

Robin Partington & Partners
built around people

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Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Flat 4, 1 Taviton Street, London

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Contents

1.0	Introduction	04
1.01	Purpose of the Document	04
1.02	Client Brief	04
2.0	Overview of 1 Taviton Street	05
2.01	Site Aerial Views	05
2.02	History of 1 Taviton Street	06
2.03	Historic England Listing	06
2.04	Planning History	06
2.05	Flat 4: Internal Views	07
2.06	Flat 4: Internal Conditions and Features	08
3.0	Statement of Need	09
4.0	The Proposals	10
5.0	Heritage Statement	12

01 Introduction

1.01 Purpose of Document

The proposal for which this application is submitted is the comprehensive refurbishment and updating of the top, attic level flat; 'Flat 4' in 1 Taviton Square, London.

The flat is located in the mansard roof space of 1 Taviton Square, occupying the entire level. It comprises two bedrooms, a living space with separate kitchen and currently a small bathroom on the same level but separate from the overall flat demise.

1 Taviton Square is owned by the University of London and has been altered, at some point in the past, to create a number of flats in the building. The flats are let to a mix of graduate students and academic staff of the University.

1.02 Client Brief

When the long standing tenant of Flat 4 died the University Estates Department approached Robin Partington and Partners to help them consider how best to refurbish the flat, which was in a very poor state of repair and also consider ways to improve the quality of the accommodation in order to permit the University to offer the refurbished flat for let.

The brief was to create an up to date two double bedroom flat, completely self-contained which provided accommodation suited to modern needs and improved on the spatial quality of the flat by intelligent use of its dual aspect and top floor location, whilst keeping the external appearance unaltered, save maintenance and painting needs of such a refurbishment.

The flat had benefitted from the creation, in the past of three roof lights in the main flat roof which permits additional light to enter the flat. These skylights had recently been replaced as the previous units had failed and were leaking.



▲ View from Taviton Street, looking south-east. Flat is not visible from this view point, it is located above the parapet line.

2.0 Overview of 1 Taviton Street

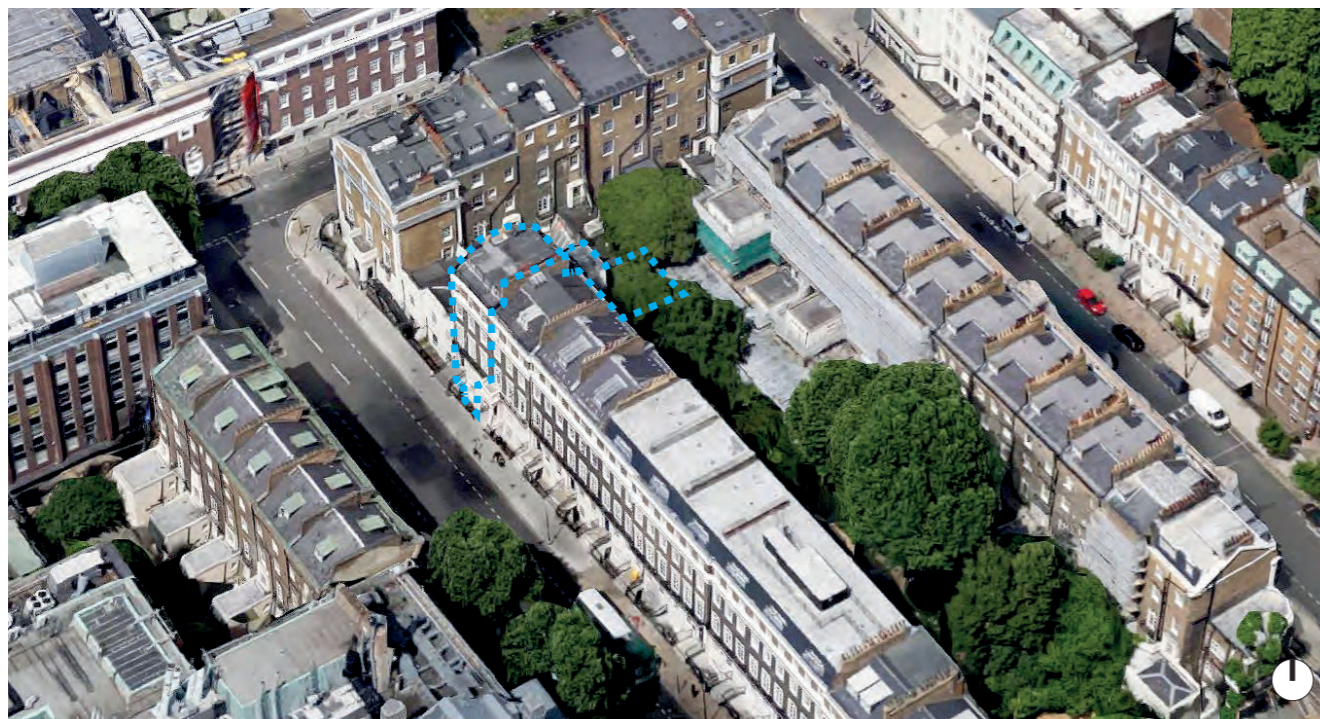
2.01 Site Aerial Views



▲ Aerial View of site from north



▲ Aerial View of site from east



▲ Aerial View of site from south



▲ Aerial View of site from west

2.0 Overview of 1 Taviton Street

2.02 History of 1 Taviton Street

From the desktop study of the history of 1 Taviton Street the following key facts can be noted :

- It is the northern most element of a terrace of 12 house on the east side of Taviton Street
- Dates from circa 1824
- Built by Thomas Cubitt, (1788- 1855) who was one of London's leading 'builders' in the second quarter of the 19th century. He was one of the first to have all of the necessary building trades within his organisation and is know for both his extensive speculative residential developments in Camden town and Belgravia as for his work on Buckingham Palace, the east front being his work.
- The terrace was originally a symmetrical composition, with projecting end bays (number 1 is one such bay) and central bay; arranged over a rusticated ground floor with three level above.
- Built of dark yellow stock London brick.
- Many of the details on the facade, the rustication, the windows surrounds , continuous balcony at first floor level, line and parapet are original and in all cases still present, although in various states of repair.
- Above the parapet a mix of original mansarded accommodation and possibly later additions with extensive hand rails on the parapet are visible, indicating the evolution of uses in this terrace and its gradual move away from single family homes to multi- tenanted and academic use.
- The extensive pavement level wrought iron railings and associated access stairs to the lower ground level or basement are a key feature of this side of the street.

2.03 Historic England Listing

- The entire terrace was Grade II Listed in 1969.
- The listing describes the external features in detail, however the internal features were not inspected at the time.

The listing does however cover all of the internal features as present inside the building since 1948. This 'catch-all' will cover all of the internal arrangements present in Flat 4.

2.04 Planning History

An on-line search of the London Borough of Camden's Planning database reveals very few applications for 1 Taviton Street.

There are only three which relate to this address, all internal conversion works to the interior :

- 8470022 : 16/01/1984 Listed Building Consent for the conversion of the second floor into a self contained flat.
- 8400110 : 16/01/184 Planning consent for the above conversion.
- M13/1/4/36801R1 : 18/08/1983 The refusal of consent to convert an existing non- self contained residential unit at second floor and first floor mezzanine level into two self-contained flats.



▲ View of Grade II Listed terrace, looking south down Taviton Street



▲ View of front door to 1 Taviton Street



▲ View of pavement level railings and first floor balcony



▲ View of blank gable end to Taviton Street terrace, attic level accommodation is not visible

2.0 Overview of 1 Taviton Street

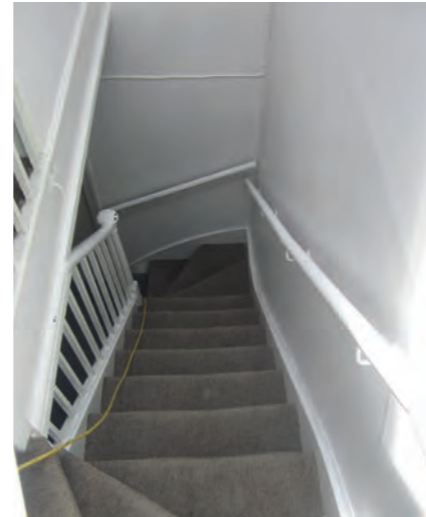
2.05 Flat 4 : Internal Views



View 1 : Third floor landing



View 2 : Third floor landing and base of stairs



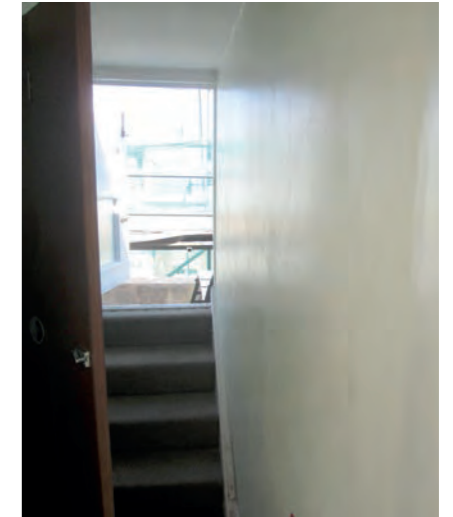
View 3 : Stairs to fourth floor, looking down



View 4 : Stairs to fourth floor, looking up



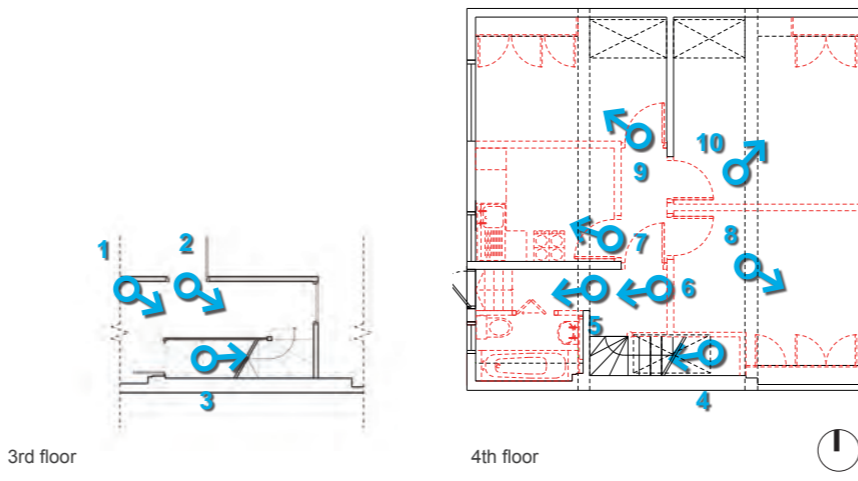
View 5 : Fourth floor landing, looking to bathroom



View 6 : Fourth floor landing, looking to roof exit



View 10 : Main bedroom, west facing.



3rd floor

4th floor

Floor plans showing location of internal views



View 7 : Existing east facing kitchen



View 9 : Existing bedroom, single bedspace, east facing, adjacent to kitchen



View 8 : Existing 'living room', west facing, located opposite kitchen

2.0 Overview of 1 Taviton Street

2.06 Flat 4 : Internal conditions and features

No drawings of the original building, or older pre 1948 survey drawings of the building have been found, we understand the previous tenant was in residence for over 40 years, with an estimated moving in date of early to mid 1970s.

Since then the interior of the flat was the responsibility of the tenant, with the landing on level 3, the staircase and access to the roof maintained by the landlord.

The internal condition of the flat, soon after the tenant's furniture, fittings and belongings had been removed revealed a number of key aspects that needed both immediate and longer term attention.

- Roof and roof lights. Signs of internal damage due to slow water ingress around the roof lights and in places in the roof required immediate attention, prior to any consideration to renovation
- Removal of items hung on walls and water damage to base of walls in the kitchen suggested extensive damage to the internal lining of most of the external walls and ceiling as well as damage to the internal partitions due in part to age.
- Closer examination of the lining showed that both 'modern' and ancient plasterboard was used to create both wall linings and internal partitions. The 'modern' plasterboard is the current plasterboard, however the ancient version appear to be made with a 'straw binder' within the plaster itself, with paper wrapping. This was used extensively in the partition between the kitchen and bedroom 2.
- The partition between the common stair and the living room appeared to be a mix of thistle plaster on lathe with a more recent layer of cementious render : possibly to provide a degree of fire resistance.
- Bathroom access off the shared stair and roof corridor unacceptable to modern tenants.



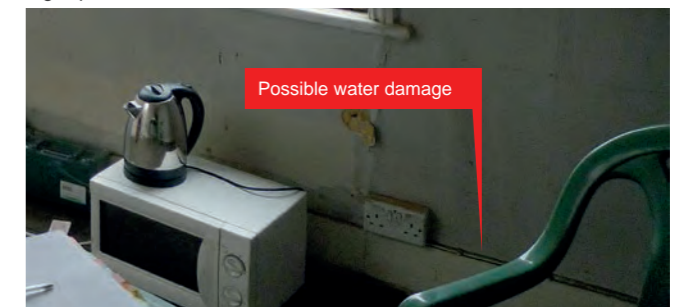
Partition between bedroom 2 and kitchen, view from bedroom.



North side of attic space, view from bathroom, with damaged plasterboard removed to examine for water leaks from outside



Living room, north wall, with fitted cupboard and showing possible signs of water ingress along top edge and damage to base of partition of the right, between common stair and living space.



Main bedroom, below west window, signs of water ingress.



Lining opened up, showing roof framing (old timber) and hardwood studs



Living room, partition open to see composition and potential fire risk.

3.0 Statement of Need

The key challenge for the University is to create a two double bedroom self-contained apartment in this limited roof space.

The cellular nature of the existing accommodation is characteristic of the original nature of accommodation in these attic spaces. The damage seen internally and the need to examine in more detail the potential causes have revealed some interesting and possibly original elements of the flat.

Two in particular are worth highlighting:

- Very large, very dark oak beams within the roof structure. These are far too large for the apparent structural requirements of their location, suggesting these may have been items salvaged from a ship and re-used in this building. Cubitt was the son of a carpenter and had used his time as a ship's carpenter, travelling to India as a way of raising funds to start his building career. As there is no intention to alter the roof structure these beams will remain 'as-is' albeit hidden within the wall lining.
- Hardwood timber studs. These also appear to have had a previous life at some stage. Despite the damage to the plasterboard that they supported the majority of these appear in good repair and can be re-used.

The straw based plaster board may be pre -1948 however the extensive degradation of the board and extent of surface damage suggest that its replacement by modern materials is necessary in order to comply with fire resistance and acoustic criteria.

Self Contained Unit

The current accommodation is not self contained and any resident could in theory use the fourth floor bathroom. This arrangement is not in line with current requirements for post graduate or academic accommodation and the creation of a new 'front door' is essential to achieve this aim.

Ideally the front door will be on the third floor, with the entire stair as part of the demise.

New bathroom

The existing bathroom is very constrained, with barely sufficient space for the WC and bathtub. This is partly the result of the need to retain a separate access to the roof, for maintenance only, in the 'common part' of this floor. The creation of a self contained unit removes this constraint and the bathroom could be extended to enclose this corridor, with access to the roof retained, with tenant consent through the bathroom.

This would involve removing the partition, possibly a pre-1948 element, between the bathroom and corridor.

Kitchen and Living Space

The current cellular configuration, with an enclosed kitchen and enclosed living room represents the life style at the time the unit was created. It is unlikely that originally there was a kitchen at this level. This level may well have been the location for staff bedrooms and perhaps a maids parlour, with a staff dining in the lower ground floor, possibly in the main kitchen.

The dual aspect nature of the unit offers scope to allow both morning, afternoon and evening light into the main living space, creating a primary habitable room that benefits from greater access to daylight and sunlight as well as responding to current lifestyle demands.

Bedrooms

The existing bedrooms, one facing east, one facing west are suitable for single beds and rather too small for a standard double.

In order to provide a unit that is suitable for academic or post graduate student occupation; often with a young family, the brief is to explore how to create two (small) double bedrooms within the space. This should meet expectations for this type of accommodation.



▲ Bedroom 2 : Too narrow to accommodate a bed 'across' the room, it needs to be orientated towards the window, adjacent to the kitchen (left hand side of image). This limits the room to being at best a single bedroom, with the bed limiting access to the window.
The partition to the left of the image is that between the bedroom and kitchen, to the right is the party wall with 2 Taviton Street



▲ Third floor landing : potential to create self contained demise, with new front door located at this level. Note door in picture is a permanently locked door to the flat on the third floor. It is not an emergency exit.



▲ Kitchen : Entire kitchen needs to be replaced and any damage to the internal partition and external wall lining rectified. Current services layout limits location of appliances to replicate layout, which block access to window and daylight.



▲ Main bedroom : Just wide enough to have a bed parallel to the window, although it leaves very little room to access the cupboard at the foot of the bed and therefore access to the window and far side of the bed.

04 The Proposals



▲ Option 01 : Combined living/ dining and kitchen on eastern side, bedroom to west.

Option 01.

- New bathroom which encloses the corridor, roof access via retained hatch.
- Kitchen 'opened up' into old second bedroom to create combined living/ dining and kitchen space by removal of existing partitions. Only east facing windows, both at 'high level'
- Two double bedrooms, partition positions retained, new fitted furniture to ensure appropriate storage space (hanging and drawers etc..)

- Stair and skylight over stair remain 'enclosed' and part of the flat's circulation space.
- Highly cellular nature of attic maintained.

The living space, being single aspect and east facing is a 'poor' relation in terms of the quality of light and space possible in this location and volume.

West facing bedrooms enjoy the 'best' light however neither enjoys the morning light often desired in a bedroom.



▲ Option 02 : 'Dual aspect' living dining and kitchen space, with one east facing and one west facing bedroom.

Option 02.

- New bathroom which encloses the corridor, roof access via retained hatch.
- Creation of a dual aspect primarily living space, with the kitchen located on the eastern side, with an east facing window above the work top and the main living space facing west, with the large, low silled window allowing afternoon and evening sunlight into the space.
- Partition enclosing the stair removed, bringing

the stair volume into the living space and more importantly allowing the skylight to add its light into the heart of the primary living space, by the dining area.

- Two double bedrooms created by slightly altering the east west partitions to create two more equal rooms. One faces east for those who enjoy the morning sun, one facing west for those who enjoy the afternoon/ evening light.
- Cellular nature of the accommodation retained, with an acknowledgement of modern living space desires.

04 The Proposals

Option 02 Developed.

Further review of Option 2 was undertaken and in order to maximise the improvement to the quality of the living space the scope to move all of the main services in the kitchen (incoming gas, water and waste) was added to the opportunities available to the team.

This allowed the main kitchen area to be switched from the bathroom wall to the bedroom wall, allowing the sink to be located immediately below the window. This gives greater access for daylight and morning sunlight into the kitchen area, whilst still allowing it to be understood as a separate space within the overall whole.

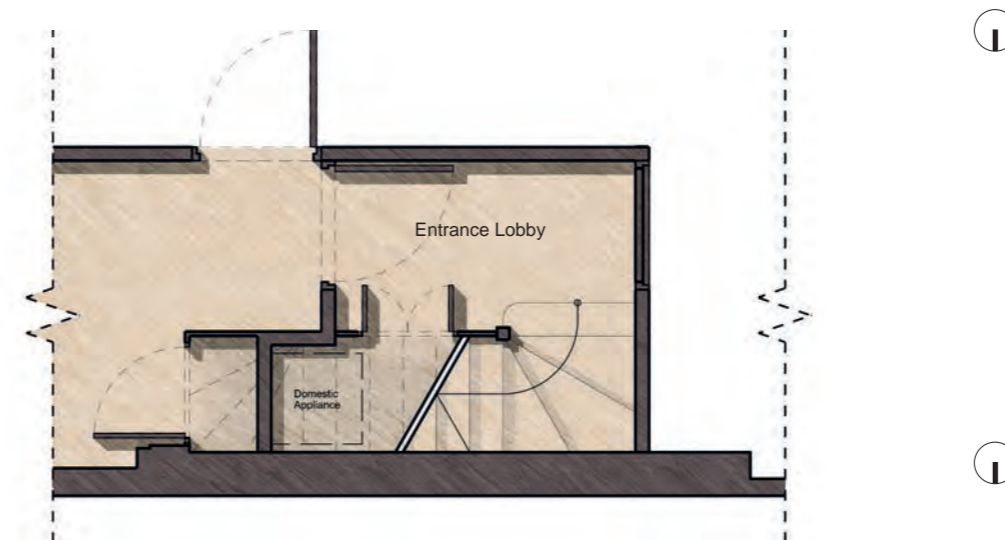
The partition between the bedrooms and the remainder of the flat would be moved slightly northwards in order to allow both to have a double bed parallel to the window and sufficient access all around. The studs that are in the existing partitions would be re-used, with new appropriate plasterboard and acoustic insulation to create a modern fire rated and sound attenuating partition.

The dual aspect living space, with morning light into the kitchen area and afternoon/ evening sun into the main living space and top lit from the skylight creates a high quality space, appropriate for this type of accommodation. The balance between the highly cellular nature of the bedroom space and bathroom, balanced by the open, yet divided living space ensures that the original nature of this level remains present and visible with adaptation to accommodate the modern lifestyle.

On the level below the flat is made 'self-contained' by the addition of a new partition and front door. In addition the space under the stair is allocated to the demise by the installation of a new partition within the space and the creation of doors in the side of the boxing out. The permanently locked door to the adjacent flat is simply board over, able to be revealed if needed in the future.



Level 04 : 'Dual aspect' living dining and kitchen space, with one east facing and one west facing bedroom.



Level 03 : Entrance lobby and staircase to main living area.

05 Heritage Statement

The primary guide through the development was the desire to retain the compact cellular nature of the accommodation on this level and balance it with modern lifestyle needs which favour more open living spaces.

The length of the previous tenancy had ensured the overall nature of the flat had been retained, however the actual condition of the fabric of the flat illustrated a lack of long term maintenance that had allowed significant material deterioration.

Concept

The proposed option retains the tight cellular arrangement of bedrooms on this level. Each is large enough to have a bed and all of the individual storage needs as well as a living' space, in the form of a desk immediately below each skylight.

The dual aspect living space is acknowledgement that contemporary living does permit a more fluid mix of spaces, with visual and physical accessibility between the more formal dining and living functions mixed in with the informal kitchen food preparation tasks. The dual aspect also recognises the ever increasing importance of orientation, daylight and sunlight within buildings and seeks to maximise the opportunities to benefit from the building's orientation.

Opportunity to Repair and Re-Use

In this refurbishment there is scope to carry out the renovation and maintenance needed to bring the fabric up to the required, modern standards and remove material that has, through age and a degree of neglect been allowed to deteriorate. The maintenance work, especially to the roof from the inside will ensure that some of the original fabric, such as the oak beams are kept dry and stable for the foreseeable future.

In addition the timber stud work, some possibly original, can be re-used in the new partitions, suitably protected by modern plasterboard and finishes.

The older straw based plasterboard should be completely removed from this level. Its internal deterioration and degradation is almost impossible to determine. In order to create an residential unit that meets modern standards its wholesale replacement is desired.

Architectural Interest and Plan

The cellular nature of the proposal, with enclosed bedrooms retains the spirit of what may well have been the original use of this level. The introduction of a modern living space acknowledges the need to adapt and re-use spaces in order to create the next chapter in a building's life.

Materials

There appear to be very few original materials visible on this level. The timber flooring is one that can be immediately re-used once refinished in an appropriate manner, such as a general sanding to provide an appropriate surface after decades of being beneath fitted carpets and then sealed with a satin wax which highlights the tone of the wood.

The doors and internal fittings (kitchen/ bathroom and built in cupboards) all appear to be unoriginal and their replacement with contemporary new items is in keeping with providing an appropriate living space.

The plasterboard should be replaced by modern materials, whilst re-using where possible, the wooden studs.

Overall the new unit will appear to be a sympathetic refurbishment and adaptation of this upper level.

Services

There are no original services on this level at all as historic renovations have removed all trace of gas lights or integrated candle holders and any other fittings

All of the plumbing, wiring and gas services will be replaced.

Reversibility

The proposed works are seen as a sensible adaptation of this level and whilst the opening up of the living space and stair does change the immediate appearance of the level when one first arrives in the unit, its overall cellular nature and clearly defined function spaces is retained whilst allowing a modern lifestyle to inhabit this exceptional location.