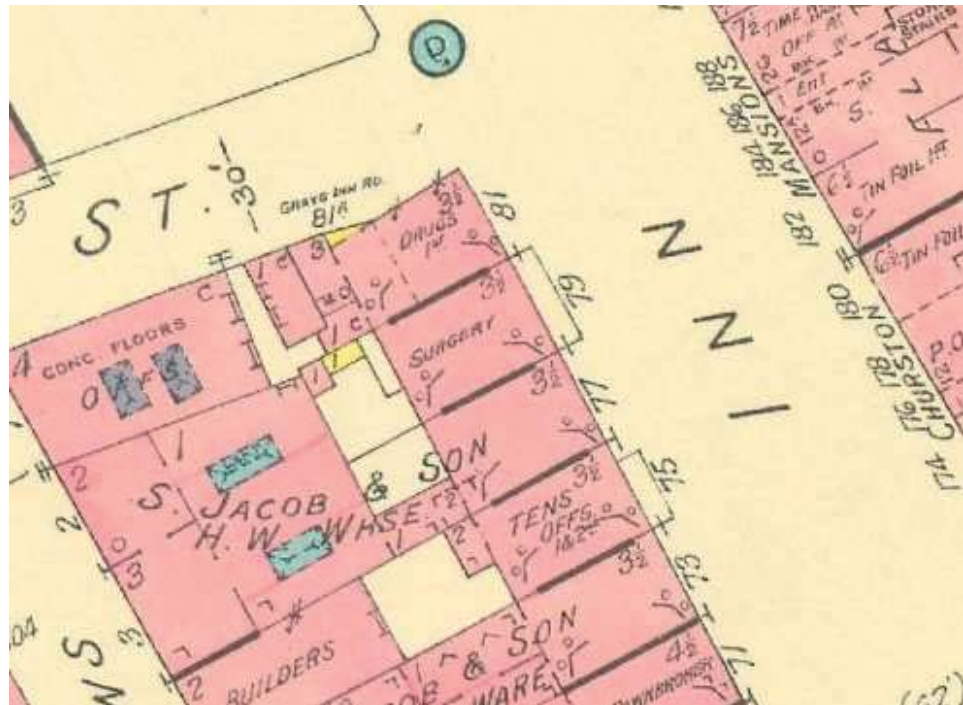


No. 79 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8TP

Heritage Appraisal



Goad Insurance Plan Detail (1942)

The Heritage Practice

April 2015

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following Heritage Appraisal has been prepared in support of applications for planning and listed building consent in relation to no. 79 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8TP. This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings prepared by Nash Baker Architects and the accompanying Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement.

Research and report structure

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to set out the history and significance of no. 79 Gray's Inn Road. No. 79 is a grade II listed building and forms part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is also located in close proximity to a number of listed buildings and forms part of a listed group (nos. 75-81A Gray's Inn Road). The report considers the acceptability of the proposed alterations to the existing building against the significance of the site and the relevant policy context.
- 1.3 It should be noted that in common with many historic buildings, sites and places, it is not possible to provide a truly comprehensive analysis of the site's historic development. The research and analysis set out in this report is as thorough as possible given the type and number of archival resources available. Research has been undertaken at the London Metropolitan Archives, the London Borough of Camden's Local Studies and Archive Centre and the photographic archive of English Heritage. A number of online sources have also been used including British History Online, the London Borough of Camden's historic planning records and *The Times* online archive.
- 1.4 This desk-based and archival research has been combined with a visual assessment and appraisal of the existing building and its context. Further sources and evidence that add to our knowledge and understanding of the site and its history may become available at a future date.
- 1.5 The report is divided into five main sections. The first (section 2) provides an outline description of the site and its context. The following section describes the historic development and significance of the building. This is followed by a brief description of the proposals and a further section on the relevant historic environment policy. The final section provides an assessment of the proposals against the significance of the building and relevant policy.
- 1.6 Kate Graham is a skilled and knowledgeable historic environment professional with extensive employment experience in the sector and a strong academic background in history and building conservation. Kate was most recently the Design and Conservation Team Leader at the London Borough of Islington and prior to that was a Senior Historic Buildings and Areas Advisor for English Heritage's London Region. In both cases, Kate has dealt with a variety of schemes and proposals for a broad range of listed buildings and conservation areas. Kate has also worked for the Architectural Heritage Fund and in the policy team at English Heritage. Kate has an

extensive background in research, listed building assessment and analysis and understanding policy and its application. She is also experienced in dealing with new design and build in and around historic buildings and areas both in London and across the UK. Kate is a member of the Islington Design Panel.

Designations

- 1.7 No. 79 Gray's Inn Road was statutorily listed at grade II in 1974 along with its neighbours at nos. 75-81a Gray's Inn Road. The list description reads as follows:
- '4 terraced houses with later shops. c1791, altered. Yellow stock brick with slate mansard roofs (No.77, corrugated iron) and dormers. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, attics and basements. 2 windows each, No.81 with 2-window return forming No.81A. No.75: round-arched doorway with stucco reveals, fluted pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-head; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Stucco 1st floor sill band. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor in shallow, round-arched recesses linked by stucco impost bands. Moulded brick band at base of parapet. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with tasselled spearhead finials to area. No.77: C20 shopfront with late C19 consoles. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor in shallow, round-arched recesses. Parapet. No.79: round-arched doorway with stucco reveals, fluted pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-head; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Stucco 1st floor sill band. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor in shallow, round-arched recesses. Parapet. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with acorn finials to area. No.81: mid-C20 shopfront with vitrolite fascia. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor in shallow, round-arched recesses. Rebuilt parapet. INTERIORS: not inspected.'
- 1.8 No. 79 Gray's Inn Road also forms part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area which was first designated in 1968. The conservation area covers an area of approximately 160 hectares extending from Euston Road in the north to High Holborn and Lincoln's Inn Fields in the south and from Tottenham Court Road in the west to King's Cross Road in the east.

2 Site description

- 2.1 As noted above, no. 79 Gray's Inn Road is a grade II listed building and forms part of a wider group of similarly constructed and dated listed buildings on the west side of Gray's Inn Road (paragraph 1.7). The list description notes some features of the building's exterior, including the front door and window and stucco details.

Exterior

- 2.2 The building rises to three storeys with attic over a basement and is two-bays wide. The principal elevation to Gray's Inn Road is traditionally and classically composed with the first floor *piano nobile* emphasised by generous 6x6 sash windows and a stucco band between ground and first floors. The hierarchy of floors within the building are marked by the changing proportions of the windows across the building as would be expected in a building of this age and type.
- 2.3 The building has something of a run-down appearance and has evidently been aggressively cleaned at some point in its past and now the brick is weathered. This condition has been exacerbated through the use of a hard cementitious mortar in a historic repointing of the front and rear elevations. The parapet to the front and rear elevations have been rebuilt.
- 2.4 The building retains a historic front door, fanlight and surrounds. The windows at ground floor are Victorian or early 20th century and the frames are in a poor state of repair. The basement window to the principal elevation has also been replaced at some point. The first floor windows are of some age and constructed to a traditional design but are likely to be historic replacements. The second floor windows appear to be the earliest surviving windows and are likely to be original to the house's date of construction. The building retains its original ground floor area railings.
- 2.5 The rear elevation, more prosaic than the principal elevation to the street, has also suffered the effects of inappropriate brickwork repair. Tired and redundant servicing marks the elevation. A single window at second floor level has been altered and partially blocked. An uPVC window has also been inserted at third floor level. The windows to the rear elevation are traditional in character but are all modern replacements.
- 2.6 The roof of the building is a traditional M profile mansard roof, a feature that the building has in common with a number of its neighbours. The roof is now covered in artificial slate but the structure of the roof appears to be historic if not original. The roof of the building has a central drainage gully and this has caused problems internally in the past with water ingress into the upper floors of the building.

Interior

- 2.7 For many decades no. 79 Gray's Inn Road was in use as a doctor's surgery (see section 3 below). This use has clearly had an impact on the character and appearance of the building and its special historic and architectural interest. The quasi-office use of the building has seen the remodelling of the ground and lower ground floors for the use of waiting and consulting rooms and as part of an overall 'upgrade of the building.' The basement level in particular retains no features of architectural or historic interest. The stair between the ground and lower ground floors has been replaced and the stairs at the upper levels of the building have been altered and adapted. Overall, these historic alterations have diminished the spatial quality of the circulation space and reduced the impact of its volume and character.
- 2.8 Partitions have been added at ground floor level and elsewhere rooms have been opened up to create more usable space – at least insofar as the doctor's surgery was concerned. An extension to the building was added at ground and lower ground floors in the 1960s/1970s and this infilled the rear yard of the property.
- 2.9 The first to third floors retain something of their original layout in that each floor retains a front and rear room. The rear rooms have been subdivided at first and third floor levels. Historic drainage plans (see section 3) suggest that the front room at third floor level was originally subdivided.
- 2.10 The first to third floors were relatively recently converted into three flats and each of the upper floors therefore has a domestic feel and character. Each floor is now characterised by new wall and ceiling finishes in places, excessive spot-lighting, new doors throughout and other new joinery including skirting boards. The front rooms retain features such as shutter boxes and shutters – in a number of cases, it is not possible to utilise the shutters as secondary glazing has been installed to those windows facing onto Gray's Inn Road. The third floor retains few features of interest, with the exception of historic floorboards, and there are no surviving fire surrounds.
- 2.11 Panelling survives in the second floor front room with traces to the rear room. The window to the rear room at second floor level has been amended to allow for the installation of a kitchen and a new window with poor proportions introduced. A fire surround survives to the front room. At first floor level, there is a fairly grand, stone fire surround with mantle although this appears to have been modified. The front room retains a cornice and plaster feature above the fireplace. This feature is difficult to date. The room retains generous windows with functioning original shutters. The rear room has been converted as a bathroom and bedroom and appears to have modern wall and ceiling finishes and detailing.
- 2.12 No. 79 Grays Inn Road evidently retains some historic features and finishes but inappropriate alteration and repairs have diminished the historic and architectural quality of the building. While there are positive elements of the building, in the sense of retained fabric and layout, there are also many negative elements that have resulted from the intensive surgery use over several decades. The need for many people to visit, use and circulate around the building has necessitated a number of

alterations and changes that are not considered entirely appropriate or sensitive in their context.

3 Historic development and significance

- 3.1 No. 79 Gray's Inn Road was built as part of a terrace of houses in the late 19th century. The southern part of Gray's Inn Road was relatively well developed by the middle of the 18th century but development had not yet reached far beyond the line of what was to become Roger Street. Rocque's map of London (1746) shows that the site of no. 79 was at that point occupied by a Stable Yard (figure 1).

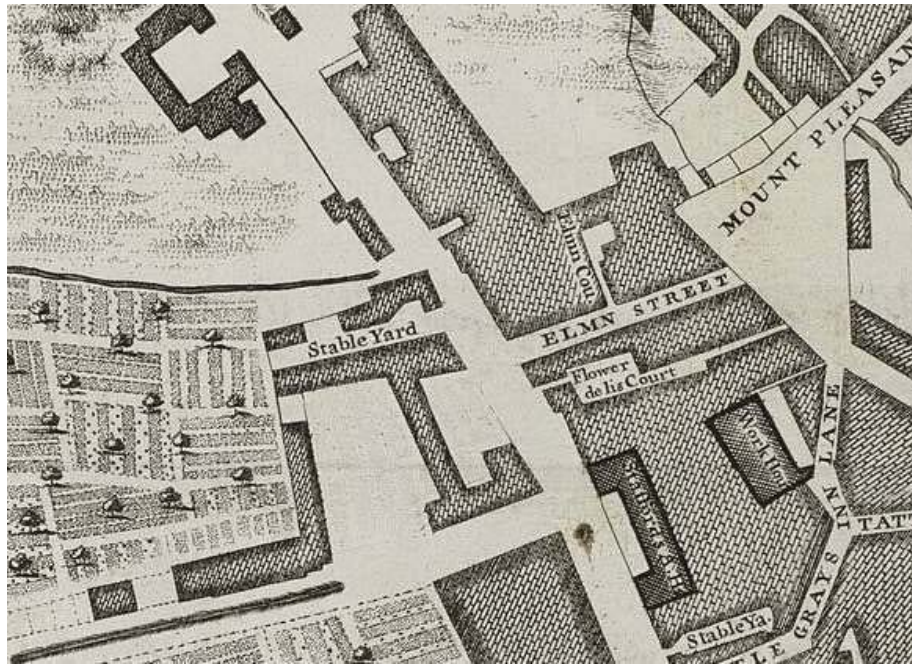


Figure 1: Extract from Rocque's map of London (1746). The position of no. 79 aligns with that of the Stable Yard shown on the map extract.

- 3.2 By the time of the publication of Horwood's map of London (1792-9), no. 79 is shown to the south of the line of Roger Street with some additional terraced properties to the north (figure 2). No. 79 is shown as neat terraced property with a generous rear garden extending to the south-west.

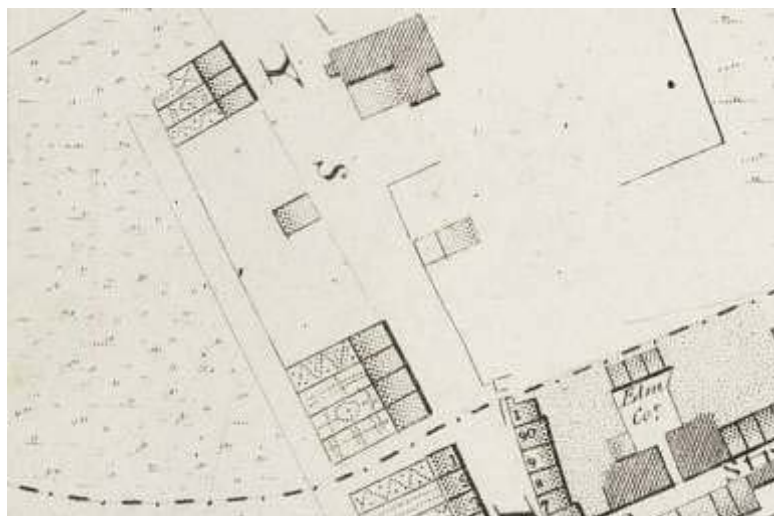


Figure 2: Extract from Horwood's map of London showing no. 79 Gray's Inn Road as no. 2 to the south of the dashed line (the line of Roger Street).

- 3.3 By 1830, and as shown in Greenwood's map of London, Gray's Inn Road and its periphery had become densely developed. The terrace of which no. 79 forms part, to the south of what was then called Henry Street, is known as 'North Place' on Greenwood's map (figure 3) with North Street running parallel to the south-west. The generous garden to no. 79 had disappeared and Gray's Inn Road had become very much part of a densely built up urban environment.
- 3.4 It is likely that from the early Victorian period, the properties of Gray's Inn Road had lost any fashionable cachet or desirable reputation. The speed with which the area was developed from the late 18th to the mid-19th century rendered the locality an incredibly dense, urban area. Along Gray's Inn Road there was a mixture of residential uses and relatively heavy industry and manufacturing, typical of the 19th century inner city. Certainly by 1871, the house was occupied by a Horatio Nelson, a delivery officer for the nearby Holborn Union Workhouse. This reflected the changing status of residents in the local area.
- 3.5 The OS Map for 1872 shows no. 79 Gray's Inn Road forming part of a more diluted terrace and architectural composition (figure 4). Other buildings within the terrace had been extended and linked through to buildings on North Street to the rear. No. 79 is shown with a small yard to the rear. The footprint of the building remained as such until the 1970s (appendix A).



Figure 5: OS map extract of 1872.

- 3.6 The building has until recently been operated as a Doctor's Surgery with an associated residential use. Interesting, census records show that the building was in use as such from at least 1881 when the doctor's rooms were opened by a Dr Reginald Taylor. Dr Taylor practised and lived in the building with his family until at least 1911.

- 3.7 Goad Insurance Plans show that the building continued in use as a surgery throughout the 20th century (appendix B). The plan extracts, which date from 1942 to 1967, show a building with an unchanging footprint, the existing front lightwell, small single-storey extensions in the rear yard. The annotations on the plan show the double mansard roof with slate covering (identified with a 'o') and that the building was considered to rise to 3 ½ storeys above ground (figure 6).

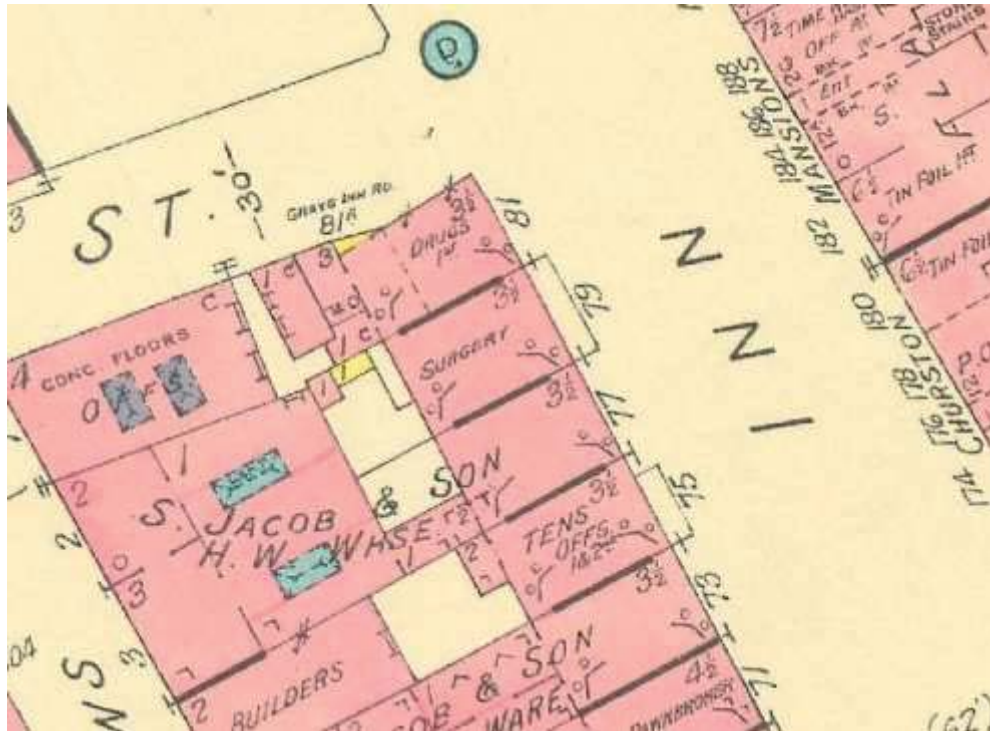


Figure 6: Goad plan extract (1942)

- 3.8 While externally, little changed in terms of the footprint or external envelope of the building for several decades, the rear courtyard has now been infilled with an extension which links into the ground and lower ground floors of the building (the extension dates to 1984). This extension has disrupted the original rear wall of the house and the plan form of the building to a degree. A small external courtyard remains.
- 3.9 An assessment of the existing building at no. 79 in its current form has also revealed a degree of internal alteration. The building retains a hierarchical floor structure with a *piano nobile* at first floor with the greatest floor to ceiling height and embellishment. Floors above diminish in floor to ceiling height. A number of rooms retain some features of historic and architectural interest, most notably to the ground floor hallway and the first and second floors. The front room of the latter retains some panelling.
- 3.10 Many of the windows throughout the building have been renewed and there are few that date to the original period of its construction. The windows to the front elevation at first floor level appear to be historic but not original. All others have been replaced at some point in the building's history. Many of the windows are historic or good copies but others are less appropriate including a uPVC window to

the rear elevation at third floor level. Many windows retain shutters and shutter boxes which are currently blocked by secondary glazing.

- 3.11 While it appears that the stair is in its original location it has obviously been altered. The handrail of the stairs appears to have been raised – perhaps due to health and safety considerations of a doctor’s surgery – balusters have been replaced and there is little of architectural or historic interest to be found.
- 3.12 Historic drainage plans for nos. 75 and nos. 77 Gray’s Inn Road show that those houses were built with staircases that extended from lower ground floor to third floor on a continuous vertical through the building (figures 7 and 8). No. 79 doesn’t follow this arrangement. Instead, the stair is split between ground and lower ground floor. The existing stairs to the lower ground floor are generous, long and with shallow risers. The stair appears to be a modern addition to the building and lacks any architectural or historic interest. It is likely that as with its neighbours, the stair to no. 79 originally had a continuous staircase that ran from lower ground to third floor level. The buildings are relatively modest in scale and a simpler stair arrangement would make good sense – splitting the stair adds unnecessary complexity to the floor plan overall.
- 3.13 In addition, the position of the stairs from the ground floor upwards is slightly awkward. The upward flight from ground floor is positioned alongside the party wall with no. 77. This prohibits the continual access that one would expect from the main entrance door through to the yard at the rear (such as in no. 75 shown in figure 7). It is therefore likely that the stair has been flipped to borrow more space at ground floor level. The stairs may have been reconfigured when the extension was added to the building in 1984.

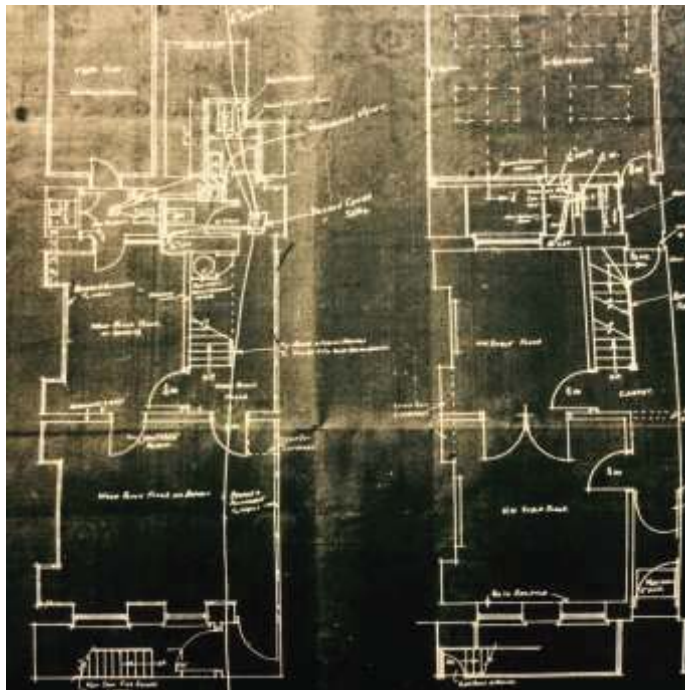


Figure 7: Drainage plan for no. 75 Gray’s Inn Road (January 1969)

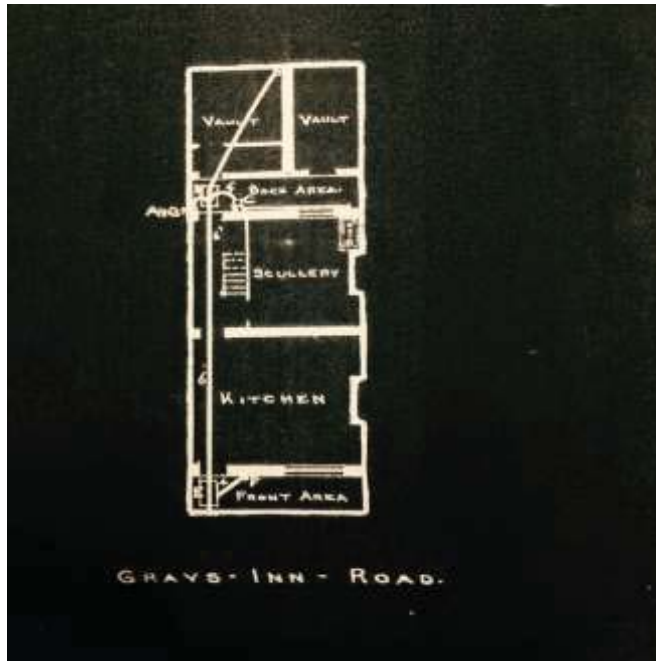


Figure 8: Drainage plan, no 77 Gray's Inn Road (1897).

- 3.14 The use of no. 79 as a surgery has clearly determined the appearance of the building as it is today. At lower ground level, there are no visible historic features or fabric of note and it is evident that the floor has undergone a thorough 'conversion' and 'modernisation'. At ground floor level, the stair has been altered, partitions added and an arched opening inserted into the spine wall. Some plasterwork appears authentic while that to the rear room appears to be a later addition. While the floor plan typically found in buildings of this period (i.e. front and rear rooms either side of a spine wall and accessed via the stair compartment) is legible, it is evident that the plan form has been heavily disrupted.
- 3.15 At first floor level, the plan of front and rear rooms has been disrupted while a modern kitchen has been fitted in the front room. The fireplace has been altered but generally the room is in good order. As with the building as a whole, there are no original doors and very few traces of any original joinery.
- 3.16 The plan at second floor level retains its front and rear room arrangement. There is panelling to both the front and rear rooms although it is more complete in the front room. There may be traces of panelling behind the modern fitted kitchen in the rear room. The window opening to the rear room has been altered.
- 3.17 At third floor level, the rear room has been subdivided and there are traces to show that the front room was also subdivided at some point. A drainage plan application of 1963 shows that the rear room once housed two bathrooms, presumably to serve two bedrooms in the subdivided front room.
- 3.18 The building's roof is now covered in artificial slate and is in need of some repair. It is not clear exactly when many of these internal changes were undertaken although it is evident that they date to the post-war period given the finish and detailing. The description of development for the 1984 planning and listed building consent

applications sets out that the applications were for 'The erection of a rear extension at basement, ground and part first floor levels and works of internal and external alteration' (application number 8470106). No drawings are currently available online but it may be possible to consult the hard copy of the relevant file.

- 3.19 The building has clearly undergone a significant degree of alteration although it retains something of a historic character and domestic scale.

Significance

- 3.20 No.79 Gray's Inn Road is clearly a building of special architectural and historic interest as acknowledged by its grade II listing in 1974. It is good example of a late 18th century townhouse in this location together with its neighbours from nos. 75-81a. The building and wider terrace is evidence of the later 18th century development of the wider area and is an important contributor to the Georgian character of the street and of the area more generally.
- 3.21 In terms of the layout and appearance of the building, it does retain something of sense of a Georgian townhouse despite substantial later alterations that have diminished the building's special interest. With such buildings and in determining the significance of its constituent parts it is important to consider the existing layout of the building, its surviving historic fabric and in the readily identifiable hierarchy of floors and individual spaces. The aesthetics of its rooms and elevations and its overall composition are also important. The significance of the sum of these parts in this case is clearly considered to be a national importance given its grade II listing although it does not appear that the interior of the building was ever inspected.
- 3.22 The integrity of the building's plan form is largely retained despite later alterations and subdivisions. The hierarchy between the floors remains legible which emphasises the *Piano Nobile* and the lesser status of the upper floors. The surviving chimney breasts, panelling, cornicing detail and other mouldings where relevant also contribute to the legibility of plan and hierarchy, giving strength to the character of the building. This legibility is of significance.
- 3.23 The main elevation is carefully composed with its plain and simple brick façade clearly of interest. While the elevation has the proportions and aesthetics of the original building, the fabric has been altered with the replacement of the building's original windows. The front elevation is important and of interest but its aesthetic and architectural significance has been diminished through the replacement of the windows.
- 3.24 Internally, the building is in good order and retains some of its historic fabric. As already noted it has undergone considerable alteration which includes works to the main stair. The historic fabric of the principal rooms includes some original or historic floorboards, areas of lath and plaster and cornicing. Many wall and ceiling finishes are modern.

3.25 Overall, no. 79 Gray's Inn Road is today a building with architectural and aesthetic interest and value, providing evidence of the history of the development and changing uses of Gray's Inn Road. The building is not in its original form; it has been adapted and altered to suit its users and uses. It does remain a building of some significance and character with more recent interventions obviously being of lesser interest.

4 Outline of the proposals

4.1 The proposals are fully set out in the accompanying drawings and Design and Access Statement submitted by Nash Baker Architects. They generally involve a light touch to the building result from a careful assessment of the building and its special interest and include:

- General repair and refurbishment of the building where necessary/appropriate;
- Refurbishment and redecoration of the existing front door and fanlight;
- Removal of secondary glazing and introduction of appropriately detailed double glazed windows where appropriate/necessary. 12mm deep Slimlite double glazed units with reproduction crown glass will be used to the front elevation (with the exception of the second floor windows) in order to address noise issues generated by traffic to Grays Inn Road. Windows to the rear elevation will be single glazed. All new windows will be appropriately detailed and proportioned.
- Refurbishment of shutters where required;
- Replacement of uPVC doors and windows with timber equivalents where necessary;
- Removal of the non-original staircase between lower ground and ground floor;
- Enhancements to the main stair including positive interventions to the altered handrail and balustrade where necessary and the removal of modern walling to the staircase. This will have the benefit of opening up the staircase and restoring some of its historic character;
- Use of the front area external staircase as main access to the lower ground floor unit;
- Change of use of the ground floor to residential;
- Removal of non-original partitions at lower ground floor and the return to a more historic layout of front and rear room;
- Reinstatement of the spine wall at ground floor level;
- Retention of the existing plan at first floor level;
- Creation of a narrow opening between front and rear room at second floor level;
- Removal of all non-original joinery such as built-in cupboards;
- Alteration to the spine wall at third floor level while retaining elements of the spine wall and the sense of front and rear rooms;
- A conservation rooflight to the stairwell at third floor level replacing an existing rooflight;
- Recovering of the existing roof with natural slate and the covering of the central section with lead so as to avoid future water ingress. All of the roof structure will remain *in situ*. The proposed covering of the central section would not be visible from street level (no. 77 has similarly altered its roof structure);

- New appropriately detailed doors, skirting and architraves throughout; and,
- Levelling of historic floorboards and refurbishment of other floor coverings.

- 4.2 Overall, the proposals work with the existing layout and fabric of the building but seek to enhance it through repair and refurbishment and the proposed residential use throughout. This is a building originally conceived and constructed as a residential property and it retains its domestic scale and character in part. The proposed scheme will allow the building to revert back to a fully residential building - a use which better responds to the layout and plan of this 18th century house. Alterations to the building's layout will reinstate the more cellular plan of the original building and allow for a more appropriate, less intensive use.
- 4.3 The package of works offered by the proposals will be beneficial to the building and its architectural and historic special interest and significance. Section 6 considers the principal alterations to the building and how these relate to its significance and relevant historic environment policy (outlined in section 5).

5 Policy Context

- 5.1 This section briefly sets out the range of national and local historic environment policy and guidance. The relevant statutory provision for the historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the government's approach to the historic built environment. Section 12 of the NPPF deals specifically with this area of policy. Policies relevant in this particular case are as follows.

- 5.3 Paragraph 126 sets out that local authorities should 'set out in the Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment'. In doing this, they should take into account:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and,
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

- 5.4 Paragraph 128 states that applicants should 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.' A history of the site and a statement of significance are presented at section 3 of this report.

- 5.5 Paragraph 131 states that in determining planning applications, local 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.

- 5.6 Paragraph 132 states 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. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.’ Paragraph 133 goes on to say substantial harm or total loss of significance may be acceptable only in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.7 Clearly, while the thrust of Chapter 12 of the NPPF is to protect against harm, in many cases proposals will not cause harm, substantial or otherwise. Paragraph 134 deals with cases where a proposal causes less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset such as a listed building or Conservation Area. It states that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. It follows that if harm is not caused then proposals will be acceptable.

London Borough of Camden’s Local Plan

- 5.8 A number of policies within the London Borough of Camden’s Core Strategy and Development Policies seek to preserve and enhance the borough’s historic environment, and protect elements and features of special interest. The relevant policy from the Core Strategy in relation to the historic environment (CS14) sets out Camden’s overarching strategy and focuses on the need to preserve or enhance heritage assets and their setting and the requirement for new development to be of the highest quality and to respect local context and character.
- 5.9 Policy DP25 of Camden’s *Development Policies Document* provides further guidance on the council’s approach to the historic environment. The main points of this policy in this instance are as follows.
- 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.
- 5.10 As the building is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, local conservation area policies also have some relevance. The proposed changes, insofar as they relate to the conservation area, are minor (window renewal and repair, brickwork repair and cleaning) and are intended to enhance the conservation area

as much as the listed building. While all the relevant conservation area policies set out at DP24 are not reiterated in full here, the general intent of the policy is to ensure alterations within conservation areas preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, in line with statutory requirements.

6 Assessment of the proposals

- 6.1 The following section considers the impact of the proposed scheme on the significance of the building and how it accords with national and local historic environment policy.
- 6.2 The general thrust of national and local policy seeks to protect the special interest of designated heritage assets or listed buildings. In this regard, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which aligns with the statutory duties set out in the 1990 Act, sets out that proposals should not cause harm to the significance of heritage assets. It states at paragraph 132 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. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.’
- 6.3 Paragraph 132 introduces the idea that the more important an asset, the greater the weight to be given to its conservation. It follows that the more important an *element* of an asset, the greater weight should be given to *its* conservation and that where there are less significant elements of an asset, there is scope for alteration through managed change. There is effectively a potential hierarchy of significance for individual buildings where some areas or elements of a building are less significant than others. Paragraph 132 also rightly points out that significance can be harmed through ill thought out and inappropriate alterations. It is vital that the significance of the building and its setting is understood prior to developing proposals and in the case of no. 79 Gray’s Inn Road, this understanding has underpinned the evolving design from the outset. The proposed alterations to the building have been identified for sound architectural, design, functional and conservation reasons and, as shown below, the various elements of the proposals can be fully justified in these terms.
- 6.4 Paragraphs 133 and 134 of the NPPF deal with the matter of harm and set out that harm can be substantial or less than substantial. ‘Harm’ should identified and be justified. While the acceptance of substantial harm to a heritage asset is usually exceptional, ‘less than substantial harm’ may be outweighed by the benefits of the proposals. ‘Less than substantial harm’ is a broad categorisation that encompasses a considerable array of impacts from virtually no harm to almost substantial harm. The impact of the proposals on the significance of the relevant element will need to be carefully considered and a balanced decision taken on the degree of harm against relative significance. The loss of non-significant features would not cause harm and the reinstatement of other features and forms would be beneficial. A balanced and proportionate approach in the development of proposals and in their judgement is essential.

- 6.5 Local policy also seeks to minimise the harm caused through policies DP24 and DP25. A number of criteria are set out in DP24 that stipulate the prerequisites of appropriate development and DP25 sets out that alterations and extensions would only be permitted where they did not harm the special interest of a listed building or its setting. Similarly, such proposals would only be acceptable where they preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area.
- 6.6 The following paragraphs consider the effects of the proposals on the special interest and significance of no. 79 Gray's Inn Road. The paragraphs take into account the national and local historic environment policy as set out above and justify the proposed changes to the building. It is considered that the proposals represent a well-considered and responsive scheme for the alteration of the existing building and the following paragraphs give weight to this conclusion.
- 6.7 From the outset, it should be remembered that the existing building does retain some features of interest and significance but that significance has been diminished through alteration and an intensive use. The proposals seek to reverse some of those alterations that detract from the building's significance and to enhance no. 79 as far as possible and as practicable.
- 6.8 More appropriate detailing will be introduced throughout the building. This extends to doors, architraves and skirting boards. It also includes the replacement of certain inappropriate or failing windows such as those at basement and ground floor levels and the uPVC window to the rear elevation. In replacing windows, it is considered possible to introduce appropriately and traditionally detailed double glazed windows to the front elevation (with the exception of the second floor where the windows are original). Where acoustic separation is necessary to rooms facing Gray's Inn Road, new windows will be fitted with 12mm deep Slimlite double glazed units with reproduction crown glass used in order to enhance the reflective quality of the windows.
- 6.9 The new double glazed windows will allow for the removal of unattractive secondary glazing that in many cases prevents the opening and use of original shutters. It is considered that aesthetically and architecturally, the replacement windows (where appropriate) and the refurbishment and reuse of the shutters will enhance the building and its significance.
- 6.10 A number of changes are proposed to the layout of the building. At ground floor level, the spine wall will be reinstated, a solid wall replacing the later arched opening to the building and enhancing the sense of a front and rear room. The first floor layout is unchanged. At second floor level, a small opening is proposed between front and rear rooms. The layout of front and rear room would remain legible and the works to the second floor would allow for the reinstatement of the original window proportions at this level to the rear.

- 6.11 The main alteration to the plan is seen at third floor level which has already been significantly altered. In addition, the third floor is of less significance and architectural and historic interest than the remainder of the house. A central spine wall currently separates the front room from a corridor with access to a bathroom at the rear. The proposals at this level involve the opening up of the spine wall to allow for the incorporation of a bathroom at the centre of the plan. Parts of the spine wall will be retained. This has a relatively modest effect on the plan at this level overall, borrowing some space from the front room. The traditional arrangement of rooms to the front and rear of the spine wall will remain in essence and it is considered that the approach is a neat solution to reconfiguring the accommodation at this level.
- 6.12 It is also proposed to remove the staircase between ground and lower ground floor levels. As set out in section, it is considered that the proposed stair is not sited in its original location and is not of any architectural or historic interest. Rather, it appears to be a modern insertion that has been introduced following the reconfiguration of the building at lower ground and ground floor levels and the main stair itself. Its removal would therefore not harm the special interest or significance of the building although it would have an impact on vertical circulation throughout the building. Given the degree of alteration already undertaken, the redundancy of the existing lower ground stair, its lack of historic character or quality and the wider benefits offered by the proposed scheme, it is considered that any perceived harm can be outweighed by the many benefits of the proposals, particularly the refurbishment works to the main staircase.
- 6.13 Historic alterations to the principal staircase will also be reversed with the lowering of the balustrade where necessary and the removal of dividing walls to the stair well. Works of this nature will dramatically enhance the spatial quality of the main circulation space and reinstate more of the character of the original house. The stair is currently dark and enclosed and the proposals will open up the stair, offering a further enhancement to the listed building.
- 6.14 The proposals do allow for the addition of Slimlite double glazed units to the principal elevation of the building. This is often a contentious matter in historic or listed buildings. In this case, many of the windows are in a poor state of repair or inappropriate such as those at ground and lower ground floor. There is a need to enhance the performance of the windows to the principal elevation given the traffic conditions and associated noise to Gray's Inn Road. In dealing with the noise issues with Slimlite glazing, the new windows would enhance the principal elevation through appropriate and traditionally detailed 6x6 sash windows (crown glass will be used in the new units). In addition, double glazing would allow for the removal of the unattractive secondary glazing which prevents the use of the shutter boxes in a number of instances. There are benefits to the future occupiers of the property in the better performing windows and also benefits to the listed building in how it would enhance its character and special interest.

Conclusions

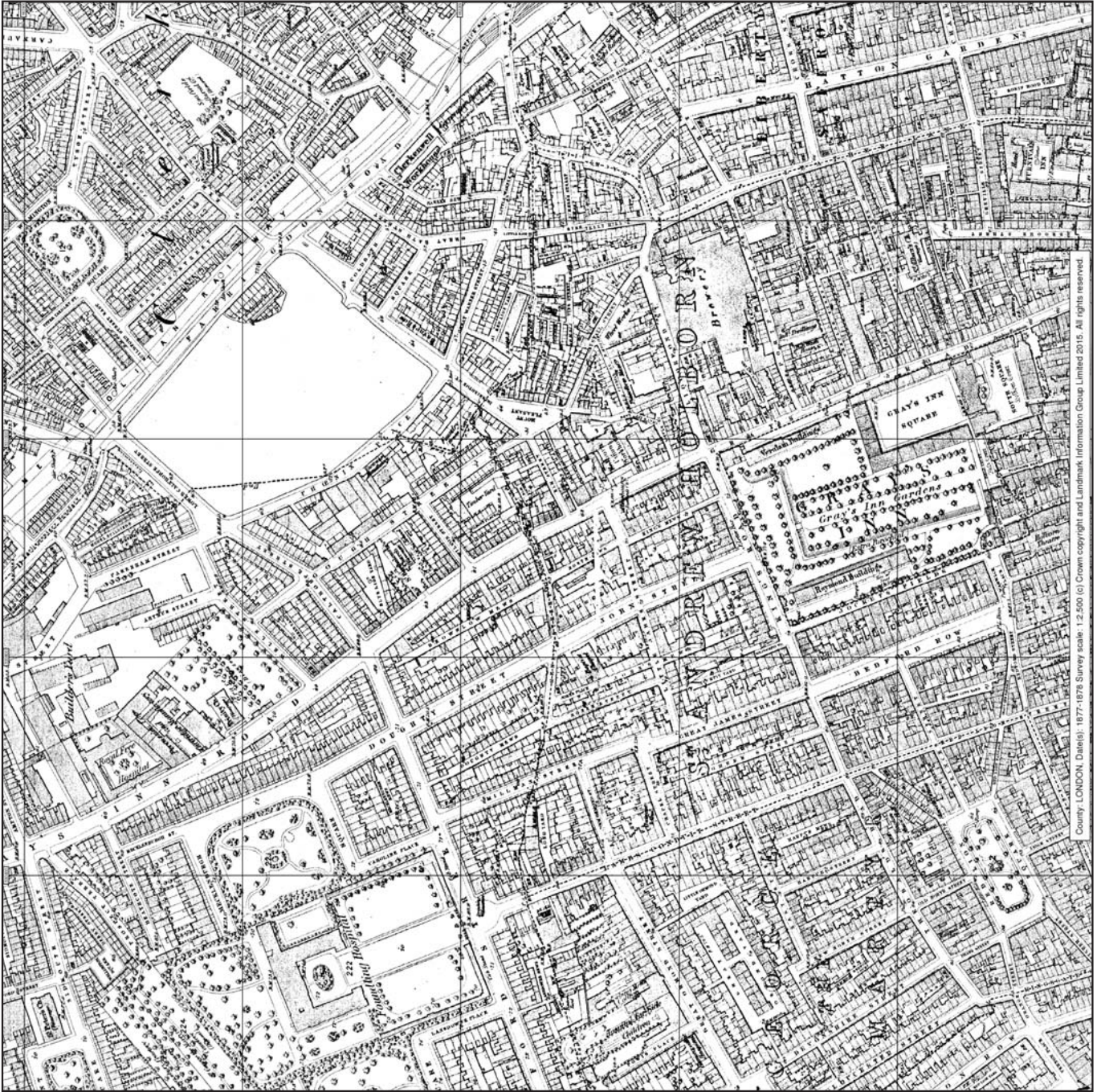
- 6.15 National and local historic environment policies seek to minimise or prevent harm to listed buildings. In line with the 1990 Act, proposals should not cause harm to the special interest of the listed building. The special interest of no. 79 Gray's Inn Road is derived from its surviving historic fabric, its plan, layout and architectural composition, its relationship with neighbouring listed buildings and its role in the historic development of Gray's Inn Road. On a more micro-level, the individual elements of the building that make up the whole such as historic windows, doors, and cornicing clearly contribute to its architectural and historic special interest. In the case of no. 79 Gray's Inn Road, the special interest of the building has been diminished and harmed through historic alterations and interventions. The proposed scheme seeks to reverse some of those alterations and interventions to a point while delivering an appropriate level of residential accommodation. The proposals have been carefully balanced so as to ensure that this can be achieved while offering genuine enhancements of and benefits to the listed building.
- 6.16 The proposals will bring about benefits to the building's principal and rear elevations through enhancements to its windows and repairs and refurbishment where necessary. Internally, the remaining historic features will be repaired and enhanced, the legibility of the original plan form at ground and first floor will be emphasised and historic wall, floor and ceiling finishes will be retained and repaired. The roof will also be repaired and recovered. More traditionally detailed and appropriate joinery will also be reinstated/introduced. The existing doors are plain, unattractive and add little to the character and interest of the building. Works to the main staircase will considerably harm this important space and emphasise the historic and architectural character of the building. These works will enhance the significance of the building rather than cause harm as per the relevant policy test.
- 6.16 The plan form of the building has been altered in certain areas and the reconfiguration of rooms as set out in the scheme currently proposed focuses on areas that have already been reconfigured and altered. The proposals still retain the legibility of the plan form while effectively moving partitions or introducing limited new stud walls. The proposals do not seek to reconfigure the better, less altered principal rooms at ground, first and second floor. Given the degree of existing alteration, it is considered that the proposed subdivision does not worsen the existing situation and causes no further harm to the historic building. Taken alongside the beneficial works described above, the proposals on balance are considered to be appropriate in policy terms, enhancing no. 79 Gray's Inn Road as far as possible while maintaining a similar provision of accommodation to that which already exists. The proposed scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable in historic environment policy terms.

Appendix A

Historic OS Maps



Landmark Historical Map
County: LONDON
Published Date(s): 1877-1878
Originally plotted at: 1:2,500



County: LONDON. Date(s): 1877-1878. Survey scale: 1:2,500. (c) Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2015. All rights reserved.





Landmark Historical Map
County: LONDON
Published Date(s): 1 □ □
Originally plotted at: 1:2,500



County: LONDON Date(s): 1916 Survey scale: 1:2,500 (c) Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2015. All rights reserved.



Landmark Historical Map

□ apping: □ po: h 5
Published Date(s): 1:52-1:5 □
Originally plotted at: 1:1,250

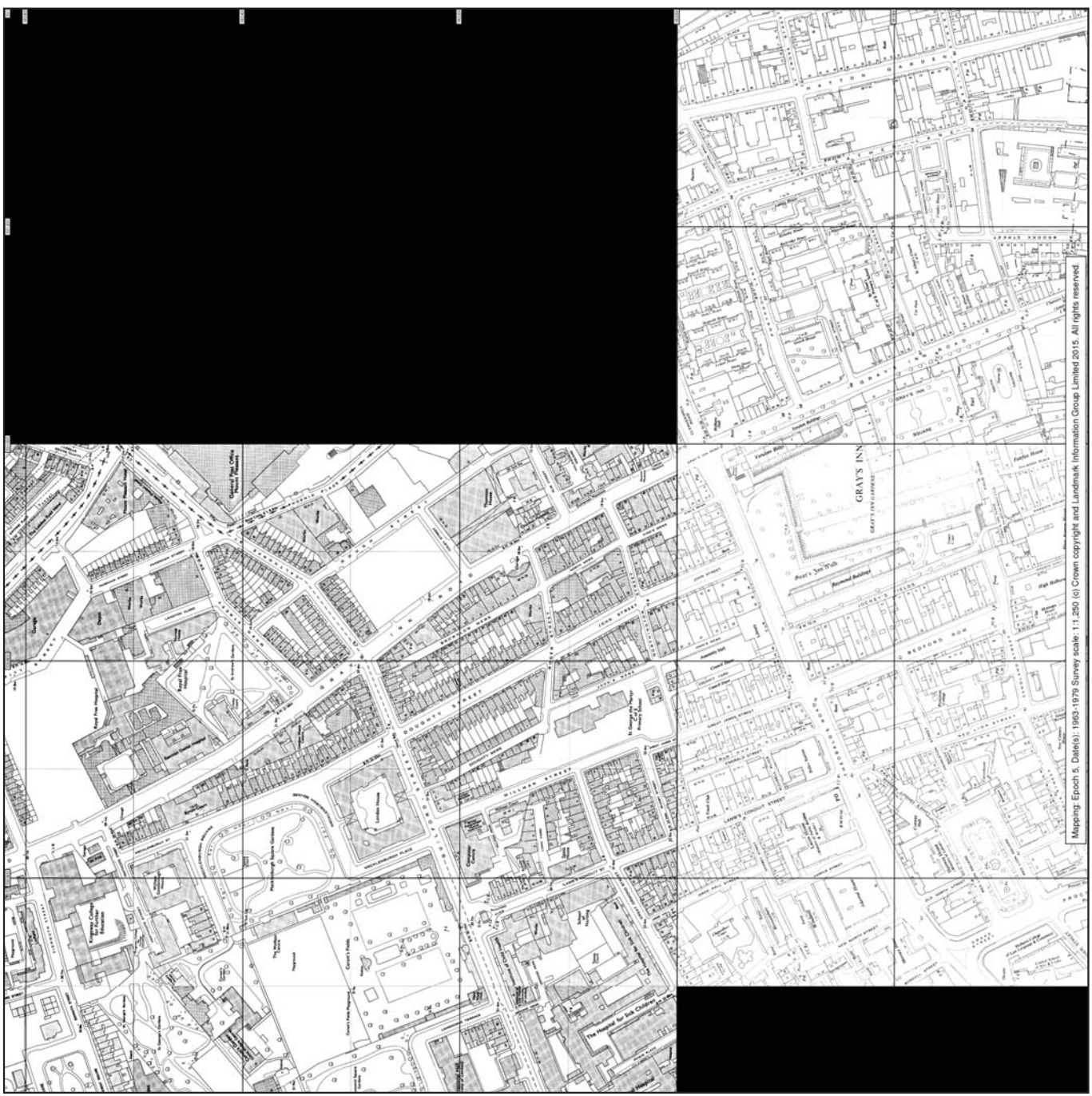


Mapping Epoch 5, Date(s): 1952-1953 Survey scale: 1:1,250 (c) Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2015. All rights reserved.



Landmark Historical Map

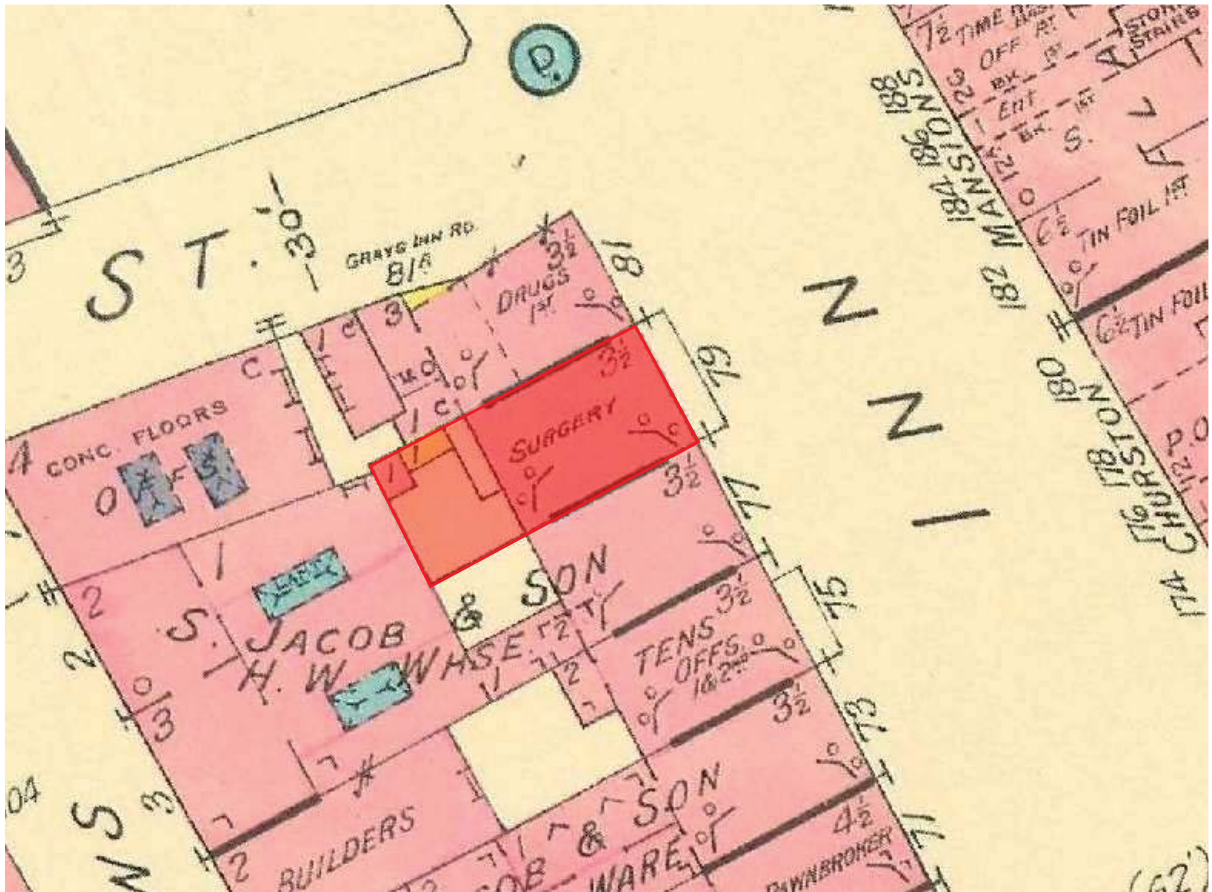
Mapping: po.h.5
Published Date(s): 1 1.7
Originally plotted at: 1:1,250



Mapping Epoch 5, Date(s): 1963-1979 Survey scale: 1:1,250 (c) Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2015. All rights reserved.

Appendix B

Goad Insurance Plan Extracts



Goad Plan Extract (1942)



Goald Plan Extract (1951)



Goad Plan Extract (1960)



Goat Plan Extract (1967)