



Heritage Statement

15 Grape Street London Borough of Camden WC2H 8DR

October 2015

Proposed works



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NGR: TQ 30137 81354

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Front cover: Looking north from Holborn MOLA 2015



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Introduction

MOLA is instructed by clients to prepare a Heritage statement in support of a planning application for works to 15 Grape Street (formerly Vine Street) WC2H 8DR.

Executive Summary

Heritage:

Bloomsbury Conservation Area (CA) is considered to be of HIGH significance but the proposed works are unlikely, in themselves, to have any material impact on the character, integrity or significance of the CA.

The setting of listed buildings in the area will not be affected.

The building itself is an 'undesigned asset' and as such its significance is considered to be Low – Medium. There will be no harm to its significance.

The proposed development entails the internal refurbishment of the existing commercial unit, by installing a lift and the addition of another floor.

The addition to the top floor of the property will provide additional commercial space without detriment to the significance of any asset..

The proposed windows will preserve the character of the original building and thereby preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

The proposed development meets the criteria and standards set out in the NPPF 2102, NPPG 2014, The London Plan and Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy, adopted April 2011, and all relevant local policy.



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Heritage Statement

No15 Grape Street is in the London Borough of Camden and situated in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (CA designated 01/03/1984). It is not a listed building but is described in the Conservation Area Assessment (CAA - LBoC 2011) as a 'Positive Contributor'¹ to the character of the CA. Buildings opposite and nearby are listed; the site is within the setting of these (e.g. Grape Street 1-7 (odd), 2-20 (even) - See below)

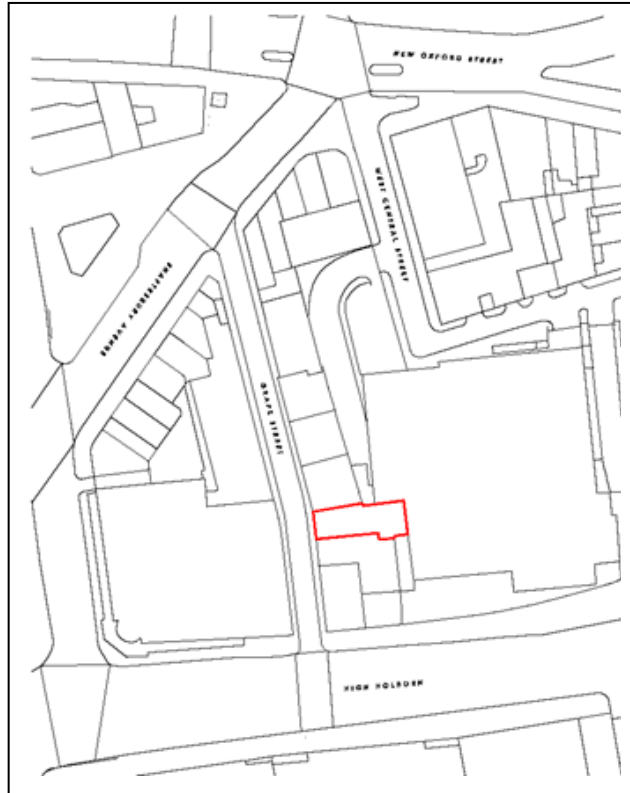


Fig 1 Site Location (HK Architects 2015) (not to scale)

The Conservation Area Assessment of the CA sets out the various 'character sub-areas' – Grape Street is within Sub Area 8: *New Oxford Street/High Holborn/Southampton Row*.

¹ Please see Appendix 3



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The CAA states the following:

The predominant architectural styles of the Conservation Area are classically derived, regardless of period or building type. (para 3.28)

Owing to the size and complexity of the Conservation Area, it has been sub-divided into a series of character areas that generally share common characteristics to assist in defining those features that contribute to the area's special interest. (para 5.1)

The site is in sub-area 8, titled *New Oxford Street/High Holborn/Southampton Row*.

An extract from para 5.130 describes the immediate area of the site thus:

.....On the east side of the space are the grade II listed King Edward Mansions and Queen Alexandra Mansions. These ornate five-storey blocks date from 1902-08 and were designed by Charles Fitzroy Doll, Surveyor to the Bedford Estate, and present a lively but consistent edge to the south-eastern edge of the open space. They extend along both sides of Grape Street, a narrow thoroughfare sloping down from north to south from Shaftesbury Avenue in the north to High Holborn in the south. The blocks contain shops at street level with former showrooms and offices above on the Shaftesbury Avenue frontage, and with flats on the upper floors along Grape decoration, including corner turrets with conical roofs which feature in long views. The grade II listed Bloomsbury public house at No 236 Shaftesbury Avenue is part of this group, although its principal frontage faces New Oxford Street. Also attributed to Fitzroy Doll, it is constructed from red brick but with white terracotta decoration. To the rear of the public house is a symmetrically-fronted 19th century building in yellow stock brick with a tall central door, arched windows and a pediment above, all of which positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



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By 1910 the frontage to Broad Street had been redeveloped, opening up (now) Grape Street from the south and the pub to the sedt appears to have been reused for another purpose. Not Holborn Baths replacing older, smaller properties on the south side of Broad Street. (See Fig 3)



Fig 4 OS 1968-1973 (Not to scale)

Fig 4 shows the situation in the early 1970s, new factors including, notably, Shaftesbury Theatre. This was the last theatre to be built on Shaftesbury Avenue (originally named The Princes Theatre). Its initial owners were Walter and Frederick Melville, it was designed by Bertie Crewe, the *'talented Victorian architect responsible for some of the country's finest theatres'* and is listed Grade II.

The listing description reads: *Shaftesbury Theatre HIGH HOLBORN. Theatre. 1911. By Bertie Crewe. Terracotta, stone and brick in elaborate Renaissance style. Rectangular plan on a corner site, the main entrance being at the angle of Shaftesbury Avenue and High Holborn.*

EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, 4 bays to each return, the entrance bay being curved. Ground floor rusticated with continuous plain canopy over. 1st floor rusticated, much of the fenestration covered by hoarding. 2nd floor with Diocletian windows & oculi in alternate bays, the entrance having rectangular windows with enriched architraves, all having large consoles under a cornice and elaborate parapet. Above the entrance front, a cupola.

INTERIOR: foyer and booking hall with delicate plaster decoration. Auditorium of considerable richness with 2 cantilevered balconies, the fronts varied in form and decoration.



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Rectangular ceiling with enriched cove and cornice and circular flat-domed centre. Segmental proscenium arch with figure reliefs in spandrels over. Bow-fronted boxes paired in two tiers and framed by giant Ionic columns rising from heavy console brackets and carrying an entablature with figures, the whole composition crowned by a semicircular arch and a heavily moulded eaves cornice. In the arch tympanum a sculptural group is set over each upper box. Balustraded balcony terraces at upper box level run laterally along the walls towards the boxes and balustraded front to filled orchestra pit. HISTORICAL NOTE: the theatre was designed as a melodrama house. (Curtains!!! or, A New Life for Old Theatres: London: -1982: 157-58).

Fig 4 also shows the large footprint of the multi-storey carpark to the east of the site.

Fig 5 shows the extent of above-ground heritage assets in the immediate area. The site, at least the front onto Grape Street, is noted as a 'positive' building in this analysis but it is not designated



Fig 5 Extract from LBoC CAA Sub Area 8 (Not to scale)



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Views

Views of the frontage to No15 from within Grape Street are limited by townscape and alignment of the road itself.

Views from the extreme ends of Grape Street are most significant but exclude any appreciation of the existing roof and consequently there will be no impact on the view by the addition of the proposed roof. Less significant views such as that from the southern pavement of Holborn will be similarly unaffected.

It is concluded that the subtle changes and additions being proposed in this planning application constitute enhancement, adding richness to one of the buildings in the enclave. In so doing, it enhances the character and appearance of Sub Area 8 and the setting of the neighbouring Grade II listed assets.



Fig 7 View looking north from Holborn; 15-17 Grape Street in the foreground (MOLA 2015)



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Description of the building

The building was occupied by the Cuban Embassy but now lies vacant, since January 2015; the current use as commercial offices.

The property was originally built around the late 19th century/ early 20th century and is a five storey building of traditional construction under a flat roof.

Proposals

(Please refer to planning application submission plans HK Architects 2015))



Fig 6 Existing and Proposed front elevations (HK Architects 2015)



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Significance

Significance is determined by reference to, amongst other things, the '4 values' (See Appendix 1).

- Evidential value
- Aesthetic value
- Historical value
- Communal value

Bloomsbury CA is considered to be of HIGH significance but the proposed works are unlikely, in themselves, to have any material impact on the character, integrity or significance of the CA. The proposals are considered to constitute, *inter alia*, an enhancement.

The setting of assets does not have significance in its own right. The settings of listed buildings in the vicinity are unlikely to be affected by the development, and hence the HIGH significance of those assets will remain unaltered.

The building No 15 is an undesignated asset, of LOW to MEDIUM significance in its own right. The works proposed are complimentary and will ensure the long-term beneficial use of the premises in employment use. The is considered to be a positive impact on the life of the asset and therefore, at worst, a neutral impact on its significance.



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Planning History

A brief review of the planning website (LBoC) shows only the current application ref: 2015/4205/P registered to the site. However it should be noted that the adjacent buildings to the north (Nos 9-13) have had a roof extension approved this year – LBoC ref: 2015/0695/P. The heritage statement attached to that application concluded, in para 8 of the THVIA, that in relation neighbouring properties (i.e. No 15) *'There are no harmful effects caused by the proposed development on the neighbouring non-designated heritage assets'*.

The overall report concluded that: *'.....the development satisfies all policy matters which are national, regional and local, regarding design and heritage'*. LBoC agreed with that conclusion and hence the application was approved with conditions and S106 requirements.

Planning Policy (Please see Appendix 1)

The overarching policy basis is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and companion document National Planning Policy Guidance 2014, the relevant sections of which are set out in Appendix 2 below along with relevant elements of the London Plan and Local Policy (These are considered to be in broad accord with the national advice).

It is considered that, as with the approved development next door, the proposals comply with the spirit and detail of the prevailing policy advice.



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Conclusions

In heritage terms, the proposed alterations are considered to be appropriate in all respects.

It is considered that the proposals reflect the spirit and detail of prevailing national, London-wide and local policy.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 Assessing Significance

'Significance' lies in the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Archaeological interest includes an interest in carrying out an expert investigation at some point in the future into the evidence a heritage asset may hold of past human activity, and may apply to standing buildings or structures as well as buried remains. Known and potential heritage assets within the site and its vicinity have been identified from national and local designations, HER data and expert opinion.

The determination of the significance of these assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against four values (EH 2008):

Evidential value: the potential of the physical remains to yield evidence of past human activity. This might take into account date; rarity; state of preservation; diversity/complexity; contribution to published priorities; supporting documentation; collective value and comparative potential.

Aesthetic value: this derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the heritage asset, taking into account what other people have said or written;

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through heritage asset to the present, such a connection often being illustrative or associative;

Communal value: this derives from the meanings of a heritage asset for the people who know about it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory; communal values are closely bound up with historical, particularly associative, and aesthetic values, along with and educational, social or economic values.

Table 1 gives examples of the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.



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Table 1: Significance of heritage assets

Heritage asset description	Significance
World heritage sites	Very high (International/ national)
Scheduled monuments	
Grade I and II* listed buildings	
English Heritage Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens	
Protected Wrecks	
Heritage assets of national importance	High (national/ regional/ county)
English Heritage Grade II registered parks and gardens	
Conservation areas	
Designated historic battlefields	
Grade II listed buildings	
Burial grounds	Medium (District) Low (Local)
Protected heritage landscapes (e.g. ancient woodland or historic hedgerows)	
Heritage assets of regional or county importance	
Heritage assets with a district value or interest for education or cultural appreciation	
Heritage assets with a local (i.e. parish) value or interest for education or cultural appreciation	
Historic environment resource with no significant value or interest	Negligible
Heritage assets that have a clear potential, but for which current knowledge is insufficient to allow significance to be determined	Uncertain



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Appendix 2 Policy

Statutory protection

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the legal requirements for the control of development and alterations which affect buildings, including those which are listed or in conservation areas. Buildings which are listed or which lie within a conservation area are protected by law. Grade I are buildings of exceptional interest. Grade II* are particularly significant buildings of more than special interest. Grade II are buildings of special interest, which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

National Planning Policy Framework

The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 (DCLG 2012) and supporting Planning Practice Guidance in 2014 (DCLG 2014). One of the 12 core principles that underpin both plan-making and decision-taking within the framework is to 'conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations' (DCLG 2012 para 17). It recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource (para 126), and requires the significance of heritage assets to be considered in the planning process, whether designated or not. The contribution of setting to asset significance needs to be taken into account (para 128). The NPPF encourages early engagement (i.e. pre-application) as this has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a planning application and can lead to better outcomes for the local community (para 188).

NPPF Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, is produced in full below:

Para 126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities 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;



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- 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.

Para 127. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Para 128. 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Para 129. Local planning authorities should 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.

Para 130. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

Para 131. 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.



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Para 132: 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. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Para 133. 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.

Para 134. 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.

Para 135. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. 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.

Para 136. Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Para 137. Local planning authorities should 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



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setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Para 138. 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.

Para 139. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

Para 140. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

Para 141. Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Greater London regional policy

The London Plan

The overarching strategies and policies for the whole of the Greater London area are contained within the London Plan of the Greater London Authority (GLA March 2015). Policy 7.8 relates to Heritage Assets and Archaeology:

A. London's heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.

B. Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present the site's archaeology.



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C. Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.

D. Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

E. New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources, landscapes and significant memorials. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site. Where the archaeological asset or memorial cannot be preserved or managed on-site, provision must be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset.

F. Boroughs should, in LDF policies, seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London's environmental quality, cultural identity and economy as part of managing London's ability to accommodate change and regeneration.

G. Boroughs, in consultation with English Heritage [now named Historic England], Natural England and other relevant statutory organisations, should include appropriate policies in their LDFs for identifying, protecting, enhancing and improving access to the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings where appropriate, and to archaeological assets, memorials and historic and natural landscape character within their area.

Para. 7.31 supporting Policy 7.8 notes that 'Substantial harm to or loss of a designated heritage asset should be exceptional, with substantial harm to or loss of those assets designated of the highest significance being wholly exceptional. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimal viable use. Enabling development that would otherwise not comply with planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset should be assessed to see if the benefits of departing from those policies outweigh the disbenefits.'

It further adds (para. 7.31b) 'Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of and/or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of that asset should not be taken into account when making a decision on a development proposal'.

Para. 7.32 recognises the value of London's heritage: '...where new development uncovers an archaeological site or memorial, these should be preserved and managed on-site. Where this is not possible provision should be made for the investigation, understanding, dissemination and archiving of that asset'.

Local planning policy



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Following the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Planning Authorities have replaced their Unitary Development Plans (UDPs), Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance with a new system of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). UDP policies are either 'saved' or 'deleted'. In most cases archaeology policies are likely to be 'saved' because there have been no significant changes in legislation or advice at a national level.

Local Planning Policies are expected to reflect the advice in NPPF/NPPG. In previous applications the LPA have referred to the following heritage related policies:

- Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Development Policies:
- CS4-Areas of more limited change
- CS14-Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- DP24-Securing high quality design
- DP25-Conserving Camden's heritage
- DP26-Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
- Camden Planning Guidance December 2006
- Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted 2007

Commentary

The proposals accord with National and Regional policy and advice.

In as much as the policies are still relevant, in the light of NPPF/NPPG and emerging alterations to the LDF, it is considered that the proposals accord with the spirit and content of local policy.



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Appendix 3 Elements of Sub Area 8: New Oxford Street/High Holborn/Southampton Row

Listed Buildings

Bloomsbury Street 1, 3 & 5

Grape Street 1-7 (odd), 2-20 (even)

Great Russell Street 5, 8-12 (consec), 16-22 (consec), 23-28 (consec) Congress House,
98-109 (consec)

High Holborn 199, 200 & 201, 207, 208-209 Princess Louise PH, 212, Holborn Town
Hall & Library, Shaftesbury Theatre

New Oxford Street 53 James Smith & Sons Hazelwood House, Drinking fountain at
junction with Shaftesbury Avenue, 43 & 45

Shaftesbury Avenue Shaftesbury Theatre, 210-226 (even), 228-234 (even) Queen
Alexandra Mansions, 233, 235, 236

Sicilian Avenue 1-29 (odd), 6-20 (even), 3 x lamp posts

Southampton Row 15-23 (odd)

Streatham Street Parnell House

Tottenham Court Road 269 Dominion Theatre, 279 Burton's Headquarters & Shop

Vernon Place 1-6 (consec) Avenue Chambers

West Central Street 16

Positive Contributors

Adeline Place 12, 14, 16

Bedford Avenue Bedford Court Mansions

Bloomsbury Street 21, 7-13 (odd) Marlborough Hotel

Bloomsbury Way 2-12 (even) St George's Court, 15-19 (odd) BUPA House



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Dyott Street 12

Bloomsbury Street 2-12

Bucknall Street 2, 4

Grape Street 9-17

Great Russell Street 1, 13, 14, Marlborough Hotel, 94-97 Kenilworth Hotel, 110

High Holborn 121-126 (consec), 130-132 (consec), 167, 145-153 & remainder

Commonwealth House, 210

Museum Street (south) 10-12

New Oxford Street 2-28 (even) St George's Court, 33-41 (odd), 36-42 (even), 44-56

(even), 47-51 (odd), 63-75 (odd), 64-72 (even), 80-116 (even),

Commonwealth House

Newton Street 1

Shaftesbury Avenue 219-229, 237, 239-249

Southampton Row 1-13 (odd)

Tottenham Court Road 263, 264-67

West Central Street 14, 16a, 16b, 18

Element of Streetscape Interest

Adeline Place York stone paving to east side, cast iron coal hole covers outside 4, 15

Bainbridge Street Occasional York stone flags on south side

Bedford Avenue York stone paving outside Bedford Court Mansions, 5 x cast iron coal hole covers outside each of 41-73, 74-97 & 98-121 (consec) Bedford

Court Mansions

Bloomsbury Street Edward VII post box at junction with New Oxford Street, mature street trees, cast iron coal hole covers outside 26, 42, 48



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Bloomsbury Way Telephone kiosks north of St George's Court, pavement lights outside
Kingsley Hotel

Bury Place Area York stone paving at junction with Barter Street

Bucknall Street Area of York stone paving r/o church & outside 2, 4

Dyott Street Cast iron coal hole cover outside 12

Grape Street York stone paving along east side & at junction with Shaftesbury

(No detractors)



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