

Design & Access Statement

Conversion of offices to 3 residential dwellings at
1-7 Woburn Walk, London WC1H 0JJ



Version 5

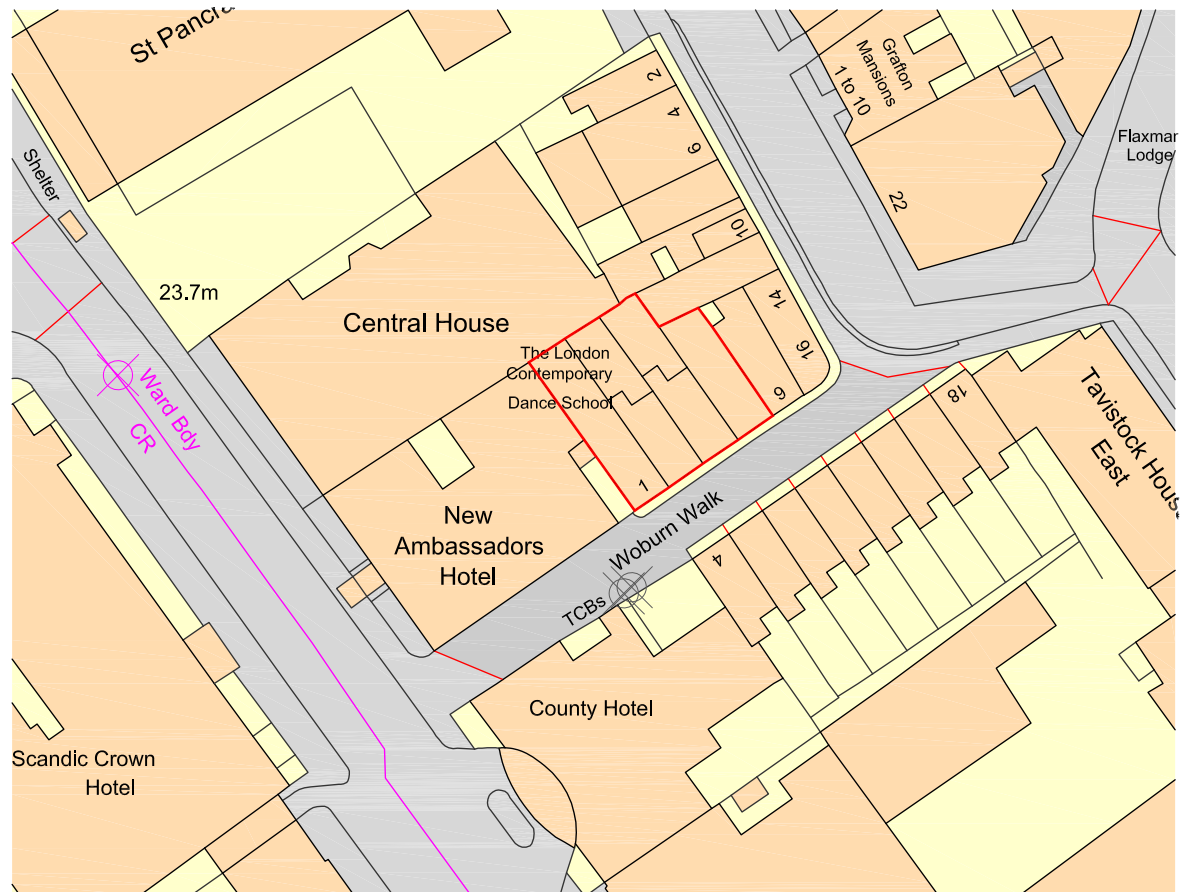
1.0 | Purpose

The purpose of this DAS document is to explain the applicant's intention to create 3 no. flats in a Grade II* listed building (of special architectural or historical interest) which is currently of use class (B1a office). This should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement, prepared by the Heritage Advisory and the Planning Statement, prepared by Montagu Evans.

1.1 | Introduction

Martin Ralph Architects were instructed to prepare a planning submission for the redesign of the upper floors of 1-7 Woburn Walk as part of a proposed scheme for the change of use of this Grade II* listed building (of special architectural or historical interest) from (B1a) office to (C3a) residential use.

The previous application was withdrawn to allow a more detailed re-evaluation of the proposals.



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Not to Scale OS Map depicting the location of Woburn Walk. The site sits within the conservation area of Bloomsbury.

2.0 | Consultation

2.1 | Previous Application

The previous application was submitted in August 2014. Ref 2014/4803/P
The proposed accommodation contained 2no. 2 bed and 1no. 1 bed apartments.
The application comprised a set of drawings showing the proposed changes, our Design and Access Statment, a Heritage Statement and a brief marketing statement.

We subsequently held discussions with the Bloomsbury Group and the Planning Authority following which it was agreed to withdraw the application in order to fully assess the proposals.



Front façade showing the first and second floor windows facing Woburn Walk. The plaque denotes the historic significance of its famous former resident.

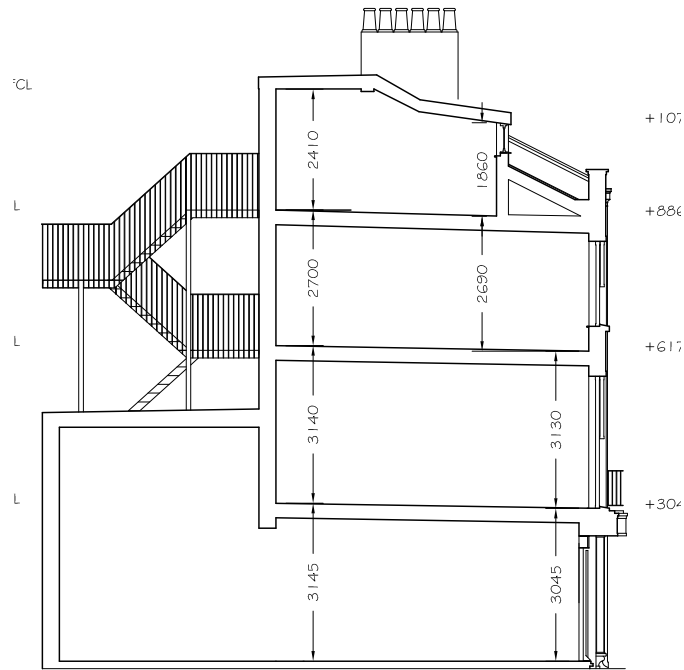
2.2 | Consultation Outcome

Representative of Historic England (English Heritage) and the Camden Officer have either visited the site or held discussion with the design team. Their response is that the principle of residential conversion may be accepted and the proposed lateral flat layout is supported.

This is mainly due to the fact that this terrace has change irreperably since the end of the Second World War.

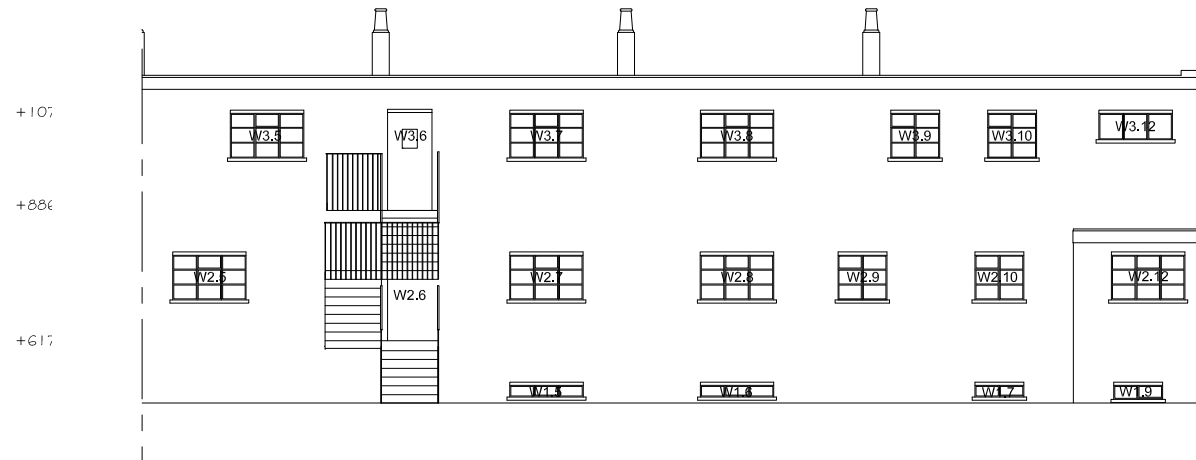
The evidence of the historic damage done, can be seen in the cross section below and on the aerial photograph on the opposite page. Further information is set out within the Heitage Statement.

This terrace is narrower than the neighbouring ones and lacks the suitable rear windows that would have existed, making attempts to recreate the original layout simply not feasible. We have taken on board detailed comments as well and the disruption to the existing internal fabric has been reduced to the absolute minimum as our new drawings clearly demonstrate.



Section AA

FIGURE 1.100



'not to scale' CAD cross section and rear elevation clearly show the trunkated nature of this block.

3.0 | Site and its Surroundings

3.1 | Site Context

Woburn Walk is an attractive, Victorian pedestrian street set within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The building forms are synonymous with the vernacular of Victorian London, comprising three levels above the Dickensian-type shop-fronts which currently are used as offices including one which sits within the attic space.

The site is within a high accessibility area serviced by numerous road, bus, tube and rail networks. A number of local shops and amenities are set within the street itself, as well as the wider context.



Aerial view looking West over the site.

3.2 | Character

Woburn Walk, as the name suggests was designed as a pedestrian street, it is lined with large trees, Victorian street furniture, signage and wide stone paving.

The buildings are rendered above timber-clad shop front windows and wear their original Victorian ornament. Well worn but meticulously maintained, the street has immense charm and sits well amongst its modern neighbours.

The street is home to small independent shops and cafes which spill out onto the wide flag-stones. It has its own micro-culture which invites visitors and regulars and is a real asset to the area.



The street in the morning is set up to receive its many guests.

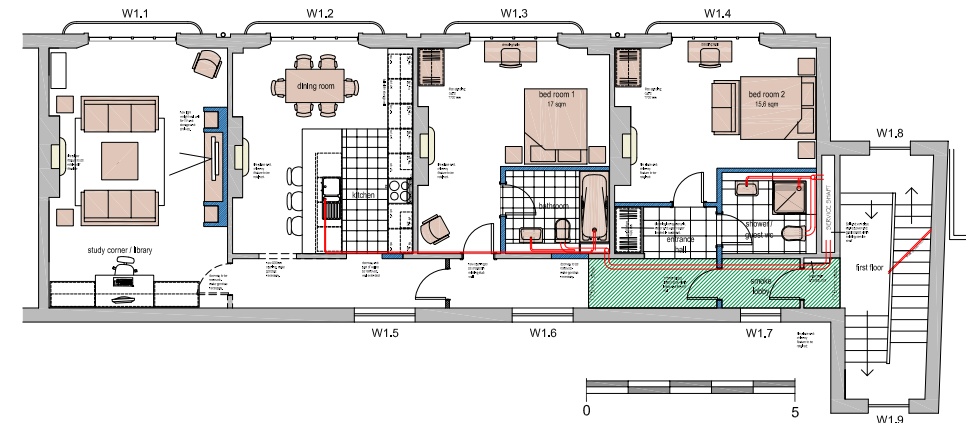
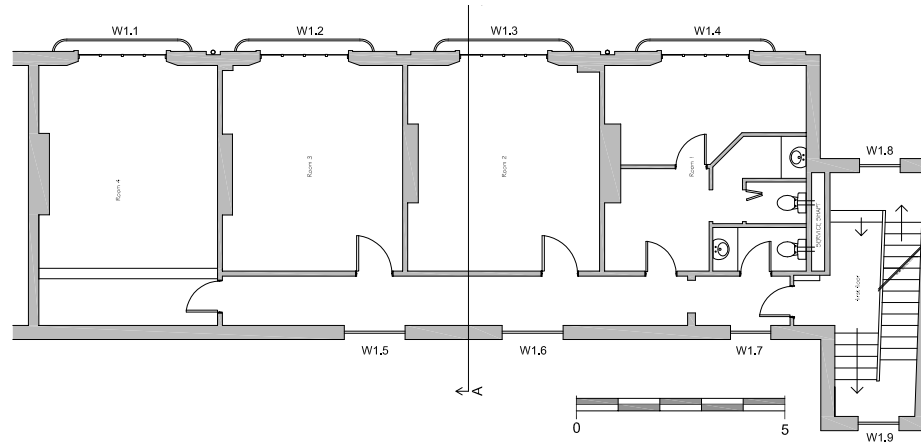
4.0 | Proposal

The proposed development will make no changes to the overall appearance of the front or rear elevations.

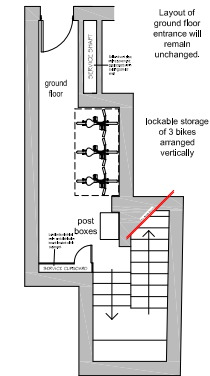
The proposed change in use will enable the exterior fabric to be sensitively renovated and improved with existing windows and ironwork retained and made good as necessary. Poor quality steel windows at the rear and the UPVC windows on third floor will be replaced with new hardwood windows, painted to match the surrounding ones.

Internal works will maintain the fabric of the building, making good and repairing as necessary. Removal of all redundant adaptations for office use will return the buildings to their former function as homes. This will enhance the fabric of the building and its character.

The revised proposal also includes more detail on the new services within this building.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN AS PROPOSED 1:100



GROUND FLOOR PLAN 1:100
PARTIAL PLAN - AS PROPOSED

Extract from drawing 14A_032 11C indicating the as existing and as proposed at first floor level and the new bike storage within the ground floor entrance.

5.0 | Design Principles

The 3 flats have been designed to keep disruption to the existing fabric to a minimum and to enhance the existing features within.

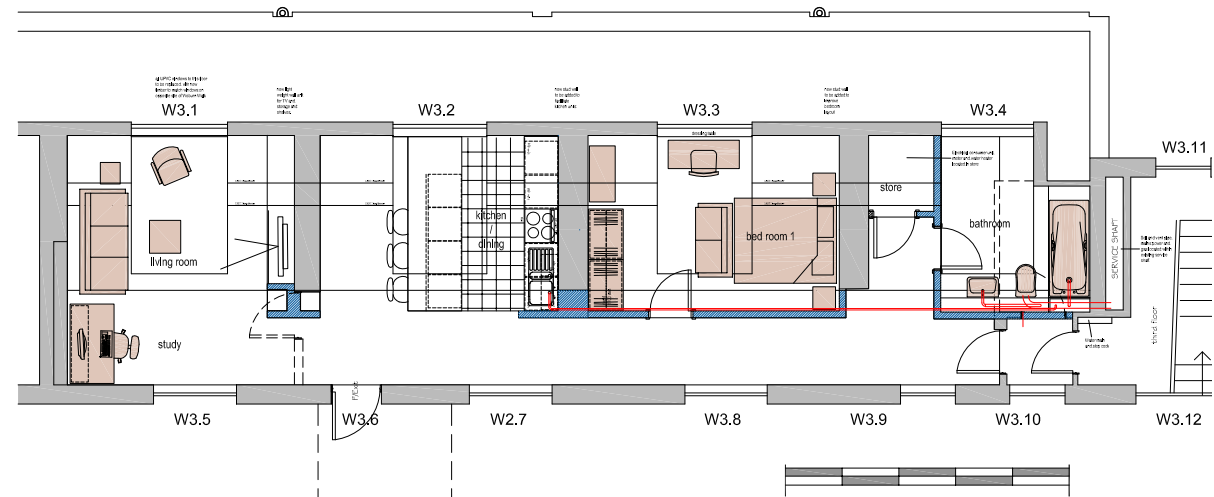
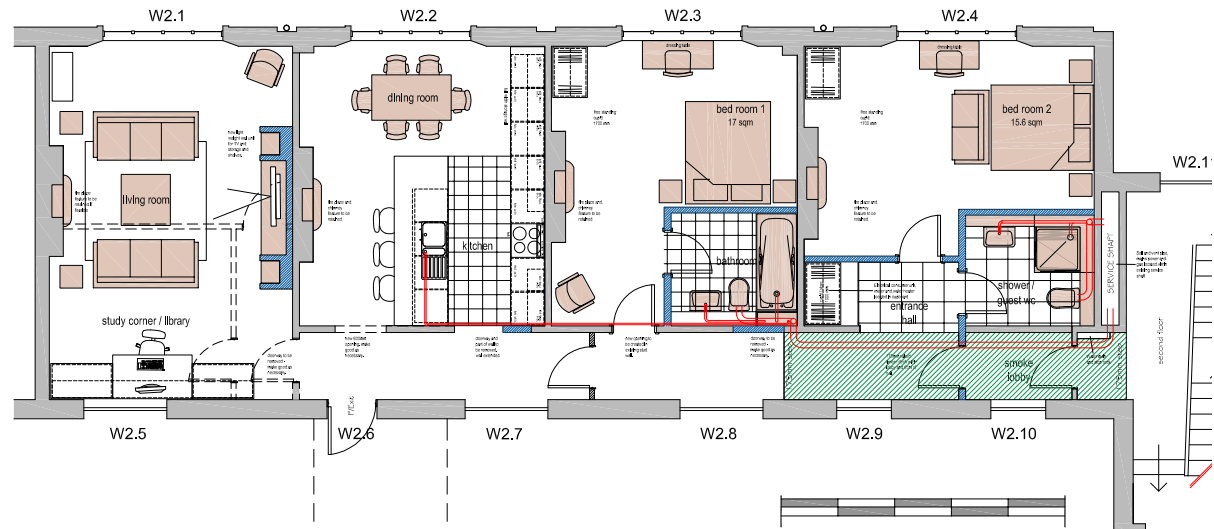
First and second floors will be 2 bedroom flats and the much smaller third floor will be converted to a 1 bed flat.

All the bedrooms are located at the front of the flats with kitchen and living spaces beyond.

All separating walls will be retained and only the minimum door openings are now proposed. Features such as chimney breasts and fire places can now be expressed again.

All finishes will be kept as sympathetic as possible. Timber floor boards will remain, architectural ironmongery will be carefully selected and light fittings will be pendant lights or free standing rather than recessed spot lights.

Extract from drawings 14A_032 12B and 13B indicating as proposed second and third floor layouts.



6.0 | Lifetime Home Statement

Statements on the Revised Lifetime Homes Standard. Published 5 July 2010. Copyright Habinteg.

1A - Parking (width or widening capability)

1B - Communal or shared parking

2 – Approach to dwelling from parking.

Owing to the nature of the site, its location within the conservation area, its original design intent as London's first 'pedestrian only' street, there has never been nor will be vehicular parking or access within the bounds of Woburn Walk. It is highly unlikely this will change, thus any vehicular parking and/or access to the buildings along the street is strictly prohibited therefore parts 1A, 1B and 2 of the HfL criteria cannot be met and/or are not applicable.

3 – Approach to all entrances

Approach to the building along Woburn Walk is unimpeded by level change and has direct pedestrian access from/to the street therefore complies with part 3 of the HfL criteria.

4 - Entrances

Entry to the building is via a single door, to the left of the street elevation on Woburn Walk. As this forms part of the building it is thus included within the bounds of the listing. Any changes to this is again likely to attract objections on the grounds it will alter the building, the street scene, and differ from existing frontages. However, the street is at a level whereby ambulant and wheelchair users can travel unimpeded where only minor thresholds exist as external and internal floor levels (to that of 1-7 Woburn Walk) are very similar therefore part 4 of the HfL criteria would be partially met.

5A - Communal Stairs

There are no lifts within the building; a modern stairwell provides vertical access to the three levels above the commercial units on the ground floor. The stairs partly meet the requirement (whereby rise and goings differ from one run to the next in order that they sit within the confines of the building). Integration of a lift would considerably alter the layout and fabric of the building, as such would again attract objections.

The conservation and preservation of the existing building, as per the listing guidelines, would mean that any such additions/alterations would contravene them therefore only part of the part 5 HfL criteria is met.

6 - Internal doorways and hallways

The existing doors and doorways comply to building regulation Part B (Fire) and therefore comply with MoE and fire rating; included within are door sizes and distances. Internal corridors are set out by the existing fabric which again is protected under the listing and cannot be changed therefore part 6 of the HfL criteria is partially met.

The ground floor entrance lobby is spacious enough to allow for 3 bicycles to be stored vertically within the recess. These will be lockable and won't prevent a safe circulation route through the lobby

7 - Circulation Space

The existing accessibility of the building, its listing preventing adaptations which would allow for wheelchair users would therefore mean it not practicable to gain access to the upper levels. Part 7 of the HfL criteria is not applicable.

8 - Entrance level living space

The ground floor of the building is given to commercial use only and is protected by the listing. Owing to the existing accessibility of the building and such adaptations being prevented, wheelchair and non-ambulant users would not be able to gain access to the upper levels. Ambulant users however would be catered for as all proposed dwellings lay on a single floor therefore Part 8 of the HfL criteria is partially applicable and met.

9 - Potential for entrance level bed-space

The ground floor of the building is given to commercial use only and is protected by the listing. Owing to the existing accessibility of the building and such adaptations being prevented, wheelchair and non-ambulant users would not be able to gain access to the upper levels. Ambulant users however would be catered for as all proposed dwellings lay on a single floor therefore Part 9 of the HfL criteria is partially applicable and met.

10 - Entrance level WC and shower drainage

The ground floor of the building is given to commercial use only and is protected by the listing. Owing to the existing accessibility of the building and such adaptations being prevented, wheelchair and non-ambulant users would not be able to gain access to the upper levels. Ambulant users however would be catered for as all proposed dwellings lay on a single floor therefore Part 10 of the HfL criteria is partially applicable and met.

11 – WC and bathroom walls

All new interventions are to be non-permanent and leave existing fabric unchanged and in-tact, all walls and partitions are to be of stud construction. Any additional strengthening for grab-rails etc will be specified in the construction drawings thus complying with Part 11 of the HfL criteria.

12 - Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwellings

The proposed units are single storey only and would not need additional vertical circulation outside of the primary circulation space therefore Part 12 of the HfL criteria is not applicable here. The conservation and preservation of the existing building, as per the listing guidelines, would mean that any such adaptations would contravene them.

13 – Potential for future fitting of hoists and bedroom / bathroom relationship

Ceiling hoists to aid movement between bedroom & bathroom require the insertion of supporting steel beams which again would contravene the listing requirements as they interfere with the fabric. Such adaptations would therefore not be permissible and as such Part 13 of the Hfl criteria cannot be met and/or is not applicable.

14 – Bathrooms

The bathrooms within the proposed comply with Part M1 (section 10) of the building regulations and part 14 of the Hfl criteria.

15 - Glazing and window handle heights

The windows within the proposed will mostly remain unchanged, but as they are wholly included within the listing therefore compliance with part 15 of the Hfl criteria cannot be met.

16 - Location of service controls

All new electrical services will comply with Part P of the building regulations and therefore comply with Part 16 of the Hfl criteria.

7.0 | Conclusion

It is believed that the proposed redevelopment of Woburn Walk, providing three market dwellings creates an opportunity to increase the provision of housing for people within the area of Bloomsbury.

This supports the objectives and selected policies of both Camden Council and English Heritage to contribute towards the vitality of the area, meeting the needs of the community in a sustainable manner, whilst retaining the rich heritage and historical nature of this part of London.

The reclassification of the building from offices to homes brings an appropriate use of the site and will provide housing of a scale and design commensurate with the street setting. It is therefore believed that the proposal is consistent with key planning policies of the Development Plan.



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