

27 Montague Street London

Heritage Assessment to accompany planning and listed building applications

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1 Scope

1.1 This Assessment has been produced to accompany a planning and listed building submission for the re-instatement of 27 Montague Street in residential use.

1.2 The Assessment is based on an examination of the building, consideration of the listing, the Survey of London, the Conservation Area Appraisal, previous planning applications, and archive material held at Woburn Abbey.

1.3 It has been prepared by Anthony Walker, a registered architect with a post graduate diploma in Building Conservation who is on the register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation. He has been a visiting professor at Kingston University and lectures on building conservation matters at the Architectural Association and Cambridge University.

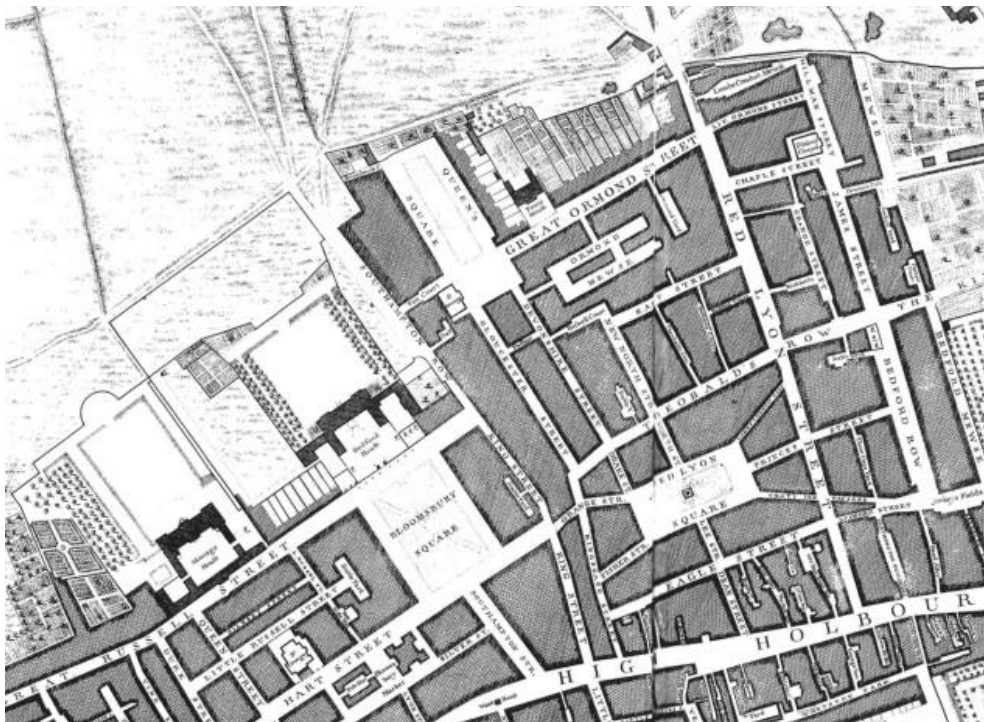
2 Background

2.1 Location.

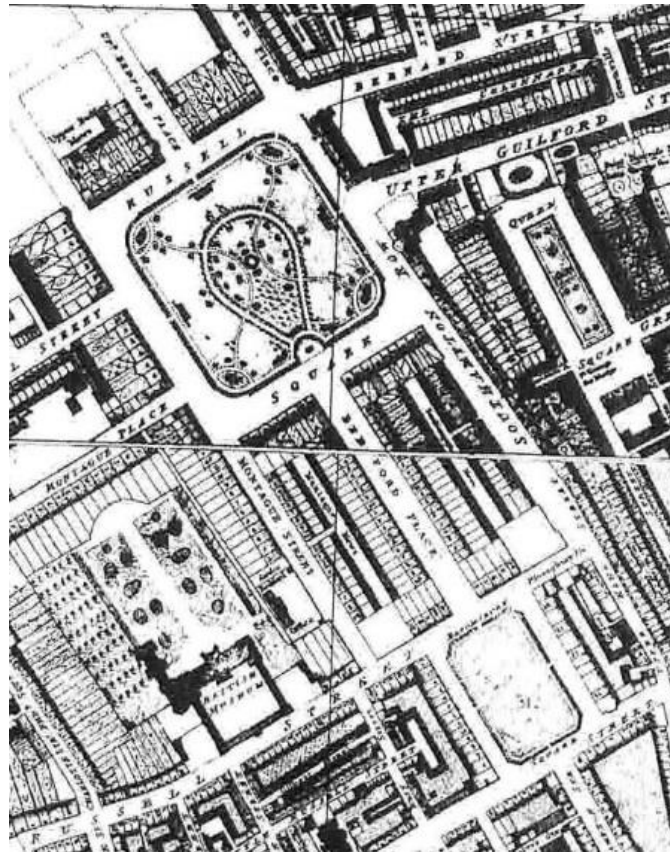
The property is located at the southern end of Montague Street on the eastern side backing on to what were original mews buildings but was converted to open gardens at the beginning of the twentieth century as the mews use declined and the buildings fell into disrepair.

2.2 Historical Background

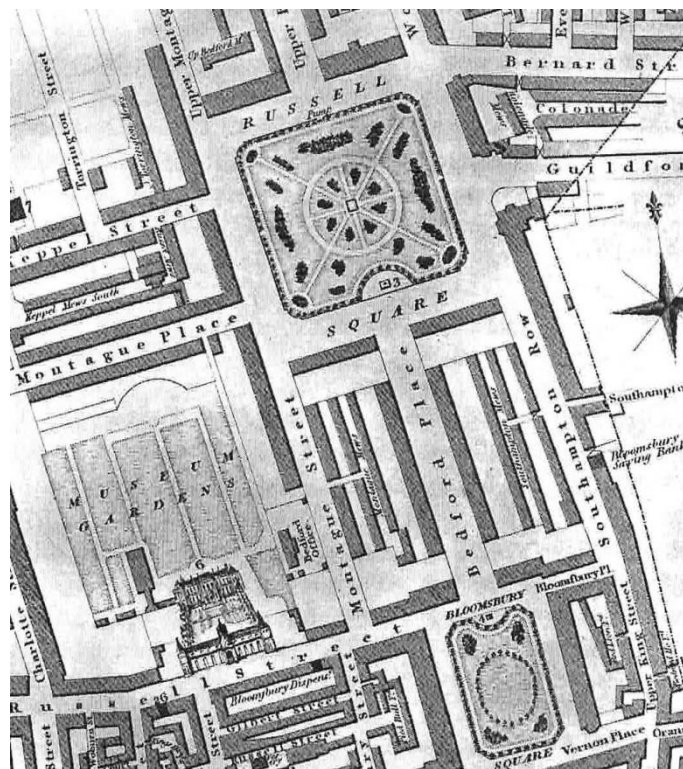
2.2.1 Roques Map showing Bloomsbury Square with Bedford House to the north and Montague House to the west along Great Russell Street.



2.2.2 1800 Plan showing James Burton's layout of the area between Bloomsbury Square and Russell Square



2.2.3 1824 Plan



2.3 Significance

2.3.1 Listing. The terrace was listed in 1969 and described as:

CAMDEN TQ3081NW MONTAGUE STREET 798-1/100/1146 (East side) 28/02/69 Nos.12-29 (Consecutive) and attached railings. Montague Hotel (12-20) (Formerly Listed as: MONTAGUE STREET Nos.1-29 (Consecutive) White Hall Hotel (2-5), Montague House (8-11), Montague Hotel (12-16)) GV II Terrace of 18 houses. c1803-6. By James Burton. Built by WE Allen, altered. Yellow stock bricks with stucco ground floors. Stucco sill band at 3rd floor level. Nos 15-17 and Nos 22 and 23 slightly projecting. Gateway to rear gardens (qv) between Nos 20 and 21. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Round-arched doorways with reeded door frames or sidelights, mostly 2-leaf doors; Nos 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28 and 29 with patterned fanlights. No.13, door replaced by window. No.19 with mosaic top doorstep with words "White Hall". Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows, most with original glazing bars. Nos 18, 19 and 20 with glazing bars forming patterns of octagons, squares and ladders, to sides of panes, on ground and 1st floor. Nos 21 and 22 with patterned glazing bars to ground floor and No.26 to 1st floor. 1st floor windows with cast-iron balconies. Parapets. Rear elevations of Nos 25-29 with bowed bays. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

2.3.2 Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

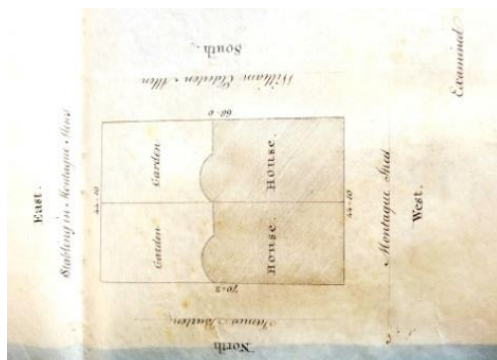
2.3.2.1 Montague Street lies in sub area 6

5.79 This sub area is largely made up of three- and four-storey late 18th and 19th century terraces surrounding a sequence of linked formal spaces, namely Bloomsbury Square, Russell Square and Tavistock Square. A series of north-south vistas visually connect the three squares. Moving through the area, there is a transition between the enclosed, urban nature of the streets and the more open squares which are softened by trees and green landscape. In places, the original terraces have been replaced with 20th century development, mostly of a larger scale and urban grain; this is particularly noticeable around Tavistock Square, Bedford Way and Upper Woburn Place.

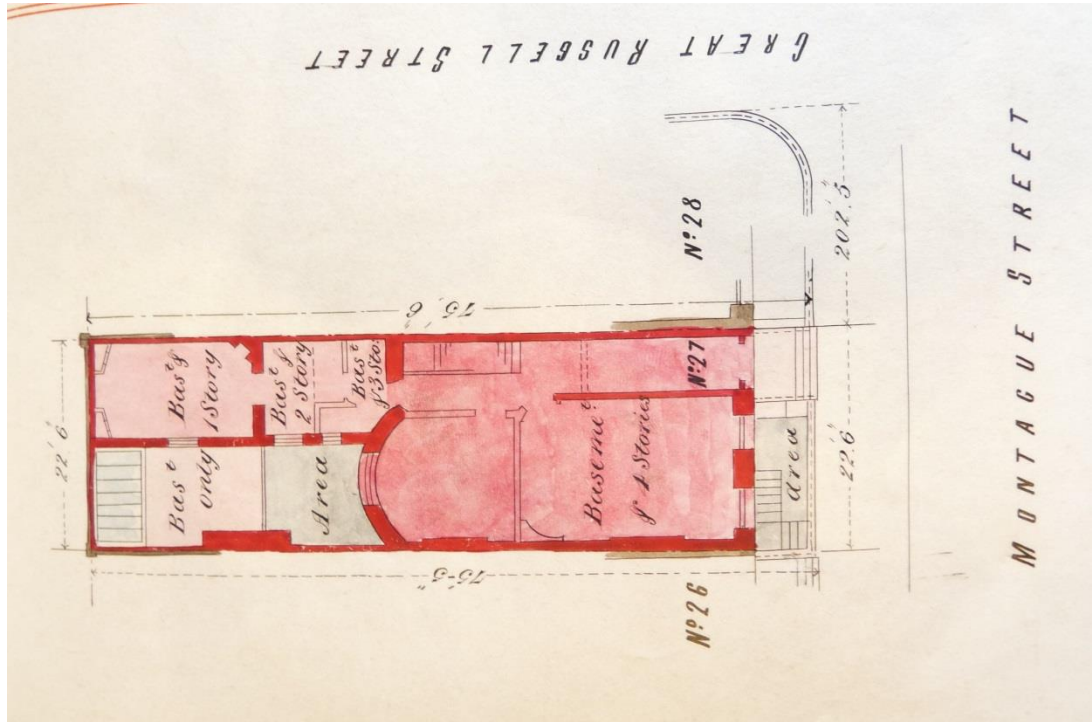
5.88 Montague Street links the south-east corner of Russell Square to Great Russell Street. The street benefits from views north towards the greenery of Russell Square, but has its own uniform townscape with a high sense of enclosure created by the 1800s terraces on its east and west sides, all of which are listed grade II, and were developed by the Bedford Estate following the demolition of Bedford House in 1802. The strong visual consistency derives from the repeated identical frontages. The properties are of four storeys with a continuous parapet and are built in a yellow stock brick with a continuous band at third-floor sill level and a rusticated stucco ground floor and basement level. Each townhouse is three-bays wide with a recessed, semi-circular arched doorway and iron balconies to first-floor windows.

3 The building

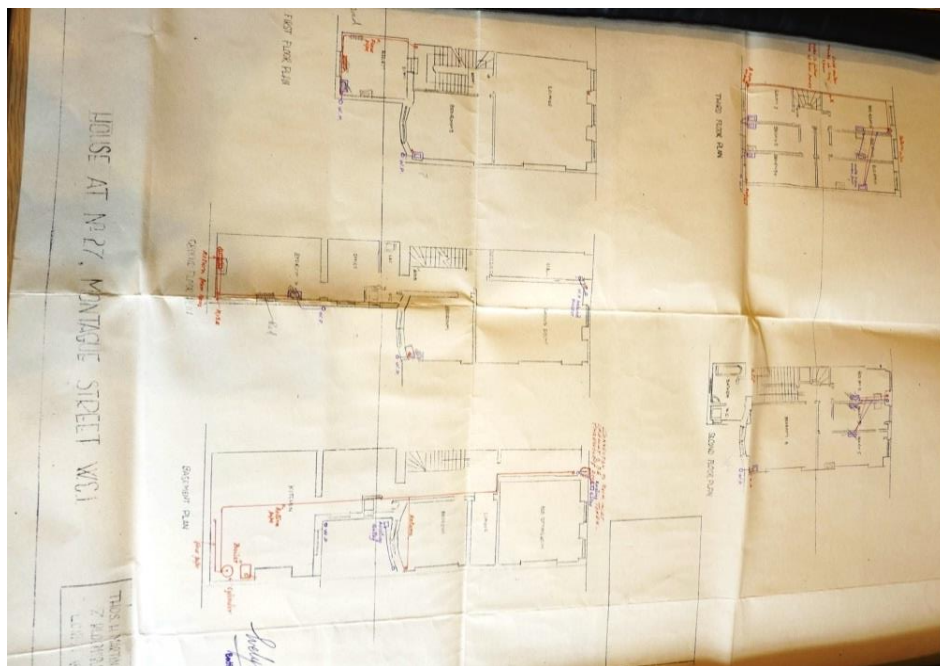
3.1.1 The original building was built in accordance with a Lease granted in 1803 for 99 years from 1800 to William Allen for the 2nd and 3rd houses in the street (numbers 27 and 28). The lease plan shows a simple rectangular plan with a curved bay at the back and no back closet. This does not mean that there was no back closet wing initially.



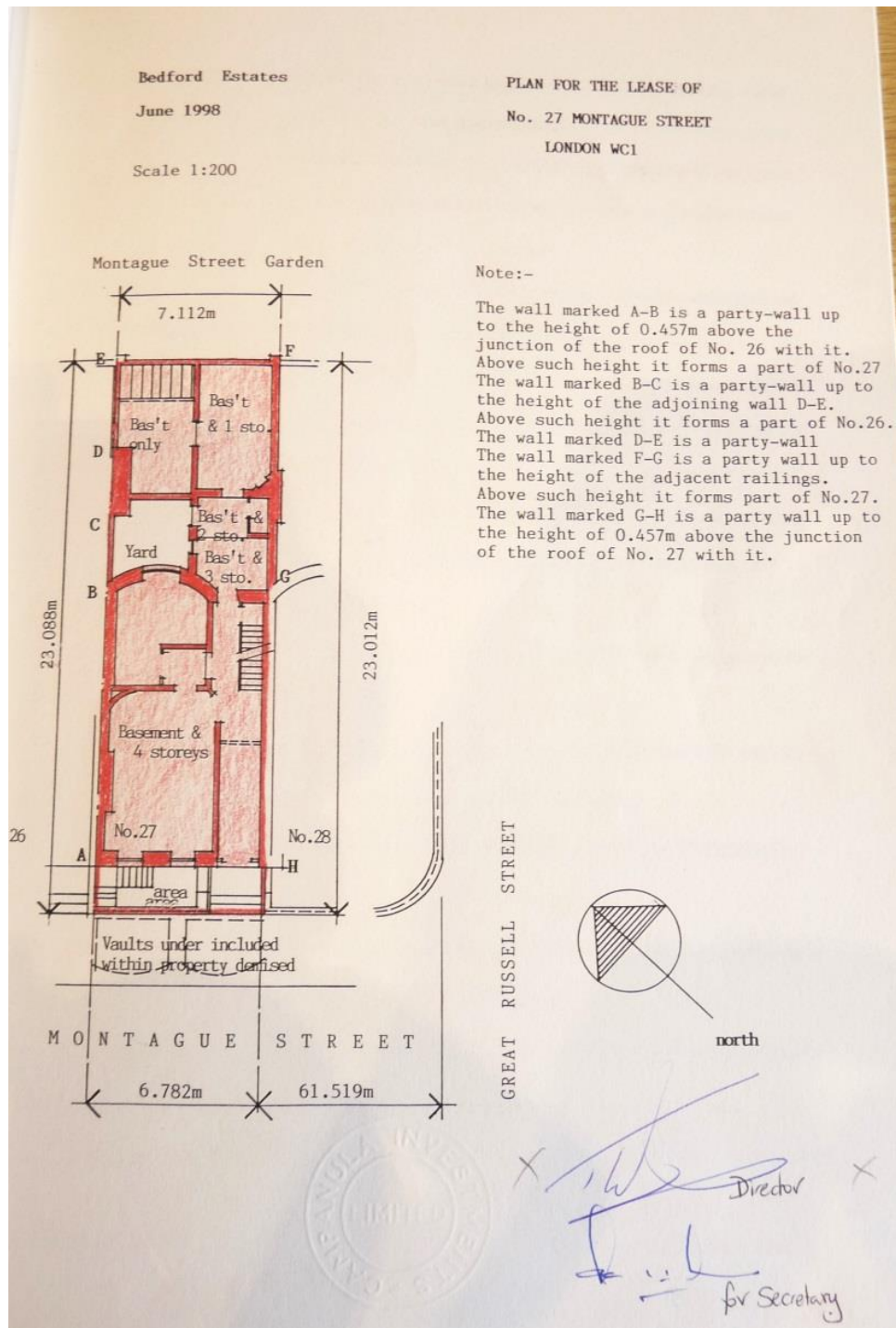
3.1.2 A new lease was granted in 1899 to JW Coade for 30 years to 1929. This does show a back closet rising three storeys over the basement and a further extension of basement and part ground floor. The development at the back may have been part of the original building or carried out at some time during the initial lease.



3.1.3 In February 1935 Christian Doll wrote to the Estate confirming that there was no reason to refuse a licence for lavatory basins in each bedroom. Plans show the layout.

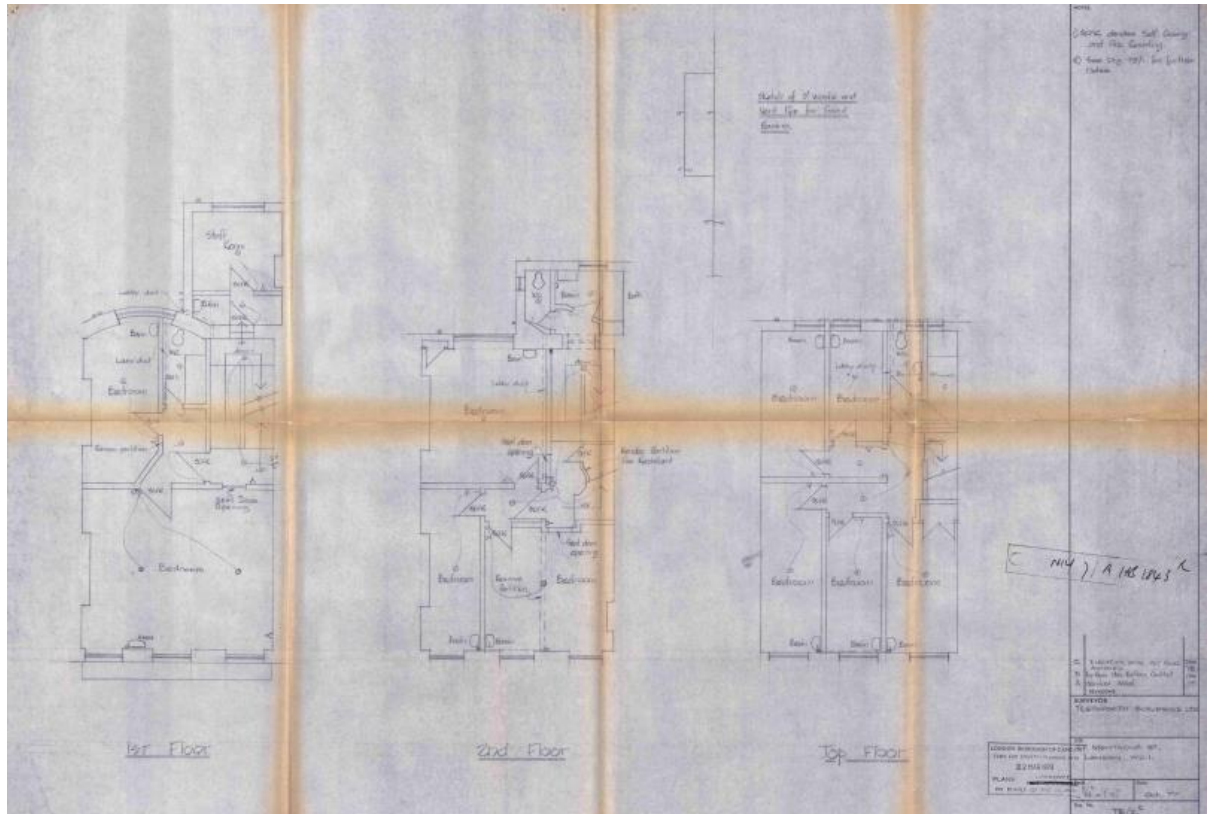


- 3.1.4 A lease was granted to Mrs Marion Orr from 1929 to 1943. The lease plan was unchanged. Correspondence in 1940 confirms that the building would continue to be used as a boarding house with tenants working it in partnership.
- 3.1.5 A lease was then granted in 1941 to 1970 to Kingsley and Thackeray Hotels Limited
- 3.1.6 The plan attached to the Lease in 1999 shows a lobby to the back ground floor room. Otherwise the massing of the building remains unchanged.



3.2 Summary of alterations

There have been a number of alterations during the twentieth century. The drawing below from 1977 shows the upper floors partitioned into small rooms. It should be noted that at the front of the second floor the historic partition which aligns with the staircase is shown removed reversing the earlier layout of the front of the building.



3.3 The above plan may be compared with those from 1925 showing the historic partition in position at the front of the second floor and a new partition being introduced subdividing room 5 into 5 and 5a. As part of those works a lobby was introduced leading to 5a.

3.4 It is apparent that there have been substantial repeated alterations sometimes reversing previous changes. Services have been introduced and then modified in some cases involving work within walls and ceilings.

4 The proposals

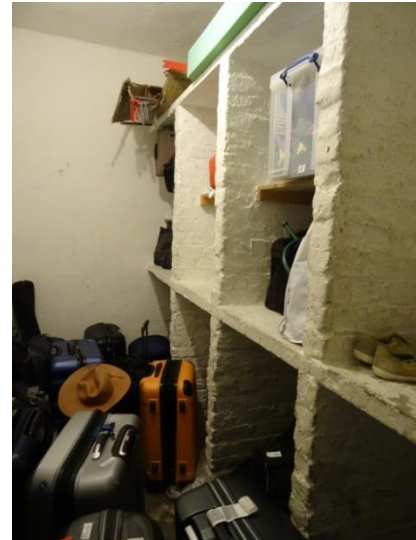
4.1 The proposals are set out in the architect's drawings and in the DAS. For the purposes of this heritage assessment they comprise the restoration of the building to residential use providing a maisonette at ground and basement levels, a single bedroom flat on the first floor and another maisonette on the second and third floors.

4.2 In general terms this has allowed the reinstatement of the principal rooms as single spaces which makes a significant enhancement of the floor plans and decorative details of the historic building.

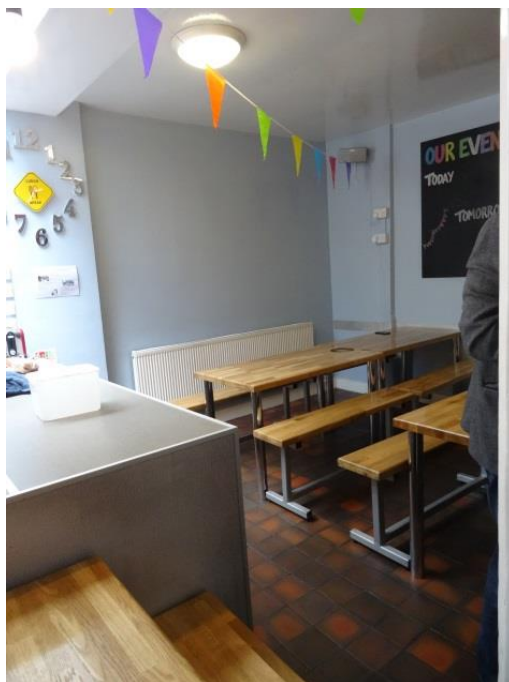
4.3 The form of the building as indicated on the original lease has been retained.

4.4 Basement.

4.4.1 The existing basement has two main rooms, a wine store and a corridor running the length of the building leading to a back closet wing with a basement beyond that.



4.4.2 The original lease plans which were for 27 and 28 do not show a back closet but this is not unusual and when the lease was renewed the basement extension was shown. The extension is of no special architectural merit but is being retained with internal modifications. This is beneficial for the external appearance of the back of the building and the retention of an original feature.



4.4.3 The other rooms have no significant architectural detailing. There is an intensive use of the building throughout as can be seen from the dense layout of the bunk beds. While the furniture is not subject to listed building consent it is noticeable that this density of use does detract from the appearance of the building. Also the location of basins in the rooms do not enhance their architectural appearance. There are several instances of boxing out which appear to be to conceal plumbing for basins and other services.



- 4.4.4 The proposals retain the principal rooms including the back closet wing and the linking corridor. The spaces at either end are used as bathrooms serving the two bedrooms. The wine store is retained as storage space.
- 4.4.5 The two main rooms will have the visual clutter including the basins removed. The bathroom by bedroom 2 originally had a door leading to the area however the area and vaults are no longer of specific use for the basement and this door is converted into a window to provide wall space for the bath. This window is under the entrance slab and is not visible from the pavement and does not harm the appearance of the building.
- 4.5 Ground floor
- 4.5.1 The existing floor plan has two principal rooms of which the back one has an entrance lobby. The back closet wing is currently used as a service area including lavatory accommodation. The main hall and staircase are retained. There are miscellaneous services which will be removed.
- 4.5.2 The proposals retain the two main rooms and enhance their appearance with the removal of the lobby to the back room and by the removal of the individual basins. Decorative features such as plaster work and joinery will be restored where necessary. Surface mounted services will be removed which will enhance the appearance of the rooms and the entrance hall and staircase.



- 4.5.3 The back closet wing appears to have always been ancillary accommodation to the main use of the building. There is no architectural detailing of significance and it is proposed to convert this area to provide a guest lavatory just beyond the end of the main staircase with a dining kitchen overlooking the roof of bedroom 3 which provides a well located amenity terrace.
- 4.5.4 This arrangement provides the opportunity to reinstate the two main rooms on this floor to substantially their original appearance including the reinstatement in working order of the window shutters to both rooms. In both cases the existing stone mantle pieces will be retained and the fire places opened up with new grates installed which will enhance the appearance of the rooms.
- 4.5.5 The entrance to flat 1, the ground floor and basement maisonette, is set back as far as possible to ensure that the main staircase is clearly visible. The upper part of the screen which subdivides the hall and appears to be original will be retained. The intrusive modern door which has been installed and conflicts with

the design of the fanlight above will be removed providing a better view of the main staircase. It is considered that this will enhance the appearance of the entrance and the significance of the building overall.

4.6 First floor

4.6.1 This is proposed to form a single bedroom flat. The principal room at the front is retained as a single room with kitchen units along one wall. The single isolated basin will be removed. Window shutters will be reinstated in working order. The existing entrance from the staircase which has an imposing door case with grand consoles supporting a decoratively carved door head will be retained as the entrance to the flat. The double doors between the two main rooms has a similar door case which has lost the upper part above the picture rail. This double door has one panel fixed and the other retained as access from the lobby off the stair case. It is proposed to retain this arrangement but to reinstate the consoles and doorhead to match the entrance door. The supporting pillars on either side of the double doors match those of the single door. It is considered that this will provide a significant enhancement of this room.

4.6.2 The back room at present has been subdivided on a line parallel to the Party Wall to form a bedroom and lavatory accommodation. The later will be removed allowing the room to be reinstated as a single main space. It is proposed to provide a lobby incorporating a coat cupboard and small WC for guests between the two main rooms.



View showing original door case and decorative cornice. The modern partitioning and doorway to room 23 is to be removed.

4.6.3 The back closet wing is currently used for lavatory accommodation and its optimum use is to retain this by forming a discrete link to the bedroom which does not intrude on the form of the principal room. Existing basins in the principal room will be removed as will the lavatory accommodation and modern partitioning. The existing window shutters will be brought back into use.

4.6.4 Thus the principal room at the back has had the original form with a bay window reinstated. This has been achieved by the means of the discrete link in the corner which will be fitted with a simple jib door. This breakthrough is essential in order to link the bathroom to the principal room and has allowed the removal of the existing inappropriate bathroom which harms the proportions and appearance of the principal room at present, The amount of historic material disturbed is minimal being just over 1 cubic metre(1.02m³). Similar proposals have been approved for planning and listed building at 24-25 Bloomsbury Square. Breakthroughs were also considered acceptable by Camden officers as part of a pre-application enquiry in 2011, for similar proposals, at 27 Montague Street. In both cases the proposals were considered to provide significant benefits in enabling the retention of the principal room at the back of the ground floor.

4.6.5 This link is not considered to harm the significance of the designated Heritage Asset and is of overall benefit to the appearance and historic interest of the building. The restoration of the original residential use of the building with the removal of inappropriate subdivisions and the reinstatement of decorative details is considered to be a significant public benefit in accordance with paragraph 134 of the Framework and secure the optimum viable use.

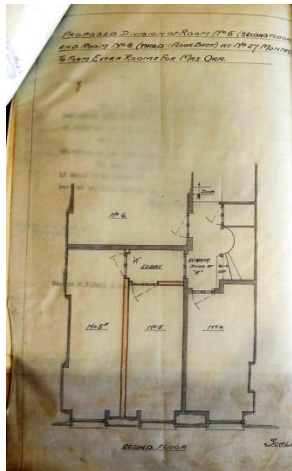
4.7 Second floor

4.7.1 The current layout is a single room across the back of the building and the front divided into two rooms with a small lobby off the staircase and lavatories in the back closet. There are no decorative features other than the ceiling of the staircase.

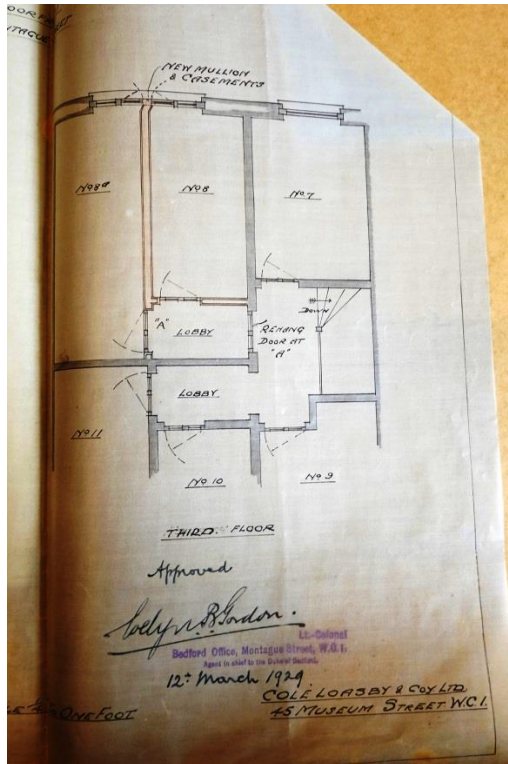


4.7.2 The floor has however been through a number of changes including division into two rooms at the back and three at the front. These were first carried out in

1929 with other changes to follow. There are again individual basins in each room which will be removed.



- 4.7.3 The proposed layout links the original front and back rooms. As noted above the layout of the partitions has been changed on several occasions.
- 4.7.4 The small back closet wing will be retained as a utility room to serve flat 3 the upper maisonette.
- 4.7.5 While the layout of the main rooms does not replicate the original layout which probably existed when the building was first built it has, as noted, been through a number of changes. The layout does retain the traditional relationship with the staircase and a single back space as originally planned.
- 4.8 Third floor
- 4.8.1 The existing floor plan divided the front and back rooms into two and three small rooms with basins. This subdivision was carried out in 1929. The 1929 alterations included changes to the window at the back of the building.



- 4.8.2 The proposals reinstate the general form of a larger and smaller room of which the latter lies on the same line as the staircase. This is a traditional layout and what is the only original partition being that between the two main rooms is retained.
- 4.8.3 It is considered that the layout reflects a traditional arrangement and thus enhances the appearance of the building.

5 Summary

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which is supported by the National Planning Guidance, sets out national policy. Section 12 of the NPPF confirms the importance of conserving heritage assets and sets out the balance required between any harm and public benefit including the optimum viable use of the property. Paragraph 134 states that where there is less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset the public benefits including achieving the optimum viable use should be taken into account. The optimum viable use is defined by Historic England as that which causes the least damage to the significance of the building. In this case the restoration of the building to its original residential use and the removal of the significant number of modern partitions and subdivisions is clearly the optimum viable use.
- 5.2 Both the London Plan and the Camden Core Strategy and Development Policies set out similar requirements to protect the historic environment. The following in Camden Policy are relevant.
Core Policy CS14, Conserving Heritage, states that the Council will ensure that Camden's buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by (b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings. This is

amplified in paragraph 14.9, confirming that conservation area statements will be material considerations in assessing applications.

Camden Planning Guidance 1, Design

Section 3 Heritage. Key messages: Camden has a rich architectural heritage; development within conservation areas will only be permitted if it preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area.

Section 4, Extensions, alterations and conservatories. Key messages are that the alterations should take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings, that windows, doors and materials should complement the existing, and that rear extensions should be secondary to the main part of the building being extended.

Policy DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage

Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

- a) take into account the conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
- b) only permit development, within conservation areas, which preserves and enhances the character and appearance of that area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building which makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area or where it would harm the character or appearance of that conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown which outweigh the case for retention;*
- d) not permit development outside a conservation area which harms the character and appearance of that conservation area;*
and
- e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of the conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*

Listed buildings

To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown which outweigh the case for retention;*
- f) only grant consent for a change of use of, or alterations and extensions to, a listed building where it considers that this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building;*
and
- g) not permit development which it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.*

- 5.3 As part of its use as a boarding house/hotel the building has undergone changes which harmed the building largely through the subdivision of the rooms on more than one occasion but were also exacerbated by the introduction of basins and service some of which are surface mounted.
- 5.4 Internally the proposals will substantially enhance the architectural and historic interest of the building. They do so by:
 - Restoring the general plan form of the building in particular in the basement and on the ground, first and third floors where the historic layouts of the principal rooms have been reinstated. The only

intervention on these levels is on the first floor where a low level enclosure is provided between the two main rooms to provide for a cloakroom and visitors lavatory and a discrete link is provided to the bathroom in the back closet.

- The only floor not to follow this pattern is on the second floor where the historic partitions have been significantly altered and where the main back room has been retained and the street frontage has a single room across the frontage.
- Generally the rooms retain features such as decorative plaster work on the principal floors, the wine store in the basement and remove intrusive surface mounted services.
- On the principal floors the existing shutters will be restored in working order.

5.5 Externally, apart from general repairs and maintenance, there are no changes to the front of the building which retains its appearance and contribution to that of the terrace of which it is a part.

5.6 At the back of the building it is proposed to provide a new doorway from the ground floor kitchen to the terrace over bedroom 1 making good use of external space in conjunction with a family flat. The form of the building as indicated on the 1899 lease plan is retained.

5.7 It is considered that overall there is no harm to the architectural or historic interest of the building and that as a result of the proposals the internal heritage features will be enhanced and preserved for the future. As set out in 5.1 it is considered that the proposals comply with paragraph 134 of the Framework and offer significant public benefits including ensuring the optimum viable use of the building.

5.8 The main role of the building in the conservation area is as part of one of the terraces designed by Burton to enhance and develop the Bedford Estate. There are no changes to the front and those at the back do not harm this significance and it is therefore considered that there is no harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.9 It is therefore considered that the proposals comply with both national and local conservation policy and positively enhance the significance of the building through the restoration of the historic plans, the repair and restoration of historic details and the creation of viable and sustainable residential use in accordance with its origins.

Anthony Walker

19th December 2016