

# DESIGN AND ACCESS/HERITAGE STATEMENTS

**GHK ARCHITECTS**

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<b>Project:</b>	<b>No12 Gray's Inn Square London WC1R 5JP First and Second Floor (North) Proposed Alterations and Refurbishment of Existing Barristers Offices for Change of use to Residential - 2 Bedroom Flats at each floor level (North)</b>	<b>Ref/File No:</b> HK 2191/3.1
<b>Client:</b>	<b>The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Design and Access/Heritage Statement</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015</b>	

## **Design and Access/Heritage Statement for: First and Second Floor (North) Proposed Alterations + Refurbishment of Existing Barristers Offices for change of use to Residential Flats at each floor level (North)**

### **Physical/Heritage Statement**

No12 Gray's Inn Square is a Grade 2\* Listed Building located within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate – Descriptions:-

The Existing property of No12 Gray's Inn Square forms part of the Terrace of Nos 12, 13 & 14 Gray's Inn Square and these are Listed Buildings located within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn. No12 and the Nos 13 & 14 properties are described in the listing as noted below:-

#### **Grade 2\***

Listed Terraced Chambers dated c1684-88, with later restorations. Four storeys and cellar. The properties are set on the East side of Gray's Inn Square and form an important part of the scale, character and quality of the formal setting of the square within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn and The Bloomsbury Conservation area.

#### **Exterior:**

The properties consist of brown brick with red brick dressings and brick bands between floors. Tiled roof with 4 storeys and cellars. 7no timber framed windows to each, the Gatehouse has two windows and No.14 has additionally 2 half windows. Stone doorcases with consoles and broken segmental pediments with balls in centre. Gauged red brick flat arches and dressings to flush frame windows with boxing and glazing bars. Wood block bracketed eaves cornices.

#### **Interior:**

The properties retain some panelled rooms. All have timber dog-leg stairs with turned balusters and square newels to the central staircases.

#### **Subsidiary features:**

attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to Lightwell areas.

The Gatehouse: between Nos 13 & 14 has brown brick with rusticated stone on the Ground floor. Rusticated stone quoins and stone bands. Flat arch carriage entrance with Griffin carved on keystone. Windows with stone architraves and flush frames with glazing bars. Enriched modillion cornice with pediment. Gray's Inn Road elevation is similar but windows have red gauged flat

arches and dressings. In the carriageway/archway, windows and doorway are located of former C18 bookshop with frame for shutters and panelled surround.

The sets of Existing Barristers Office Accommodation (First and Second Floors North) became vacant at the end of November 2015 and the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn has carried out an accommodation review on The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate and screening for letting of these individual small sets of Offices. As a result of the accommodation reviews it is proposed by the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn that the size and scale of the 2 No sets - First and Second Floors (North) would be better suited and more readily lettable as Residential units - as the proposals in this Application.

As part of this Application it is proposed to retain the Entrance doors and the timber Main Staircase/ finishes and refurbish the 2 No First and Second Floors (North) sets of accommodation internally to provide single 2 bedroom Flats at each floor level.

It would appear that the upper floors of No 12 Gray's Inn Square (North) have previously undergone substantial refurbishments previously and possibly from rebuilding of bomb damage after the Second World War, together with subsequent refurbishments. This can also be seen on the East elevation where the North façade facing brickwork appears to have been rebuilt - vertical saw tooth brick separation rebuilding lines between the Staircase windows façade and No 12 North accommodation section of the facade.

These upper floors at First/ Second Floors (North) also do not retain any of the historic features that exist on the lower floors eg; no fireplaces or historic wall panelling evident within the rooms. The majority of the finishes appear to be modern timber stud with plain plaster/ plasterboard construction wall finishes. Instead of historic moulded timber cornices modern coved cornices are provided to parts of some existing Offices although not all rooms. Coved cornices were widely used in properties rebuilt in 1950's after the Second World War as can be seen in many 1950's buildings on the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate.

Finishes to the proposed Residential Flats will be similar to the existing at present with Bathroom/ Kitchen areas are located to the North sides of the Flats to utilize services for the existing office accommodation and to minimise fabric alterations.

The submitted Planning Listed Building Consent Applications relates only to: the No12 Gray's Inn Square Internal Alterations and Refurbishment to the vacant parts of the First and Second Floors (North).

No alterations are proposed to other floors and sets of accommodation, or Main staircase, within the No 12 Gray's Inn Square property, as part of this application.

The existing Grade 2\* Listed property to No 12 Gray's Inn Square consists of Barristers Chambers and existing Residential accommodation on the Third Floor - North and South. The south sets of Barristers Chambers in No12 are also linked through with No13 North at First and Second Floor levels which provides larger units of self contained Barristers Chambers accommodation with fire escapes to the No12 Staircase.

The Chambers Offices and associated accommodation comprises Basement, Ground, First and Second floors with Residential accommodation located on the Third Floor (North and South). The property is a fine quality Grade 2 Listed Building set within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area/The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate and contains some of the fine original features on the lower floors and main stairs, including the Main Entrance.

The location of No12 Grays Inn Square provides good quality Chambers for Barristers and Residential accommodation for Tenants with good aspect views from the rooms on the West side of the property to Gray's Inn Square at all floor levels. Rooms on the East side of the property are smaller in plan area than those on the more prestigious West side facing on to Grays Inn Square and have views on to the public highway and Gray's Inn Road. Windows are provided with internal modern secondary glazing to protect against traffic noise from Grays Inn Road and adjacent street junctions.

The importance of No12 Gray's Inn Square 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/Residents. It is considered that any alterations within this particular property must be carried out in a manner that enhances, rather than detracts from the existing property with its Grade 2 Listed status, the unique setting and the retained historic fabric elements, where applicable, whilst at the same time allowing the Barristers Chambers and Residential Accommodation to operate efficiently to modern standards.

### **Location/Flood risk assessment**

As the property is well above the High Water Level of the River Thames, which is 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 relating to the First and Second Floors (North) of the No 12 Gray's Inn Square property only does not constitute new development that will require a Flood Risk Assessment.

### **Economic**

The property of No12 Gray's Inn Square, as noted above, is in a very prestigious setting within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn and its location/historic quality contributes to the success of the individual Chambers and Residents located therein and for The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn. The efficient operation and maintaining the good quality of the accommodation mix for both Chambers/Residential occupants with sensitive integration of modern services/technology continues to be an essential requirement to the success in retaining the balance/mix of the Residential/Chambers accommodation which also contributes to the general environment/quality of the Conservation area.

### **Access**

Access to and from the First and Second Floors (North) will be retained, as existing, via the Main Entrance door at Ground floor level and a central original timber Staircase rising up to Third floor level. No lift access is provided within this historic Grade 2\* Listed property. Entrances to the proposed flats/ residential accommodation First and Second Floors (North) will be, as existing, via the panelled timber Inner and Outer Entrance doors from the First and Second floors Staircase landings. With the historic fabric and the important status of No12 Gray's Inn Square as a Grade 2\* Listed Building within the confines of The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate and the Conservation area there are some limitations on full access improvements to the upper floor levels due to internal planning arrangements/historic fabric and single the centrally located original timber dog leg staircase together with the existing stepped access from the paving/roadway on the East side of Grays Inn Square to the property.

No12 Gray's Inn Square has a single central timber staircase leading up from the Main entrance and historic brick/stone Doorcase to Grays Inn Square on the West façade. The rebuilt/ historic East elevation is built directly adjacent to the public footway of Gray's Inn Road at the rear of the property. Without seriously disrupting the quality of the Conservation area status and historic character / quality of this Grade 2\* Listed property and the fine Terrace setting within the formal layout of The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate to Gray's Inn Square it would be very difficult/costly to provide full mobility access into the raised Ground floor and to the upper First and Second Floors (North) of the property from the external paving, particularly on the East side to Grays Inn Road with raised floor and Staircase landing levels.

It should be noted however, that assisted access can be made available to Ground floor with temporary/portable ramps. Wheelchair access with associated facilities are also provided/made available in other Gray's Inn properties within The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn Estate via the Banqueting Contractor. The Inn makes available individual rooms of differing sizes which are fully accessible and may be utilized by Barristers Chambers/Residents in The Inn, as and when required.

A single glazed hardwood Entrance door replacement was recently installed to No12 Grays Inn Square - Planning consent 2013/3910/P refers – in order to improve security and access for visitors/residents by replacing the original double glazed hardwood doors that were difficult to manoeuvre through and maintain secure.

### **Design Constraints.**

The constraints on the designs for Alterations and improvements to the No 12 First and Second Floors (North) of No 12 Gray's Inn Square is primarily the unique setting as part of the Gray's Inn Square Terrace in which it is located, are the planning and layout of the existing/ previously refurbished accommodation.

Additionally the existing drainage/ services connections from First and Second Floors (North) are located in the North Lightwell and Gray's Inn Road elevation serving the existing Toilets/ Showers. There is also a lack of available floor void depth on the South and East sides of the existing accommodation to include additional drainage services.

### **Design/Heritage**

A number of limited internal planning alterations have been considered for the First and Second Floors (North) to provide upgraded/modernized Residential accommodation. Consideration has also been given to the lack of available floor void space to accommodate any substantial drainage/services alterations within the historic timber floor constructions on the South and East sides of the property and to avoid main services ducts/pipes appearing as bulkheads on the floors below which would detract from the quality of the existing accommodation. Most of these options have been discounted due to their unacceptable impact on the fabric and the existing functioning of the accommodation on the floors below.

The solution that is proposed and submitted with this application is to carry out some limited re-planning to both sets of No 12 First and Second Floors (North) as indicated on the application drawings together with the modernized Kitchen/Bathroom fittings. In addition upgraded fire detection measures/detection will be incorporated and lighter weight stud partitions installed. No original decorative fireplaces/ surrounds remain in the either sets of First and Second Floors North. Similarly no original timber wall paneling/ cornices exists in the First and Second Floors North which have plain plaster walls, coved cornices and modern internal painted timber doors

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