

Heritage Statement

19 John Street London Borough of Camden



April 2016

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement for 19 John Street was commissioned in March 2016 by M W Architects on behalf of clients, GFZ Developments Ltd. The report was prepared by Neil Burton BA FSA IHBC, a director of The Architectural History Practice Ltd.

19 John Street in the London Borough of Camden (Grid Reference TQ3082 SE) is a terrace house built between 1800 and 1820, which has been used at least partly as offices since the middle of the nineteenth century. 19 John Street is a grade II listed building and was first listed in 1951. The whole of John Street lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

2.0 Background History

2.1 Development History

John Street and Doughty Street, its northern continuation, were both originally laid out on the Doughty estate. The southern part of John Street, adjoining what is now Theobalds Road but was previously known as the King's Road, was laid out and built up with houses as far north as Little James Street in the 1750s by the carpenter John Blgrave, who apparently gave his name to the street. Horwood's 1799 map of London (fig.1) shows the land north of Little James street as open ground. In fact much of the ground had already been let on building leases by Henry Doughty and from about 1807 onwards both Doughty Street and the northern part of John Street were built-up with substantial terraced houses. The 1819 edition of Horwood's map appears shows the street almost fully built up, although there is a gap on the eastern side which may correspond to the present number 19 and the houses here are un-numbered, which suggests that building was still in progress. The map shows different street numbering. The present house numbers had been assigned by the 1840s.

2.2 History of Occupation

The houses in John Street/Doughty Street were intended for private occupation but their proximity to the Inns of Court meant that by the middle of the nineteenth century these buildings were often at least partly occupied by lawyers and solicitors as their offices.

The Post Office Street directories show that in 1845 number 19 John Street was occupied by Stafford Northcote, later Sir Stafford Northcote, a conservative politician who served as Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1874 and 1880 and as Foreign Secretary between 1885 and 1886, and was one of only two people to hold the office of First Lord of the Treasury without being Prime Minister. In 1845 he was working as private secretary to William Gladstone at the Board of Trade and was called to the bar two years later in 1847.

In 1855 the house was occupied by William Ansell Boyle, a solicitor; in 1865 the occupant was George Mansfield; in 1865 it was William Browne Kidder whose legal firm, known successively as Kidder & Pavitts and later Kidder & Soames remained in occupation until at least 1900. In 1895 the directories show that another tenant in the house was an architect called William Cowdell, a reminder of the fact that from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, the streets north of Theobalds Road were popular with architects and surveyors, as well as members of the legal profession. The pattern of occupation was probably a mixture of office and domestic; certainly the basement plans from the drainage records (figs. 5 & 6) show domestic uses for the rooms.

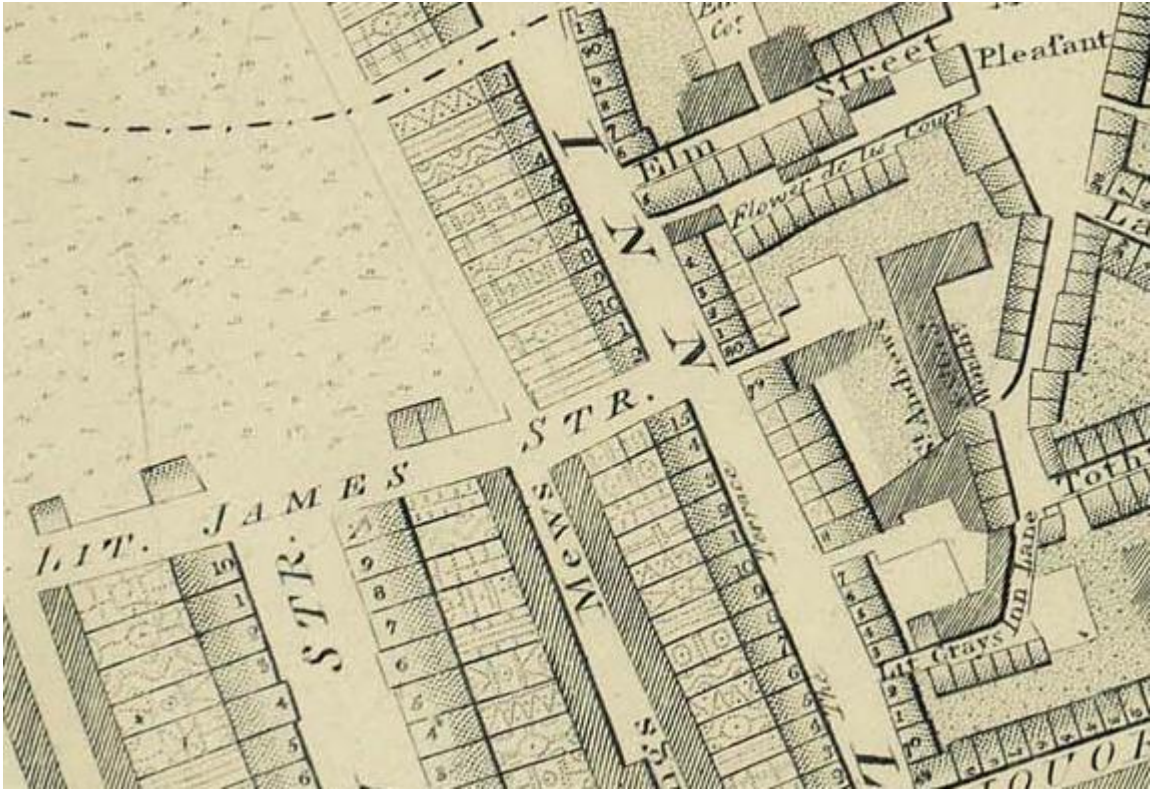


Fig.1 A detail from Horwood's 1799 map of London

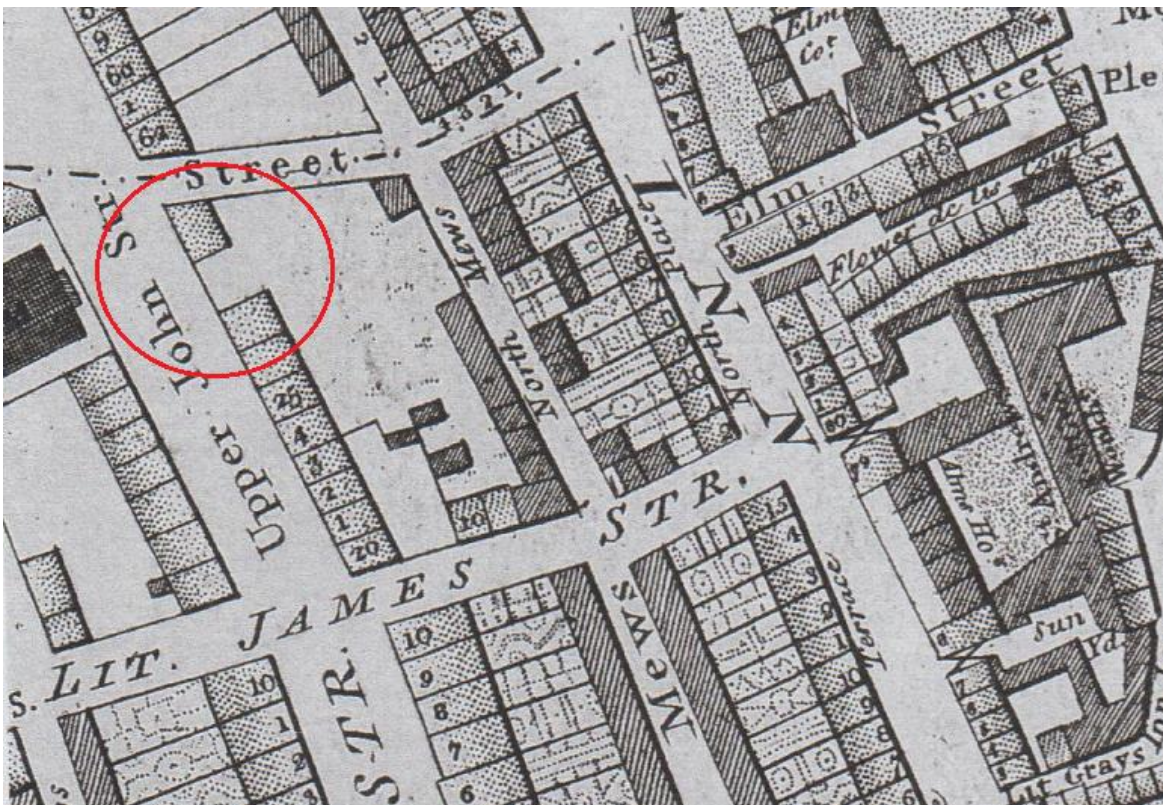


Fig.2 A detail from Horwood's 1819 map of London

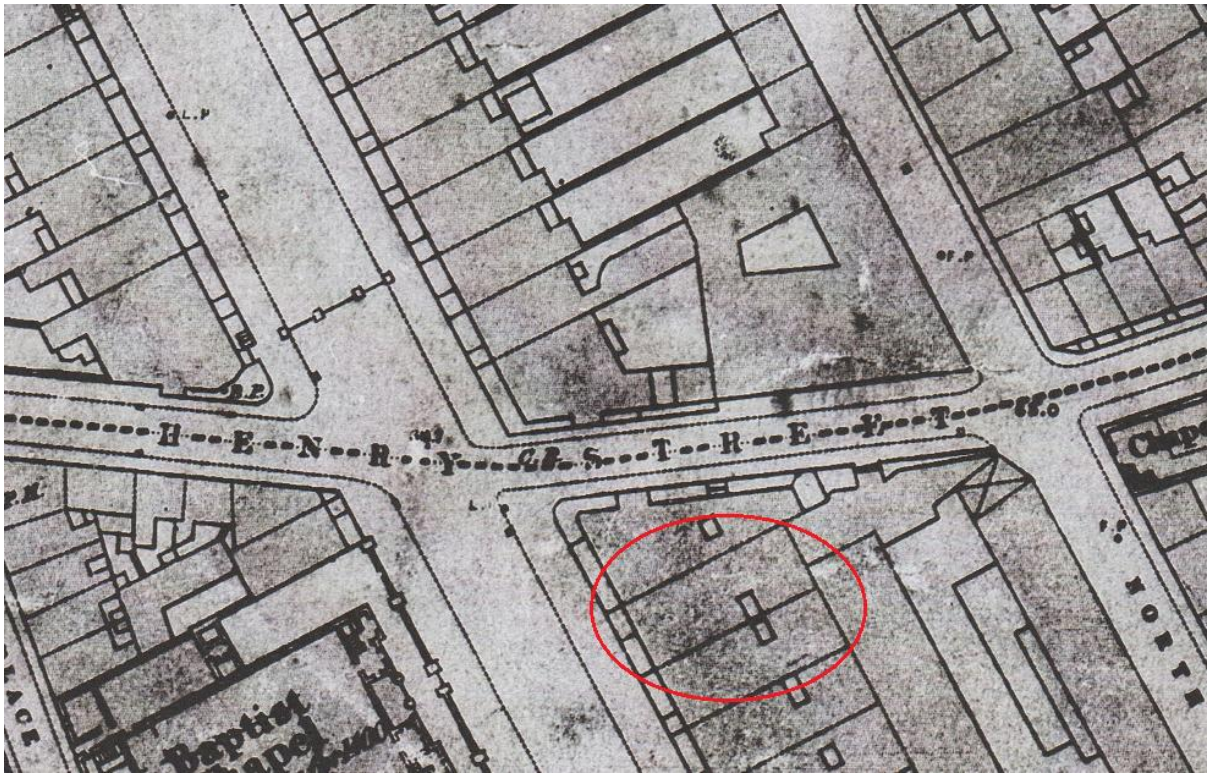


Fig.3 A detail from the Ordnance survey (VII.44); surveyed 1871, published 1874

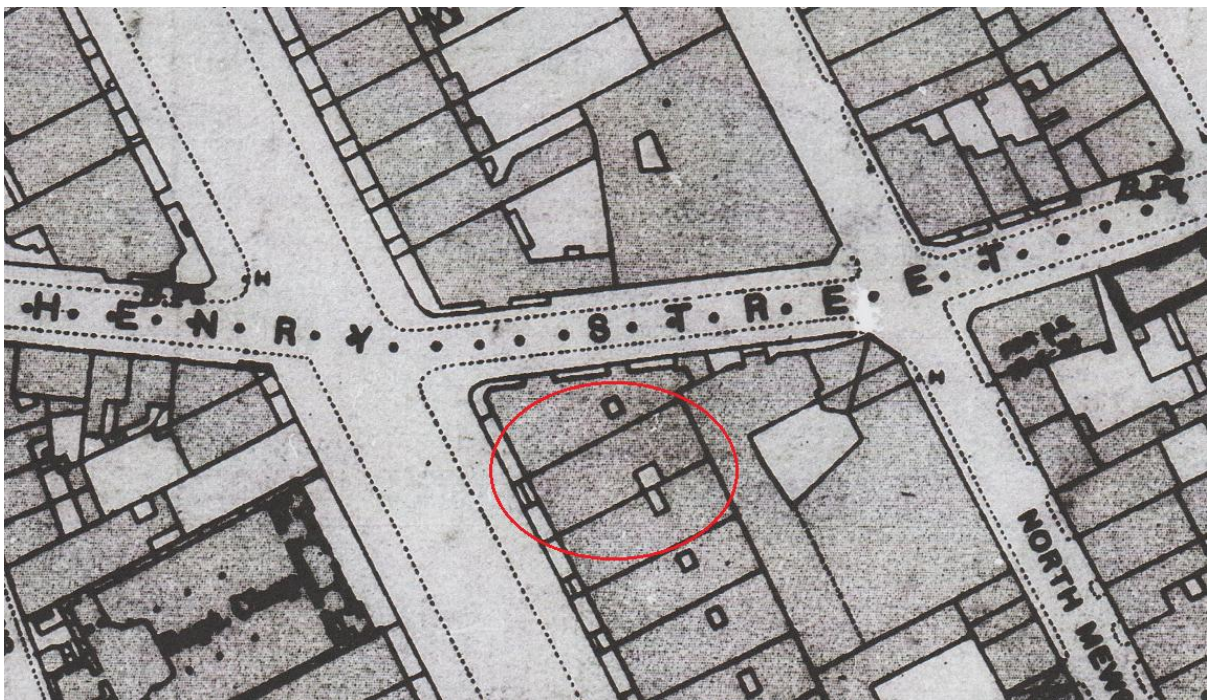
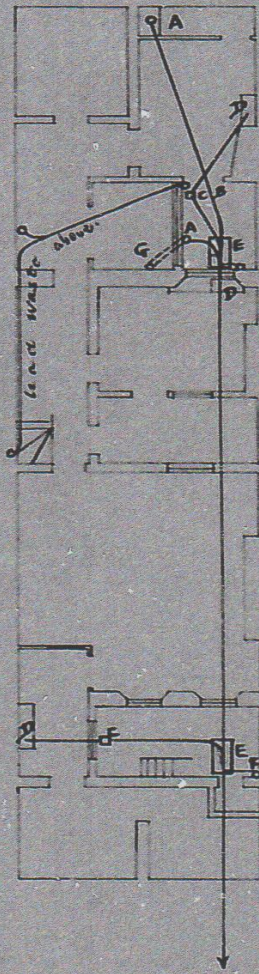


Fig.4 A detail from the 1894 Ordnance Survey 1894

The Board of Works for the Holborn District.

Plan of No. 19. John Street.
Bedford Row.

Builder's Name *Thomas Murgatroyd*
Address *30 Robert Street*
Date *Aug 9th 1894*



Approved
A. Bennett



- | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| A. Water Closets. | B. Rain Water Pipes. | C. Sinks to Yards and Areas. |
| D. Kitchen, Scullery, and Wash-house Sinks. | E. Inspection Chamber. | F. Fresh Air Inlet. |
| G. Ventilating Pipes. | Area of Premises | feet. |
| | Depth of Lower Floor below surface of Street | feet. |

Approved by the Committee of Works Thursday 16th Sept 1897.
Adopted by the Board subject to the Board's regulations and
the Bye-laws of the London County Council 16th Sept 1897
Walter H. Hale
clerk

Fig.5 The basement plan in 1897 (Camden archives, drainage plans)

METROPOLIS LOCAL MANAGEMENT ACT, 1855.

The Board of Works for the Holborn District.

Plan of **N^o 19 JOHN STREET.**

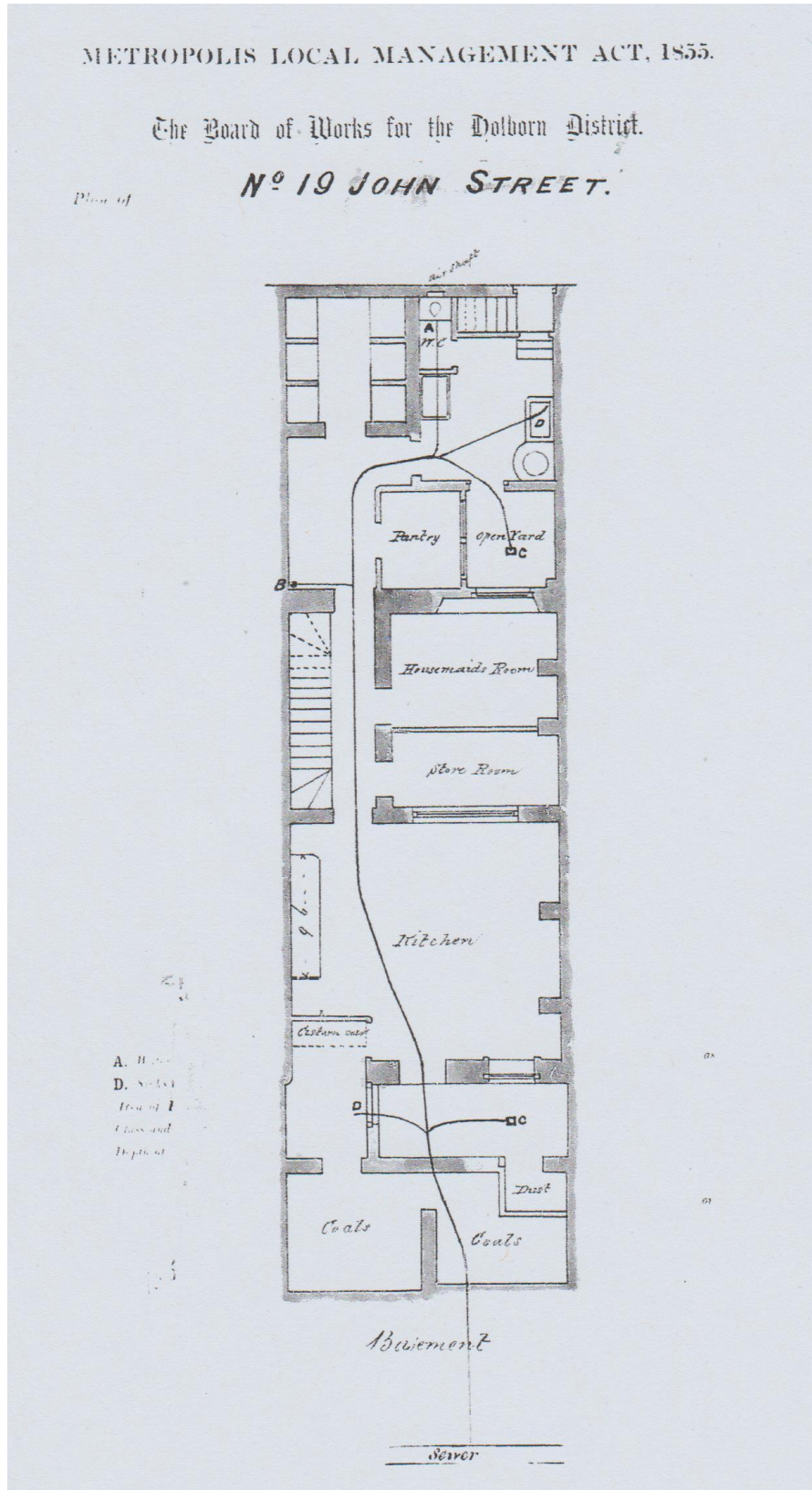


Fig.6 The basement plan in 1911 (Camden archives drainage plans)

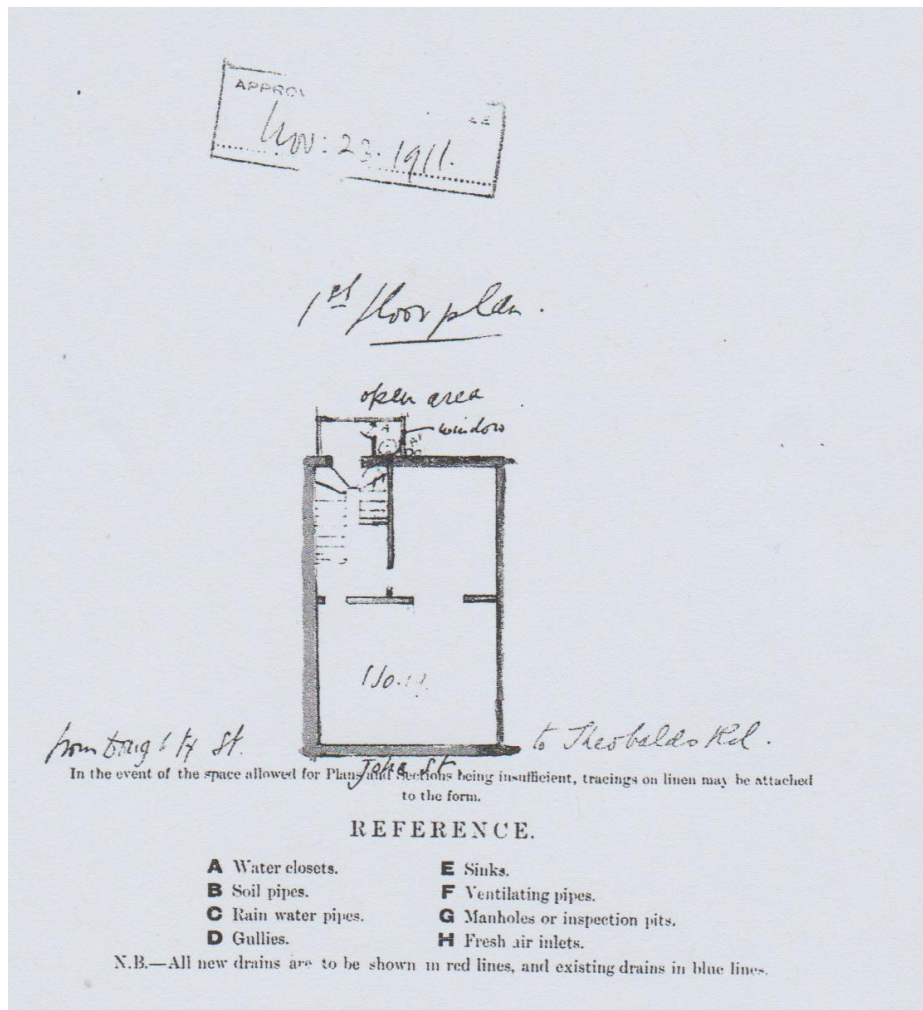


Fig.7 The first floor plan in 1911 (Camden Archives, drainage plans)

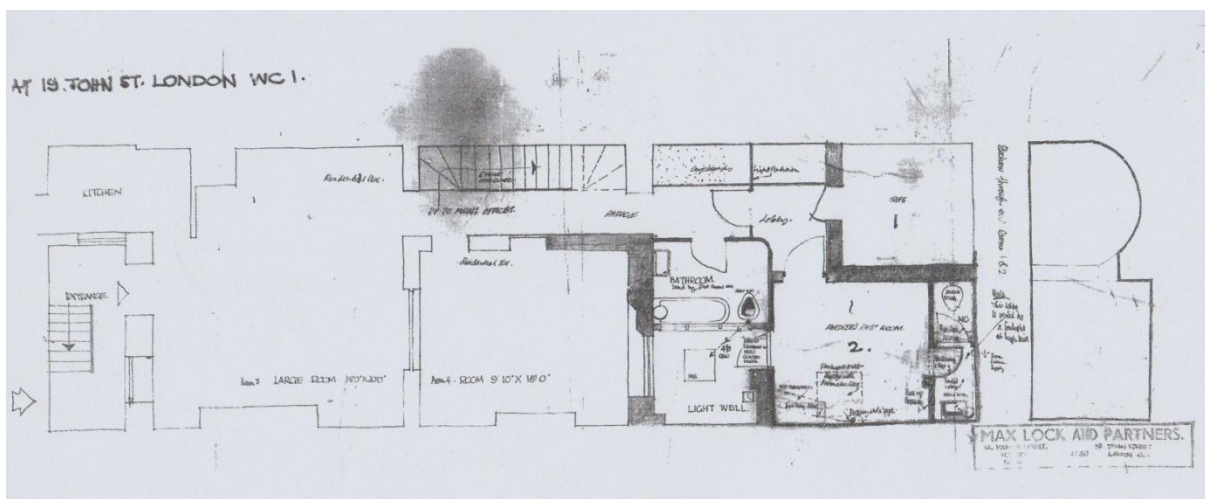


Fig.8 The basement plan in 1963 (Camden archives, drainage plans)

3.0 Brief Description & Analysis

Exterior

Number 19 John Street is a substantial early-nineteenth century terraced house, four storeys high above a basement and three windows wide. The street front is of yellow London stock brick, with plain stucco facing to the basement area and channelled stucco facing to the ground floor. The front basement area is enclosed by the original wrought iron railings (with a gate to the front area stairs). There are steps up to the front door with unsightly modern stone coverings. The doorway is of a pattern common in larger London terrace houses of this period, with narrow vertical lights either side of the main door and a semi-circular head for an ornamental fanlight, now replaced by plain glazing.

The window openings are all rectangular with timber sash windows and a variety of glazing patterns. The long first floor windows open onto a narrow stone balcony with modern iron railings. The front wall rises to a plain parapet with modern stone copings.

The rear elevation is of plain brickwork and two windows wide. There is a substantial two-storey addition behind the northern half of the front, with a smaller addition continued up to the level of the half-landing between first and second floors. Most of the original yard space behind the original house is now taken up by other minor structures, leaving only a small lightwell in front of the rear basement window. The rear boundary wall carries a section of cast-iron railings of typical early nineteenth-century character, which could be the original front balcony railings. The house has an 'M'-shaped roof, with two ridges parallel to the street

Interior

The plan of the building is characteristic of the period, with two main rooms on each floor and the entrance hall and staircase set against one party wall, with the chimneystacks against the other. The original plan is still clearly evident on all floors, although there have been some alterations at the rear. Most of the spaces have the minor alterations which are the consequence of a long period of use as offices.

At basement level there are two brick vaults under the street, originally for the storage of coal and ash. The main front room, originally the kitchen, has no surviving original features. The rear room retains a simple nineteenth century chimneypiece. The rear window in this room has evidently been reduced in size at some time to accommodate an external addition (see fig.6). The original stone stair up the ground floor survives intact with its original iron handrail. An unusual feature of the house is the wine cellar against the back wall of the original rear yard, which is a brick-vaulted space with the original brick and slate wine bins.

At ground floor level the entrance hall retains its original plaster cornice, but the floor covering is modern. The main staircase is of timber, with a cut string, simple tread-ends with moulded nosings, two plain stick balusters to each tread and mahogany handrail and newel post.

A wide modern opening has been formed from the hall to the front room, which has been subdivided with modern partitions. Both the main rooms on this floor retain their plaster cornices but have no chimneypieces (marble chimneypieces are noted in the list description but have evidently been removed). An opening has been made between the front and rear rooms with a moulded timber surround and curving upper corners. At the rear of the building is a further room built over the basement wine cellar. It appears that this room may be a timber-framed structure.

At first floor level, both of the handsome main rooms retain decorative plaster cornices and chimneypieces of white statuary marble, which may be original to the building. The rooms also have their timber shutter boxes to the windows and the tall timber skirtings typical of the earlier nineteenth century. There is a wide opening between the front and rear rooms. The timber door from the main room to the stair has been replaced by a glass door.

At second floor level there were originally two rooms in front, now linked by a wide modern opening. The second floor rooms have simple cove cornices which may be modern replacements. The larger front and rear rooms have simple nineteenth century chimneypieces with roundels to the entablature. Most of the timber doors have been replaced by glass doors in the original timber surrounds. A secondary stair rises from second to third floor. The third floor rooms were not accessible at the time of inspection.

Access to the roof-spaces in the two pitched roofs is by means of a ceiling hatch. The spaces have been floored and ceiled and nothing of the timberwork of the roofs is visible. The external roof-coverings are of natural Welsh slate.



Fig.9 The main street front



Fig.10 The rear elevation



Fig.11 Chimney piece in basement rear room



Fig.12 Stair from basement to ground floor



Fig.13 The wine cellar at the rear of the house



Fig. 14 The entrance hall



Fig.15 The main stair



Fig.16 A view from the front to rear rooms on the first floor



Fig.17 Chimney piece in the first floor front room



Fig.18 The second floor rear room



Fig. 19 The valley between the two roof ridges

4.0 Assessment of Significance

The assessment of the significance of historic buildings and their settings is not an exact science. The assessment of the significance of buildings is based on detailed knowledge of the building type, a comparison with what exists elsewhere, and the extent to which it may be distinctive or have special meaning for different groups of people.

Statutory designations provide some guide to the importance of historic buildings. Number 19 John Street is listed Grade II, meaning it is a building of national importance. The list description is included at Appendix 1.

In 2008 English Heritage published *Conservation Principles*, which identified four principal heritage values which might be taken into account when assessing significance and which can be used to amplify the assessments in the statutory lists. These values are *Evidential*, deriving from the potential of a place to yield (mainly archaeological) evidence about past human activity; *Historical*, deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present; *Aesthetic*, deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place; *Communal*, deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory.

In 2012 the Department of Communities and Local Government issued the National Policy Planning Framework which suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of historic buildings should be assessed under the headings of *archaeological*, *architectural*, *artistic or historic* (which are closely related to the English Heritage values) and points out that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.

Heritage Significance is essentially a hierarchical concept, using descending levels of value. These follow guidelines established by James Semple Kerr, which have been adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and others. The levels of significance are:

- *Exceptional* - important at national to international levels
- *Considerable* - important at regional level or sometimes higher
- *Some* - usually of local value only but possibly of regional significance for group or other value
- *Little* - of limited heritage or other value
- *Neutral* - features which neither enhance nor detract from the value of the site
- *Negative/intrusive* - features which detract from the value of the site

Evidential value

The building is clearly of some evidential value for the survival of features like the rear wine cellar but otherwise has little archaeological significance. There is probably little below-ground archaeology of any value.

Historical value

19 John Street is a relatively well-preserved example of a typical early nineteenth century London building type and has some architectural significance on these grounds. The house is also of considerable historical value as part of the early nineteenth century development of

this part of Bloomsbury, an area where the pattern of Georgian urban estate development is still very well-preserved.

Aesthetic value

The house is of considerable aesthetic value as part of a well-preserved Georgian street. The exterior has the elegant proportions typical of the time. The interior has suffered some modern alterations but still retains some original decorative features

Communal value

The house has little communal value, except as a valued part of the street scene and an important element in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Setting

The setting of number 19 John Street is in many respects almost unchanged since it was built nearly 200 years ago and is on that account of Exceptional Significance

5.0 The Proposed Works and their Impact on the Built Heritage

The proposed works are fully set out in the drawings and statements prepared by Marek Wojciechowski Architects. In sum, they comprise the re-conversion of the whole building from offices into a single family dwelling. The front elevation of the building will remain unaltered. There will be some minor alteration at the rear, chiefly the reconfiguration of the existing rear extension, which will also accommodate a lift from basement to first floor. Internally, there will be minor modifications to the existing spaces on all floors but no significant loss of historic fabric. The proposals are here described under the headings of external and internal works.

External Works

The street front of the house will remain unaltered. At the rear of the house, the various later additions will be altered to accommodate a lift rising from basement to the half-landing between first and second floor level. The height of the rear addition will remain virtually unaltered. A new terrace will be formed on the roof of the ground floor rear addition.

The present 'M' profile roof will be slightly altered by the modification of a small amount of the internal roof slopes of both roof-ridges, to allow the formation of a small rooftop terrace. The adjoining house (18 John Street) already has a large roof terrace.

Internal Works

Entrance Hall and Staircase

The entrance hall and staircase compartment will be refurbished. The present modern opening from the hall to the front room will be narrowed.

Basement

The floor level of the area vaults will be slightly lowered to provide more headroom. The front room will be subdivided to provide several small service spaces and a bedroom with wc and shower. In the rear room, the rear window will be re-positioned within the original wider window embrasure. In the rear wine cellar, the brick wine bins on the southern side will be removed to allow the creation of a shower room; the bins on the northern side will be retained.

Ground Floor

In the main rooms, later partitions will be removed and the rooms restored to their original volumes. The wide opening between front and rear rooms, which is currently blocked, will be re-opened. In the rear extension, the main room will be reconfigured to become a kitchen and the windows in the southern side will be removed to provide direct access to a new flat-roofed dining room space. The existing modern circular stair in the back area leading down to the basement will be removed, improving the appearance of this space.

First Floor

The two main rooms in the house will again become the principal living rooms and will be refurbished with missing features (like doors) reinstated, but will otherwise remain unchanged. The present wc and lobby opening off the half-landing between ground and first floors will be adapted to become a lift lobby leading to an external terrace on the roof of the kitchen.

Second Floor

The rooms on this floor will form a suite consisting of a bedroom in the main front room, a dressing room in smaller front room and a bathroom in the rear room, which will have inserted partitions enclosing the lavatory and shower spaces. The chimneypieces in both rooms will be retained.

Third floor

The three main rooms on this floor will not be significantly altered, apart from the formation of a new door opening from the rear room to a new wc space. The existing kitchen and lavatory spaces behind the stair will be changed to allow the insertion of a new stair leading up to the newly-formed roof terrace.

Conclusion

The proposed development will return the house to its original use as a single family dwelling and will have no adverse effect on the identified heritage significance of the building.

The front elevations of the building will remain unaltered. At the rear, the proposed alterations to the rear extensions will have the beneficial effect of revealing the full length of the long round-headed stair window between first and second floors.

Internally, all the main spaces on all floors will be retained and refurbished, with no damaging alterations, and important missing features like panelled doors will be reinstated. There will be some modifications to the second floor rear room allow the creation of a new bathroom, but there will be no loss of historic fabric, or of any feature which contributes positively to the character and special interest of the listed building.

At roof level, the proposed formation of a small roof terrace between the two roof-ridges will entail at least the partial removal some roof timbers. The roof structure is presently fully enclosed and cannot be inspected.

6.0 Bibliography and Sources

Camden Local Studies Library & Archive (drainage plans, maps, Post Office directories)

Historic England Historians' Files.

Historic England Photograph Library

London Metropolitan Archives

The Survey of London *Vol XXIV, The Parish of St Pancras pt.IV* (1952).

APPENDIX : List description

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: NUMBERS 10 TO 20 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS

List entry Number: 1379156

Location

NUMBERS 10 TO 20 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 10 TO 20, JOHN STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

District Type: London Borough

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 24-Oct-1951

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 478523

List entry Description

CAMDEN

TQ3082SE JOHN STREET 798-1/96/943 (East side) 24/10/51 Nos.10-20
(Consecutive) and attached railings

GV II

11 terraced houses. 1799-1824. No.20, facade rebuilt in facsimile c1950. Multi-coloured stock brick with yellow stock brick patching. Rusticated stucco ground floors with band at 1st floor levels. No.20 stucco facade to John Street with rusticated ground floor; return to Roger Street, yellow stock brick. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each; No.10 with 3-window (blind) return to Northington Street. No.20, 3 storeys and basement. 2 windows and 3-window return with 2 storey, 3-window rear extension. Gauged brick flat arches (No.10 reddened) to recessed sashes, mostly with glazing bars. Cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows of Nos 12-19. Parapets. Original fluted lead rainwater heads and pipes. No.10: round-arched doorway with mutule cornice-head, sidelights, radial fanlight and panelled door. Moulded cornice to parapet. INTERIOR with stick baluster stair in entrance hall with modillion cornice. No.11: round-arched doorway with fanlight and C20 door. INTERIOR: altered but noted to retain wooden fireplace with dentil cornice on ground floor, marble fireplace on the 1st floor. Stairs with shaped balusters and shaped ends in hallway with cornice formed of paired modillions. No.12: round-arched doorway with fluted surround, mutule cornice-head, radial fanlight and panelled double doors. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplace in ground floor rear room. Shaped ends to stairs. No.13: similar doorway to No.12. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces ground floor front and 1st floor front and rear rooms. Stairs with square balusters and shaped ends in hallway whose cornice has guttae decoration. End wall with round-headed niches each side of landing window. Some added partitions. No.14: similar doorway to No.12 with patterned radial fanlight. INTERIOR: noted to retain stairs with square balusters in front hallway with guttae cornice decoration. Round-headed niches each side of landing window. No.15: slightly projecting. Round-arched doorway with wooden, attached Greek Doric columns carrying cornice-head; fanlight and panelled door. 1st floor windows in shallow round-arched recesses linked by moulded impost bands. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces to ground and 1st floor. Stairs with square balusters. No.16: similar doorway to No.12. INTERIOR: noted to have additions but to retain marble fireplace in ground floor front room and stairs with square balusters. No.17: similar doorway to No.12 with patterned radial fanlight. INTERIOR: noted to retain stairs with square balusters. Marble fireplace, with contemporary iron centre, ground floor rear room. Marble fireplace with sculptured leafwork, 1st floor front room. Contemporary china bell pulls and door plates. No.18: similar doorway to No.12 with patterned radial fanlight. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces with sculptured leafwork, 1st floor rooms. No.19: round-arched doorway with sidelights, fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain good marble fireplaces in ground and 1st floor rooms. No.20: stucco entrance portico on return with moulded cornice and parapet; radial fanlight and panelled double doors. Rounded brick angle. John Street elevation with pilasters rising through 1st and 2nd floors to carry entablature and blocking course. Architraved, recessed casement windows; ground and 1st floor with console-bracketed cornices. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

Listing NGR: TQ3083982094



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