

# DESIGN AND ACCESS/HERITAGE STATEMENT

**GHK ARCHITECTS**

**Project:** Stone Chambers No4 Field Court London WC1R 5EF for The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn. Basement Photocopy room External Door Alteration to form sash window

**Ref/File No:**  
HK 2188/3.1

**Client:** The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn

**Title:** Design and Access/Heritage Statement

**Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> July 2015

**DESIGN AND ACCESS/HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR:** Basement Photocopy Room - External boarded over door alteration to the North elevation and small external lightwell to form new painted timber sash window to match the existing within the room .

No other works to the property are proposed as part of this Application

## **Physical/Heritage Statement**

The Existing property of Stone Chambers to No4 Field Court is located within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn and The Bloomsbury Conservation area. The property is located with its South Elevation/Entrance on the North side of the paved thoroughfare to Field Court. The North Elevation to Stone Chambers faces directly into the Gray's Inn Gardens (The Walks).

Basement levels on the North Elevation are set down with the external walls to the projecting bays acting partly as retaining walls with small external lightwells between the bays/at the corners.

Externally in the Gray's Inn Garden the grassed areas immediately in front of the North Elevation of the building and Basement lightwells/railings ground levels ramp up to the general level of the grassed areas/paths in the South west parts of the Grays Inn Garden. Lightwells and the existing boarded over Photocopy room door are only partially visible from the main garden areas looking south from within the Gardens, as can be seen in the existing photographs on the Photosheet P001 submitted with this Application

### **North Elevation exterior finishes:**

The main North elevation consists of Basement, Ground, First, Second and Third floor/dormer levels with slate pitched roofing and projecting red brick/stone chimney stacks.

**Basement levels:** red facing brickwork with painted timber sash/casement windows and boarded over timber door including to the lightwells between bays and at the corners. Modern metal railings to Lightwells painted black.

**Ground Floor:** Portland stone plinth and rusticated stonework below the projecting moulded stone cornice below First floor level and to the projecting bays. Painted timber sash windows and lead capped projecting centre bay at Ground floor level only.

**First and Second Floors:** Red facing brickwork with Portland stone quoins, projecting bays, window surrounds, string courses and moulded stone window cappings above First floor windows between bays. Painted timber sash windows to Portland stone bays and main brick façade. Large projecting moulded stone cornice above Second Floor level and below the stone parapet/balustrade to Third Floor Level.

**Third Floor and Roof:** Third floor accommodation is set within the pitched slate roofing of the property with painted timber sash dormer windows. The windows are set within decorative Portland stone dormers with scrollwork at the sides, moulded cornices and patterned semicircular head features. Panelled portland stone parapet walls are provided between the dormer windows and each side of the bays. Decorative stone balustrades are provided to the 2no bays/roofing outside the dormer windows.

**Pipework:** Black lead/cast iron rainwater pipes and vent pipes are surface fixed to the North elevation.

**East End:** A smaller set back extension to the main North Elevation is provided with plain/rusticated render, red facing bricks, portland stone string courses painted timber sash windows and slate pitched roofing. See also existing photographs on the Photosheet P001 submitted with this Application.

As the property is well above the High Water Level of the River Thames which also protected by the Thames Barrier further downstream and after a review of the Environment Agency Flood Risk mapping it is considered that this Application relates to altering a redundant and boarded over timber door to a sash window at Basement level to a small external lightwell only this application will not require a Flood Risk Assessment.

## **ECONOMIC**

The property consists of busy and successful Barristers Chambers and although not Listed the external facades contain fine decorative detailed brick and portland stone features. See also existing photographs on the Photosheet P001 submitted with this Application. The location of Stone Chambers, No4 Field Court provides very good quality Chambers rooms with fine views on the North Elevation to Gray's Inn Gardens, except at Basement level where rooms are mainly set down below garden level and external grassed areas bank down from the main Garden levels.

The importance of Stone Chambers No4 Field Court within the confines of The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate, and other Historic Buildings/Public thoroughfares, is well understood as being an important element in maintaining the high profile status for The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn and its prestigious Tenants. It is considered that any alterations to this particular property must be carried out in a manner that enhances, rather than detracts from the existing property, the unique setting and historic fabric, whilst at the same time allowing the Barristers Chambers to operate efficiently for all parties whilst maintaining a secure working environment.

The property of Stone Chambers as noted above, is in a very prestigious setting within Gray's Inn and the location/historic quality contributes to the success of the

individual Chambers offices located therein and also for The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn. The efficient operation of the accommodation continues to be an essential requirement for the success Barristers Chambers which are located in the property. As part of the Chambers operations of the it is proposed to change the use of the existing Basement Photocopy room to a Staff/rest room, and it is for this reason it is proposed to change the existing boarded over door and frame to the West side of the Bay to a timber sash window – similar in size and detailing to the one that currently exists on the East side of the bay to allow more light into the room and improve the space for the change of use proposed.

### **ACCESS**

As this application is being made for the alteration of the existing boarded over door to the Basement level Photocopy room access to and from the property will be retained as existing via the original Main Entrance door and central Staircase. It should be additionally noted that full wheelchair access and associated facilities are also provided/made available in other Gray's Inn properties within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate. Through the Banqueting Contractor, The Inn also lets out individual meetings rooms of differing sizes which are fully accessible and may be utilised by Barristers Chambers/Tenants in The Inn, as and when required.

Access to the external Basement lightwell is for maintenance purposes only and is gained via portable safety ladders.

### **DESIGN /HERITAGE.**

The design constraints for the proposed alterations are the existing external fabric and features of the bay construction/facing brickwork at Basement level to the existing Photocopy room. The existing glazed panelled door and fanlight have been previously boarded over where the door joinery became affected by moisture ingress and has remained in this condition for some time. The door was also very difficult to use due the limited shape of the triangular space to the external Lightwell outside the door. The Door could not be fully opened due to the retaining wall to the south end of the grass bank to the garden - as can be seen in the photographs on Photosheet P001 submitted with this application. It is therefore proposed to install a matching painted timber sash window to this opening, retaining the existing arch and brick reveals to balance up the appearance with the corresponding existing timber sash window already in place on the opposite side of the bay in the Photocopy room. Glazing bars and joinery details will match the existing sash window and below the proposed timber sash window cill it is proposed to brick infill the opening with red facing bricks externally to match the existing external facing brickwork and repair spalled brick faces of the retaining wall adjacent to the opening.

It is noted that the corresponding Bay on the West side of the North Elevation has painted timber sash windows both sides of the Bay at Basement level and no door is provided.

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