significance of 6 Bloomsbury Square, and to comment on the emerging proposals for its alteration.
- 1.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the documentation prepared by Flanigan Lawrence, architects.

### Organisation

- 1.4 This introduction is followed by a description of the history of 6 Bloomsbury Square. Section 3 analyses the heritage significance of the listed building and its context. Section 4 sets out the national and local policy and guidance relating to the historic built environment that is relevant to this matter. An outline is provided in Section 4 of the merits of the scheme in heritage terms. Appendices include the list description and sources of information.

### Author

- 1.5 The author of this report is Kevin Murphy B.Arch MUBC RIBA IHBC. He was an Inspector of Historic Buildings in the London Region of English Heritage and dealt with a range of major projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas in London. Prior to this, he had been a conservation officer with the London Borough of Southwark, and was Head of Conservation and Design at Hackney Council between 1997 and 1999. He trained and worked as an architect, and has a specialist qualification in urban and building conservation.
- 1.6 Historical research for this report was undertaken by Dr Ann Robey FSA, a conservation and heritage professional with over twenty years experience. She has worked for leading national bodies as well as smaller local organizations and charities. She is a researcher and writer specialising in architectural, social and economic history, with a publication record that includes books, articles, exhibitions and collaborative research.

## 2 The history of 6 Bloomsbury Square

- 2.1 This section of the report describes the history and development of 6 Bloomsbury Square and its surroundings.

### Background

- 2.2 Southampton (later Bloomsbury Square) was built on lands owned by Thomas Wriothesley, 4th Earl of Southampton. The earl had plans to build on his estate as early as 1636, but it was not until the time of the Restoration in 1661 that he had built for his own occupation Southampton House, a large mansion on a site called the Long Field. Around the sides of the open space before it, he had let plots for building a residential square, emulating the 4th Earl of Bedford's development in Covent Garden (figure 1). Although Covent Garden Piazza and Lincoln's Inn Field pre-date it, this was the first London square to be so-named and was also the first residential development undertaken with speculative builders. Plots were offered as building leases to the west, east and south. The street frontage of each plot was 24 feet, but plots were of unequal sizes and rent rates, according to the depth of the plot. Southampton (later Bedford) House occupied the whole of the north side, and the other three sides were originally Allington Row to the west, Vernon Row to the south, and Seymour Road to the east<sup>1</sup>.

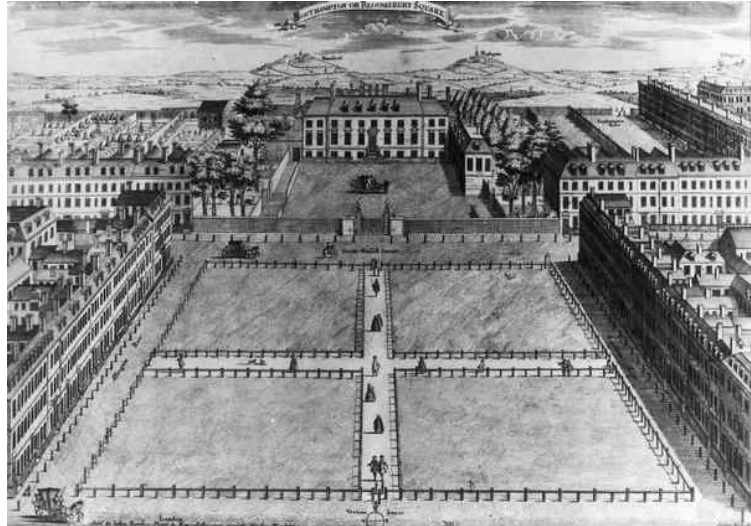


Figure 1: Bloomsbury Square and Bedford House looking north, in 1746. The large house with the front courtyard is Bedford House, formerly Southampton House, which was demolished circa 1800

---

<sup>1</sup> Camden History Society, *Streets of Bloomsbury and Fitzrovia* (1997)

- 2.3 Lessees could not just build whatever they wanted. Each house was to be built with façades of plain brick with horizontal bands at each floor level, and topped with a wooden cornice and a pitched roof with dormers. The houses fronting the square were narrower and less prestigious than those on Great Russell Street with their open prospects to the countryside in the north (figure 1). The diarist John Evelyn noted on 9 February 1665: 'Dined at my Lord Treasurer's, the Earle of Southampton, in Blomesbury, where he was building a noble square or piazza, a little towne; his own house stands too low, some noble roomes, a pretty cedar chappell, a naked garden to the north, but good aire'.



Figure 2: No. 6 Bloomsbury Square

- 2.4 Building of the square was carried out in a piecemeal fashion and it is unlikely that much of any of the original houses remain, even behind later facades.<sup>2</sup> The *Buildings of England* has suggested that 'Nos. 9-14 retain the proportions and some fabric of the 1660s'.<sup>3</sup> It has been argued that Bloomsbury Square was created as a 'pleasant prospect for the Earl' from his house. In effect Southampton Square created a courtyard fronting Southampton House that helped maintain a prospect and open aspect to the fore of the property'.<sup>4</sup> In 1669, the Bloomsbury Estate came into ownership of the Russell family through marriage, and by 1723 it had become known as Bloomsbury Square, while Southampton House was renamed Bedford House. Bedford House, was demolished in 1802. As figure 1 shows, the

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/streets/bloomsbury\\_square.htm](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/streets/bloomsbury_square.htm); The Buildings of England

<sup>3</sup> Bridget Cherry, Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England London: North* (1998), p. 321

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth McKellar, *The birth of modern London: The development and design of the city 1660-1720* (1999), pp. 198-199

square was very plain and open in the 18th century which was typical of early squares - the later gardens were originally laid out by Humphry Repton c.1806.

#### No. 6 Bloomsbury Square

2.5 No.6 is amongst the oldest surviving houses in Bloomsbury Square and was built in 1744, along with No. 5, which turns the corner with a frontage to Bloomsbury Way that forms a symmetrical façade with No.23. The architect of the small group in the southwest corner of the square was Henry Flitcroft (1697-1769). Today they are Grade II\* listed and a very handsome pair (figure 3). They have been described as a 'good example of a carefully proportioned Palladian astylar elevation with the emphasis on the first floor. No. 5a, facing Bloomsbury Way, has two wings flanking a pedimented centre with tripartite window arrangements and lunette above'.<sup>5</sup> The houses are three storeys with a dormer level and constructed in dark brick with simple contrasting stucco banding (figures 2 & 3).

2.6 In the past it has been suggested that Isaac Ware (1704–1766), a protégé of Lord Burlington built Nos. 5 and 6, and resided in No. 6 himself. He was an important second generation Palladian architect best known for his publication 'The Complete Body of Architecture' (1756) and his scholarly translation into English of Andrea Palladio's 'Four Books of Architecture' (1738). But there is little proof and the most recent edition of the Dictionary of National Biography does not include the reference.



Figure 3: Nos. 5 and 6 Bloomsbury Square with No. 23 Bloomsbury Way

---

<sup>5</sup> Bridget Cherry, Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England London: North* (1998), p. 321

- 2.7 By the end of the 18th century, the area was increasingly attracting middle class professionals, and the central garden was laid out with lawns, flower beds and privet hedge by 1806, making the location ideal for family life. At the turn of the 19th century a resident of No. 6 was the German quack Dr Myersbach, who made a fortune in London 'treating' all classes of society. An important resident of No. 6 Bloomsbury Square in the early 19th century was the writer Isaac D'Israeli who lived in No. 6 from c.1818 to 1829. His son, Benjamin (who became Prime minister) lived there for some time as a child. Isaac D'Israeli is commemorated in the stone plaque here.
- 2.8 In 1829, No. 6 was put up for rent for an unexpired term of 7 years. An advert in *The Times* described it as 'a superior town residence, Bloomsbury Square, with coach house and stabling'. The house was described as possessing unusually convenient and spacious domestic accommodations, adopted for a professional man, or excellent family residence, in thorough repair, containing 7 bed chambers on the upper floor, with water laid on; elegant drawing and dining rooms, large entrance hall, and stone staircase, breakfast parlour, and every requisite office for servants'. In addition there was a detached coach house and stabling.<sup>6</sup> The property was taken by the Revd. John Wilcox who remained there until the 1830s.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.9 By 1840, No. 6 Bloomsbury Square was in use as a hospital. The Infirmary for the Cure of Club Foot and Other Contractions was founded in 1838, and No. 6 Bloomsbury Square was bought and adapted for use as a hospital and opened on 1st July 1840, the first hospital to treat patients crippled by their disability. However, the Duke of Bedford, the freeholder of the property, objected to the name plaque on the building, and so the name was changed to the Orthopaedic Institution. At first only out-patients were seen, but a few months later two 3-bedded wards opened for in-patients. By 1849 the Hospital had 36 beds, but the premises were becoming overcrowded.<sup>8</sup> The Bloomsbury Square house must have been impractical as a hospital (especially for those with walking problems), being four storeys above ground and with a basement below. The hospital had moved to No. 315 Oxford Street by 1856.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> *The Times*, 6 June 1829; In 1881 *The Times* reported that 'the coach house and stable in the Bedford Head Yard had recently been pulled down for street improvements' *The Times* 25 Apr 1881

<sup>7</sup> LMA CLC/B/192/f/001/MS11936/530/1130602

<sup>8</sup> Lost Hospitals of London website, <http://ezitis.myzen.co.uk/roh.html>

<sup>9</sup> *The Times*, 17 Sept 1846





Figure 4: The corner of Bloomsbury Square and Hart Street (now Bloomsbury Way) in 1913 [© LMA SC/PH/01/150/89/68]

- 2.10 Evidently when the hospital was arrived, chambers were let at part of the premises at No. 6. These were accessed from the 'entrance in Hart Street' (the former name of Bloomsbury Way), where there were 'three spacious and convenient rooms on the first floor, approached by a handsome entrance hall and stone staircase, and well adapted for residences or business'.<sup>10</sup> This indicates that part of No. 6 was fronting onto Bloomsbury Way and formed part of the whole residence before being subdivided later in the 19th century. This is clearly shown on OS Maps of 1875 -78 and 1896 (figures 4 & 5). Today this is No. 23 Bloomsbury Way. It may have been to this portion of the building that the architect Ewan Christian, moved his architectural practice in 1847.

---

<sup>10</sup> *The Times*, 3 Nov 1847

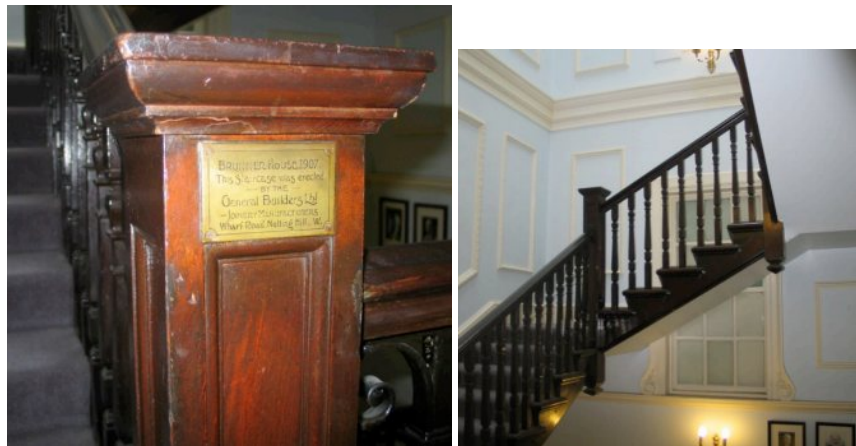


Figures 5 & 6: OS Maps of 1875 -78 and 1896



Figure 7: To the left hand side of the image the section of the building that used to be joined to No. 6 Bloomsbury Square until c.1880.

2.11 In the mid-1860s Bloomsbury Square was described as 'in a very unfashionable quarter, though very respectable'. No. 6 was in the 1880s the home to architect Edward Prior, who was influential in establishing the Arts and Crafts Movement and the Art Workers' Guild. The headquarters of the Labour Co-partnership Association (advocates of land reform) were at No. 6 Bloomsbury Square by 1906-7.



Figures 8 & 9: The staircase altered in 1907

2.12 Alterations were carried out to the house in 1907, when it was known as Brunner House, after Sir John Tomlinson Brunner, 1st Baronet, a British chemical industrialist and Liberal Party

politician who supported urban land reform. Works included the alteration of the staircase by General Builders Ltd.(figures 7 & 8). This company was set up by Henry Vivian, an English trade unionist, and Liberal Party MP and advocate of co-partnership housing. The firm was a practical venture into co-partnership with the aim of providing its members with work and accommodation.

- 2.13 The house remained in use as offices for the remainder of the 20th century. Photographs of what is described as the first floor front room chimney piece, taken at different times in the 20th century show that the original was removed some time before the mid-1960s, as there was a different surround there by 1963 (figures 10 and 11).<sup>11</sup> This happened before the major refurbishment of the house in the early 1980s.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 10: First floor front room chimney piece in 1913 [© LMA SC/PHL/01/150-98]

---

<sup>11</sup> Images on LMA Collage show internal views from Nos. 5 & 6. It is uncertain whether they are correctly labelled, as an image from 1963 showing the ground floor rear room of No. 5 has a fireplace with the same fireplace as in figure 12. It might be that fireplaces were moved from one house to another when all properties were joined before splitting in 1980 LMA/SC/PHL/01/150 -63-4673

<sup>12</sup> Camden HB2584



Figure 11: 1963 First floor front room [© LMA SC/PHL/01/150-98]



Figure 12: Fireplace in No. 6 today

2.14 In 1980, Nos. 5 and 6 Bloomsbury Square and No. 23 Bloomsbury Way were reinstated as separate buildings, altered internally and had an extension added to the roof.<sup>13</sup> The works were carried out to the designs of Chapman Taylor Partners, architects. At No. 6, works to the 2nd floor included the

---

<sup>13</sup> Camden HB2584

removal of partitions, and two party wall openings were blocked. Panelling was repaired, and a chimney piece restored. A handrail to the landing was reinstated after the removal of a staircase and a new lift enclosure was proposed in the rear closet bedroom on the 2nd and 3rd floors. On the 3rd floor an existing stair to the roof was to be removed. Some windows were to be re-sashed to provide a 'uniform pattern of glazing bars'.<sup>14</sup>

- 2.15 At the same time at No. 23 Bloomsbury Way, a later extension was 'modified with mansard roof with dormer windows, new rainwater pipe and altered cornice below the parapet'. At No. 5 a new elevation to the rear extension was built in brown brick with sash windows, with a plain parapet and slated mansard roof with dormers.<sup>15</sup>
- 2.16 In 1984, alterations involving floor strengthening air-conditioning and alterations to windows and shutters. Alterations to ceilings, plasterwork and fireplaces was undertaken at this time for Bloomsbury Square Estate Limited, who owned both Nos. 5 and 6 Bloomsbury Square.<sup>16</sup>
- 2.17 The Board of Deputies of British Jews moved to No. 6 in 2001 after purchasing the house and in 2002 put in a lift within the secondary stairwell from basement to third floor level. Malcolm Hollis Surveyors appointed Abbey Liftcare to undertake the work.<sup>17</sup> Other works in that year included the retention of iron bars to the basement windows and to the front and rear elevations, and the installation of metal panel and external mesh grilles to the door at rear basement, by Jeffrey Howard Associates.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Camden HB2584

<sup>15</sup> Camden HB2584

<sup>16</sup> Camden 8470130

<sup>17</sup> Camden LSX0205447

<sup>18</sup> Camden PSX0205091

### 3 The heritage significance of the site and its context

3.1 This section of the report describes the heritage significance of 6 Bloomsbury Square and its surroundings.

The heritage context of 6 Bloomsbury Square

3.2 6 Bloomsbury Square was listed Grade II\* in October 1951 along with No.5, 5a and attached railings and lampholder; the list description is contained in Appendix A. The listed building is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area on the south western corner of Bloomsbury Square at the corner of Bloomsbury Way. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was first designated in 1984 and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy was adopted in April 2011. The extent of the conservation area is shown in Figure 1. The present conservation area appraisal was adopted in 2002.

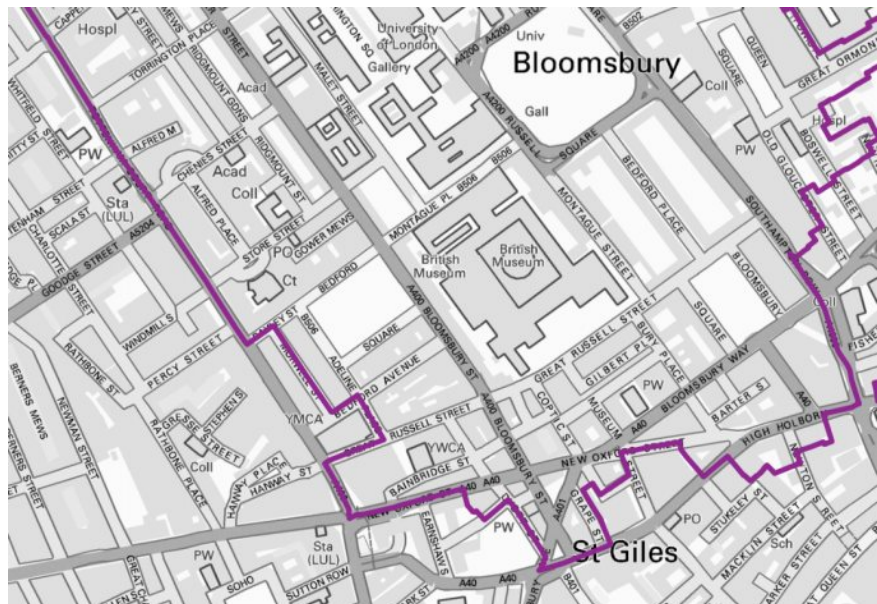


Figure 9: Map showing Bloomsbury Square within the Conservation Area (© LB Camden)

3.3 In the vicinity of 6 Bloomsbury Square, Nos 5 & 5A, 2&3, 46 & 47 (to the south), and Nos 9-11 to the north are listed Grade II. Bloomsbury Square Gardens is a designated London Square on the Register of Parks and Gardens.

Unlisted buildings of merit

3.4 The conservation area appraisal for the Bloomsbury Conservation Area identifies a number of buildings in the

vicinity as being ‘positive contributors’ to the conservation area, including Nos. 4,4a, 7,8 & 15 Bloomsbury Square.

The heritage significance of the site and its context

The relevant heritage assets

- 3.5 In terms of the assessment of the proposals for 6 Bloomsbury Square, the heritage assets within Camden most relevant to considering the effect of the scheme are the listed building itself, nearby listed buildings, and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 3.6 The effect of the proposed scheme on these assets will be first and foremost on the special architectural and historic interest of 6 Bloomsbury Square and its setting, and then secondly on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of other listed buildings.

Assessing heritage significance

- 3.7 6 Bloomsbury Square, the listed buildings in the vicinity of 6 Bloomsbury Square and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and are ‘designated heritage assets’, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF). Other buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the conservation area - such as unlisted buildings of merit - can be considered as ‘non-designated heritage assets’.
- 3.8 ‘Significance’ is defined in the NPPF as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic’. The English Heritage ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ puts it slightly differently – as ‘the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest’.
- 3.9 ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment’ (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of ‘heritage values’ that may be present in a ‘significant place’. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.
- 3.10 Historical value is described as being illustrative or associative. ‘Conservation Principles’ says that:
- Illustration depends on visibility in a way that evidential value (for example, of buried remains) does not. Places with illustrative value will normally also have evidential value, but it may be of a different order of importance... The illustrative value of places tends to be greater if they incorporate the first, or only surviving, example of an innovation of consequence, whether related to design, technology or social organisation.



- ‘Historic interest’, ‘Historical value’ and ‘Evidential value’
- 3.11 6 Bloomsbury Square, the listed and unlisted buildings nearby, and their relationship to one another and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area collectively illustrate the development of this part of London. They tell us about the nature of the expansion of London in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the suburbanisation of previously open land by means of estate development to the east of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century development around Covent Garden, the nature of society at the time and the market for such residential development, and about how the housing built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was adapted and changed to suit occupation in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. It tells us also about social and commercial transformations during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and about the dynamics of post-war change and its effect on older buildings. The area and its buildings area a record of social and economic change and lifestyles in various periods, and illustrate the effect these things had on the historic building stock and urban grain.
- 3.12 In terms of English Heritage’s ‘Conservation Principles’ the listed buildings and conservation area provide us with ‘evidence about past human activity’ and, by means of their fabric, design and appearance, communicate information about its past. Subsequent alteration, demolition and redevelopment has not entirely removed the ability of the older townscape and intact historic buildings to do this; the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and its listed buildings clearly retains sufficient historic character and appearance to convey the area’s historical ethos. Despite the many changes that are described earlier in this report, 6 Bloomsbury Square, externally and internally, retains its ability to convey this historical value. In fact, the presence of different phases of work together in a single building is part of its special historic interest, providing evidence about the historical changes that occurred to it over time.
- 3.13 The building has a number of important associations – including the architect Henry Flitcroft, the father of Benjamin Disraeli, Edward Prior, Sir John Tomlinson Brunner and most recently the Board of Deputies of British Jews, amongst other occupiers.
- ‘Architectural interest’, ‘artistic interest’ or ‘aesthetic value’
- 3.14 It is clear that the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and 6 Bloomsbury Square referred to above have ‘architectural’ and ‘artistic interest’ (NPPF) or ‘aesthetic value’ (‘Conservation Principles’). In respect of design, ‘Conservation Principles’ says that ‘design value... embraces composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) and usually materials or planting, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship’.

- 3.15 The part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in the vicinity of 6 Bloomsbury Square possesses these heritage values to a considerable degree. The contributing elements of the aesthetic significance of the area as a piece of historic townscape are the nature of older (listed and unlisted) structures and their contribution to the historic streetscape, including Bloomsbury Square Gardens, and that streetscape itself.
- 3.16 The special architectural and historic interest of 6 Bloomsbury Square as a listed building lies principally in its Georgian architectural style as altered, changed and then restored in later phases of intervention – there are few internal features remaining in the house, although those that do form a part of this typology.
- 3.17 6 Bloomsbury Square has been very heavily altered over the years in a way that has very little to do with the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. Recent alterations have more or less preserved the main plan form but most internal features have been lost and the main staircase was re-configured in 1907. Alterations have included installation of air-conditioning, floor strengthening works and work on ceilings, plasterwork and fireplaces.
- 3.18 The listed buildings near 6 Bloomsbury Square have, by definition, special architectural and historic interest and in respect of development on the site of 6 Bloomsbury Square that might affect their setting, that special interest has to do with their external architectural design, their scale, massing and roof profiles. Their internal special interest would clearly not be affected by adjacent development.

#### Summary

- 3.19 6 Bloomsbury Square has clear and extensive historical and evidential value, and this value is expressed in the narrative of the building's history and how it has changed - this is set out earlier. The building is associated with a number of important historical figures and organisations.
- 3.20 In terms of architectural or aesthetic value, this is limited to the external appearance of the listed building, the layout of the principal spaces and any remaining interior features. Through the level of refurbishment, restoration and change, large parts of the building internally are of much less - and sometimes no - architectural significance.

## 4 The policy context

- 4.1 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment.

### Legislation

- 4.2 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 (1) of the Act requires decision makers to ‘have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’ when determining applications which affect a listed building or its setting. Section 72(1) of the Act requires decision makers with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area to pay ‘special attention...to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.

### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3 In March 2012, the Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaced Planning Policy Statement 5: ‘Planning for the Historic Environment’ (PPS5) with immediate effect.
- 4.4 The NPPF says at Paragraph 128 that:
- In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 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.
- 4.5 A description and analysis of the heritage significance of 6 Bloomsbury Square and its context is provided earlier in this report.
- 4.6 The NPPF also requires local planning authorities to ‘identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal’.
- 4.7 At Paragraph 131, the NPPF says that:

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.8 Paragraph 132 advises local planning authorities that ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting’.

4.9 The NPPF says at Paragraph 133 ‘Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.’ Paragraph 133 says:

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

4.10 Paragraph 134 says that ‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

4.11 Further advice within Section 12 of the NPPF urges local planning authorities to take into account the effect of an

application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset when determining the application. It says that ‘In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

4.12 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF advises local planning authorities to ‘look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably’.

4.13 Paragraph 138 says that:

Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

4.14 The NPPF incorporates many of the essential concepts in Planning Policy Statement 5 ‘Planning for the Historic Environment’. PPS5 was accompanied by a ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’, published by English Heritage ‘to help practitioners implement the policy, including the legislative requirements that underpin it’<sup>19</sup>. The ‘Guide’ gives, at Paragraph 79, a number of ‘potential heritage benefits that could weigh in favour of a proposed scheme’ in addition to guidance on ‘weighing-up’ proposals in Paragraphs 76 to 78. These are that:

- It sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- It reduces or removes risks to a heritage asset;
- It secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation;

---

<sup>19</sup> PPS5 was superseded by the NPPF, but the PPS5 Practice Guide is still valid for the time being. It is intended by English Heritage that it will be replaced by good practice advice developed by English Heritage in conjunction with the Historic Environment Forum

- It makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities;
- It is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment;
- It better reveals the significance of a heritage asset and therefore enhances our enjoyment of it and the sense of place.

4.15 Paragraph 111 of the Guide sets out the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that local planning authorities when making decisions must ‘have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’ and ‘pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance’ of a conservation area.

#### Camden Council’s Local Development Framework

4.16 Camden Council adopted its Core Strategy and Development Policies on 8 November 2010. Core Strategy Policy CS14 deals with ‘Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage’ and says:

‘The Council will ensure that Camden’s places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

- a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;
- b) preserving and enhancing Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;
- c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;
- d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;
- e) protecting important views of St Paul’s Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the Borough and protecting important local views’.

4.17 The commentary to the policy says:

‘Our overall strategy is to sustainably manage growth in Camden so it meets our needs for homes, jobs and

services in a way that conserves and enhances the features that make the borough such an attractive place to live, work and visit. Policy CS14 plays a key part in achieving this by setting out our approach to conserving and, where possible, enhancing our heritage and valued places, and to ensuring that development is of the highest standard and reflects, and where possible improves, its local area'

4.18 It goes on to say:

'Development schemes should improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and the street environment and, through this, improve the experience of the borough for residents and visitors'

4.19 Regarding Camden's heritage, the Core Strategy refers to Policy DP25 in Camden Development Policies as providing more detailed guidance on the Council's approach to protecting and enriching the range of features that make up the built heritage of the borough.

4.20 Policy DP25 is as follows:

#### 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.



## 5 The proposed scheme and its effect

- 5.1 This section of the report briefly describes the proposed scheme and its effect on the heritage significance described earlier. The proposed scheme is illustrated in the drawings prepared by Flanagan Lawrence Architects and this section should be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement.

The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance

- 5.2 The design aim is to make minimum intervention to the existing building fabric while restoring original features, upgrading staff facilities and improving mechanical and electrical services.
- 5.3 These proposals reflect the pre-application discussions had with English Heritage and the Conservation Officer.
- 5.4 There are various existing lavatories, shower and kitchens in several locations through the building. It is intended that these are removed and the spaces restored 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 which can be regarded as a considerable benefit to the listed building.
- 5.5 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 in spaces that are of little interest.
- 5.6 The basement design includes a proposal for a glass extension into the garden to create a new communal multi-purpose area. The extension design aims to have a minimum impact on how the existing building is seen. Maximum floor to ceiling glass panel sizes allows good visibility of the existing brickwork and windows with a 'light touch' glass connection. The brickwork currently painted white, will be stripped back to its original condition.
- 5.7 Elements such as the steel safe door are to be retained as an element of significance in the building's history.
- 5.8 The existing lift and basement lift motor room will be replaced with a new lift with a smaller motor located at high level above the existing shaft. This will return the space used for the lift motor room to usable space. The existing roof light above the shaft will be raised to accommodate this in a manner that will not have any visual impact from the street.
- 5.9 Services will be consolidated at roof level within an enclosure that has been designed not to be visible from the street and will be hidden between the two roof pitches.

- 5.10 Internally where repairs are necessary they will be sensitively carried out to reflect the nature of the fabric that is being repaired – where lathe and plaster, repairs will be carried out sympathetically, but where modern, plasterboard will be used.
- 5.11 The original floors will be retained and protected and the non-original hall floor will be replaced with a more traditional Portland stone. Inappropriate laminate flooring will be replaced with good quality oak parquet in the first floor boardroom.
- 5.12 Where new fixtures and fittings are proposed it will be only to replace modern ones and will be chosen for their suitability to a house of this age and style.
- 5.13 Overall, the proposals seek primarily to return the building to its former quality with a comprehensive programme of restoration and sympathetic refurbishment proposed which will positively enhance the special interest of the listed building. Where change is necessary it has been designed to be kept to a minimum and in terms of the roof, completely hidden from view therefore causing no harm to significance of the building.
- 5.14 The new extension has been designed to be a simple and unassuming addition to the basement level of the building, with a light-touch connection of glass enabling the rear elevation of the building still to be appreciated. The part of the proposal will also remove the white paint from the brick work that currently detracts from its significance.
- 5.15 The effect on the conservation area and other listed buildings
- 5.16 The effect on the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and on the setting of other listed buildings will be negligible. The new rear extension will not be visible within the conservation area other than from the rear of the building and the works at roof level will not be visible from surrounding streets either. It will therefore have no effect on its character or appearance or the setting of any adjacent listed buildings.

## 6 Compliance with policy and guidance

- 6.1 This report has provided a detailed description and analysis of the significance of 6 Bloomsbury Square and its heritage context, as required by Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the report also describes how the proposed scheme will affect that heritage significance. The effect is positive, and for that reason, the scheme complies with policy and guidance. This section should be read with Section 5 and.

The level of ‘harm’ caused by the proposed scheme

- 6.2 As outlined in Section 4, the NPPF identifies two levels of potential ‘harm’ that might be caused to a heritage asset by a development: ‘substantial harm...or total loss of significance’ or ‘less than substantial’. Both levels of harm must be caused to a *designated* heritage asset – in this instance, 6 Bloomsbury Square, other listed buildings and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and their settings.
- 6.3 The proposed scheme, in our considered view, preserves the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and thus complies with S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It does not lead to ‘substantial’ harm or any meaningful level of ‘less than substantial’ harm to the listed building at 6 Bloomsbury Square, or any other heritage assets. The considered approach to the new rear extension will have no effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area as well as the setting of the listed buildings.
- 6.4 The only potential for ‘less than substantial’ harm would be the loss of something in 6 Bloomsbury Square that had a direct relationship to what is central to special architectural and historic interest in the listed main building. There is nothing about the proposal that would give rise to this level of harm. Other changes to the listed building, individually or cumulatively, do not reach the threshold of harm that would cause the scheme to fail to preserve the special interest of any listed building or conservation area.

The balance of ‘harm’ versus benefit

- 6.5 In any event, and even if some level of harm was to be caused by the proposals, the scheme provides a tangible public benefit in the form of restoring and repairing many elements of the building’s special interest, both internally and externally and

providing the listed building with a sustainable future. This would more than outweigh what very low level of ‘harm’ - if any - that might be asserted to be caused by the various interventions proposed. The core special architectural and historic interest of 6 Bloomsbury Square and other heritage assets remains entirely intact in the proposal.

#### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.6 In respect of Paragraph 131 of the NPPF, the proposed scheme can certainly be described as ‘sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation’. It secures the ‘positive contribution’ that 6 Bloomsbury Square makes to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the setting of other listed buildings, and it preserves the essential elements of its special architectural and historic interest as a listed building.
- 6.7 The proposed scheme complies with Paragraph 133 of the NPPF - it certainly does not lead to ‘substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset’. It also complies with Paragraph 134 for the reasons given in detail earlier in this report – the scheme cannot be considered to harm the listed building, but rather alters it in a fashion that has a relatively small effect on overall heritage significance while reversing previous harm and protecting surviving significance. Any ‘less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset’ (Paragraph 134) - if any - that can be ascribed to the scheme is outweighed by the benefit of the works of repair and restoration which will enhance and better reveal the significance of the listed building while providing it with a sustainable future.
- 6.8 It is our view that none of the individual minor interventions that make up the overall set of proposals can reasonably be considered to cause harm to the listed building when the cumulative extent of intervention involved is measured against the overall listed building. The interventions - individually and taken as a whole – help secure the ‘optimum viable use’ of the listed building. The scheme very definitely strikes the balance suggested by Paragraph 134 of the NPPF – it intervenes in 6 Bloomsbury Square in a manner commensurate to its significance as a listed building. This balance of intervention versus significance is described in detail earlier.

#### Camden’s Local Development Framework

- 6.9 In positively addressing the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the works also meet the policy requirements of the London Borough of Camden Local

Development Framework relevant to the historic built environment.

- 6.10 In terms of Core Strategy Policy CS14 and its accompanying commentary, the proposals 'would not cause harm to the special interest of the building' or to 'the setting of a listed building'.
- 6.11 Equally, the proposals will 'preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area'.

## 7 Summary and conclusions

- 7.1 The proposed scheme has been designed to make minimum intervention into the historic building whilst providing modern and viable accommodation for the future. The proposals combine repair and restoration of existing fabric with the reinstatement of other elements and spaces. New interventions have been kept to a minimum and sensitively located in secondary spaces of less or no significance.
- 7.2 The new extension at basement level has been designed with a 'light-touch' glass connection enabling the rear elevation of the building to still be appreciated and a grass or sedum roof for minimum impact. Alterations at roof level will not be visible from surrounding streets and are located in places that have seen considerable change.
- 7.3 The effect of the works and new extension on the heritage significance described earlier is therefore positive. The works will preserve and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and its setting – its historic fabric and features are retained and the appearance and layout of the listed building remains legible and appreciable. The proposals will also preserve and enhance the setting of other listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 7.4 For these reasons, the proposed scheme complies with the law, and national and local policy and guidance for listed buildings and conservation areas.

## Appendix A: List Description

TQ3081NW BLOOMSBURY SQUARE 798-1/100/100  
(West side) 24/10/51 Nos.5, 5A AND 6 and attached railings and  
lamp-holder (Formerly Listed as: BLOOMSBURY SQUARE Nos.5  
AND 6)

GV II\*

Two houses, now in three units: No.6 facing Bloomsbury Square, Nos 5 and 5A main facade on Bloomsbury Way with return to Bloomsbury Square. 1744. By Henry Flitcroft. Possibly built by JI Devall. Darkened multi-coloured stock brick. Stone bracketed cornice below brick parapet and stone band at 1st floor level. Tiled roof with dormers. 3 storeys, attic and basement. Nos 5 and 5a: symmetrical facade in Bloomsbury Way with No.23 Bloomsbury Way (qv). 7 windows (right hand two blind), 3-window return to Bloomsbury Square. Pedimented centre bay slightly projecting with round arched entrance doorway with stone archivolt and band at springing, patterned fanlight and panelled door. To either side of door, sashes with keystone blocks. Above, at first floor level, round-headed sash flanked by 2 narrow square-headed sashes, all with stone sill band. 2nd floor with Diocletian type window. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows with stucco archivolts, some with original glazing bars. Right hand wing blind apart from left hand 2nd floor window. Lead rainwater heads and pipes. INTERIOR: some original panelled rooms and fireplaces; stone staircase with balustrade restored to original design. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas. No.6: 3 windows. Stone architraved doorcase with console bracketed cornice, wood pilaster-jamb to door frame, fanlight and panelled, part glazed, door. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows with stucco archivolts, some with original glazing bars. INTERIOR: noted to contain some original panelling and features. Staircase altered early C20. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas with urn finials and overthrow lamp-holder. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.6 was home, in his youth of Isaac Disraeli, father of Benjamin Disraeli (GLC plaque).

## Appendix B: Sources of information

LB Camden online planning files

London Metropolitan Archive

*The Times* online

Lost Hospitals of London website

Dictionary of National Biography online

The Victorian Web



# KMHeritage

72 Pymer's Mead  
London SE21 8NJ  
T: 020 8670 9057  
F: 0871 750 3557

[mail@kmheritage.com](mailto:mail@kmheritage.com)  
[www.kmheritage.com](http://www.kmheritage.com)

© 2015