

**23-24 Montague Street
London WC1B 5BH**

**Heritage Assessment
to accompany planning and listed
building application**

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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 23-24 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 Leicester and Cambridge Universities.

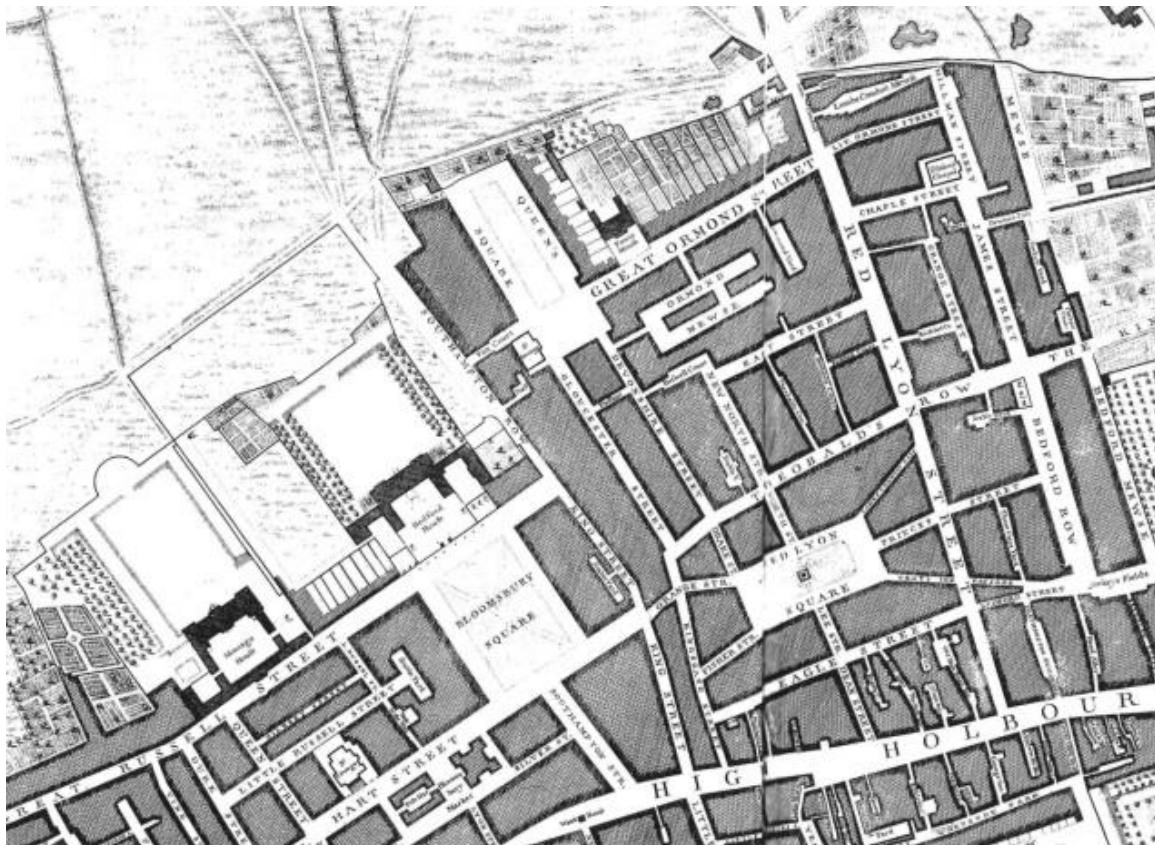
2 Background

2.1 Location.

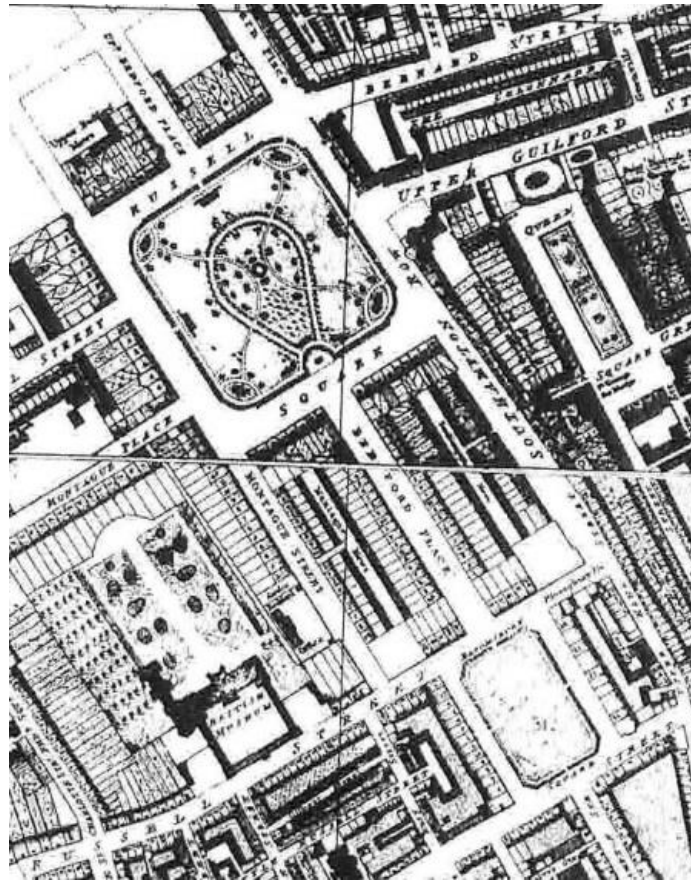
The property is located midway down of Montague Street on the eastern side close to the opening leading to the gardens between Montague Street and Bedford Place. The buildings back on to what were original mews buildings but the land was converted to open gardens at the beginning of the twentieth century as the mews use declined and the buildings fell into disrepair.

2.2 Historical Background

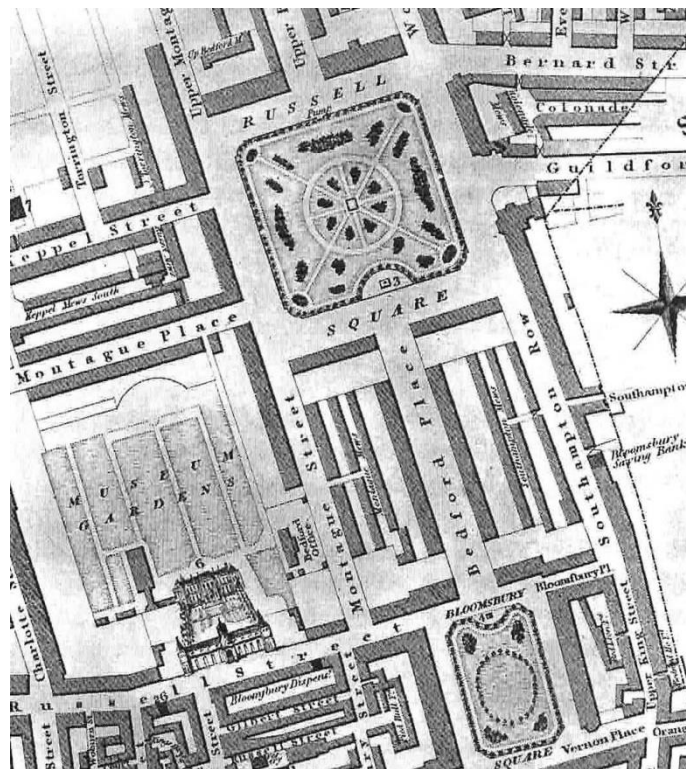
2.2.1 Roques Map showing Bloomsbury Square with Bedford House to the north and Montague House to the west along Great Russell Street.



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.

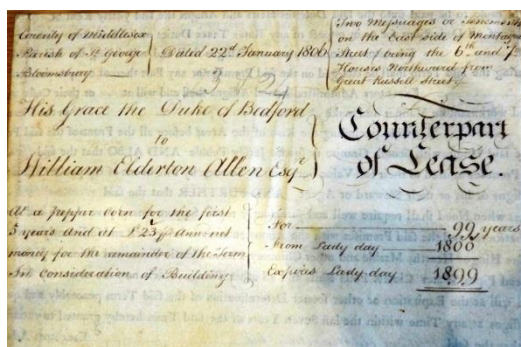
2.3.2.1 Montague Street lies in sub area 6

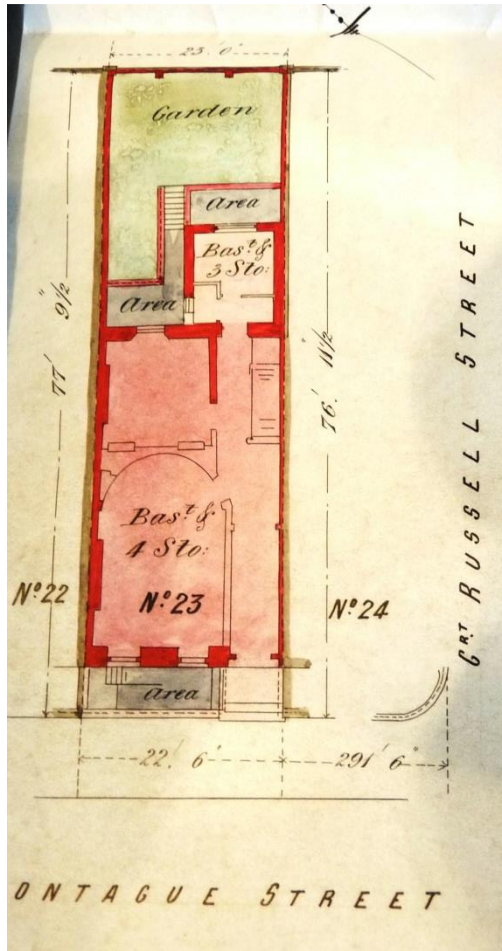
5.79 This sub area is largely made up of three- and four-storey late 18th and 19th century terraces surrounding a sequence of linked formal spaces, namely Bloomsbury Square, Russell Square and Tavistock Square. A series of north-south vistas visually connect the three squares. Moving through the area, 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 buildings

3.1.1 The original buildings were built in accordance with Leases granted in 1806 for 99 years from 1800 to William Allen for the 6th and 7th houses in the street (numbers 23 and 24). The lease plan shows a simple rectangular plan with no back closet. This lease followed a tripartite agreement between the Duke of Bedford, James Burton and William Allen.





And for number 24 to Mrs H E Jones for a similar period.

London
 St. George Bloomsbury } Dated 13th December 1899 } No. 24
 Montague Street.

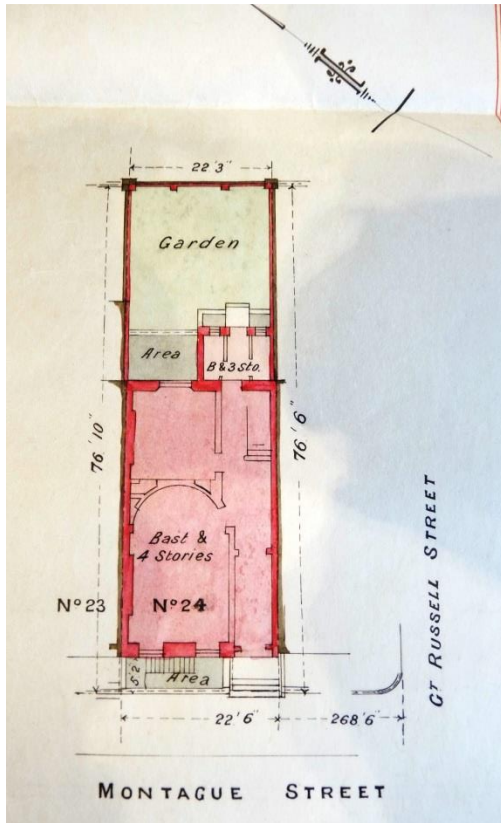
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEDFORD,
 Co

Counterspart
 Lease.

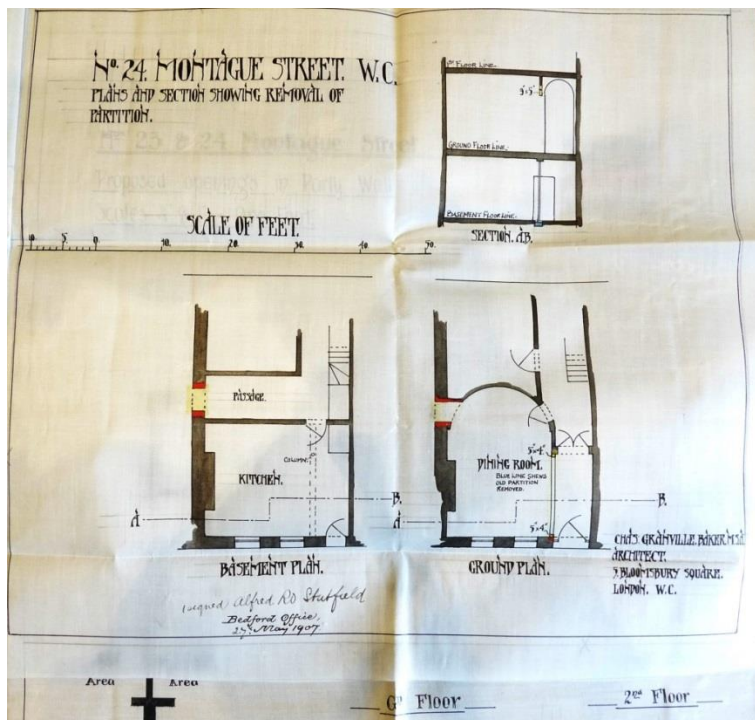
M^{rs} H. E. Jones.

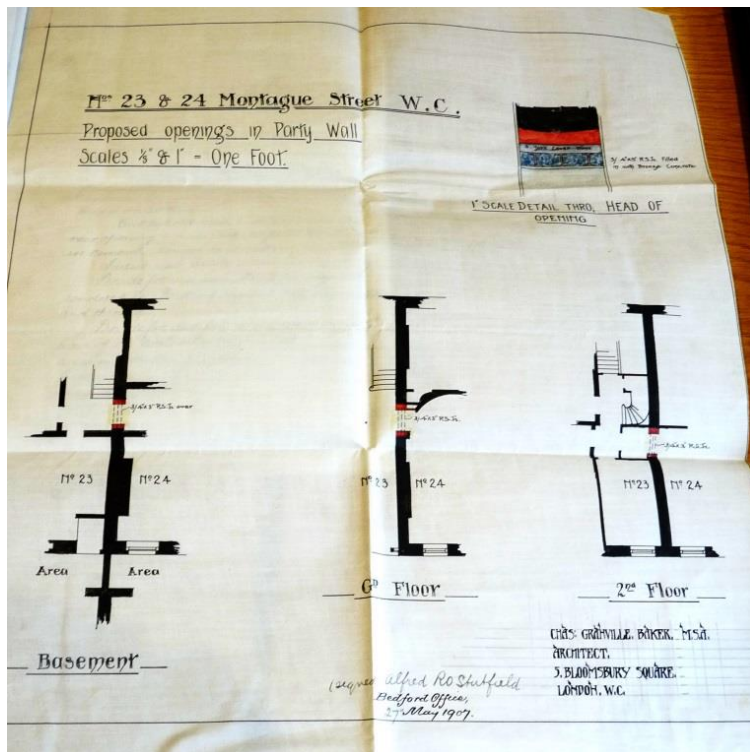
From Sixty day, 1899
 For 30 years.
 Expires Sixty day, 1929

Rent £ 75.0.0
 (First six months Jeffercan)

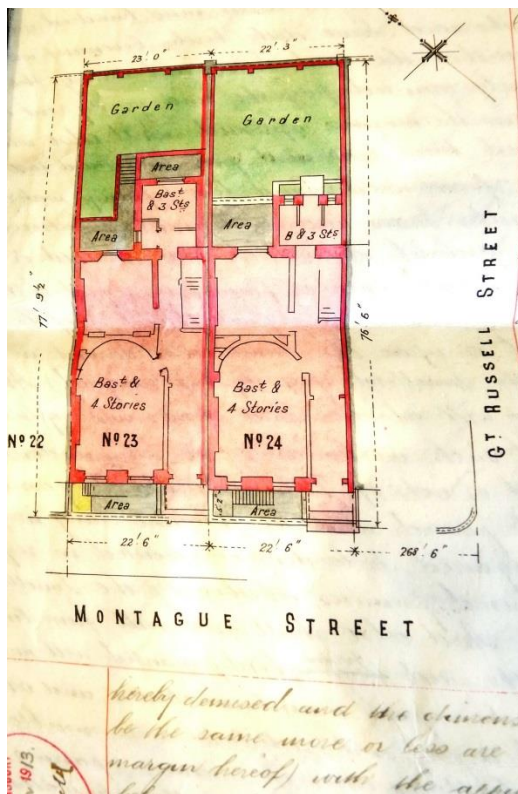


3.1.3 In 1907 a lease was granted by Mr Coade to Mr Kenyon and a licence agreed for alterations including openings through the Party Wall between 23 and 24 at basement, ground floor and second floor levels. This agreement also included removing the wall at ground level between the front room of 24 and the entrance hall which became one open space.

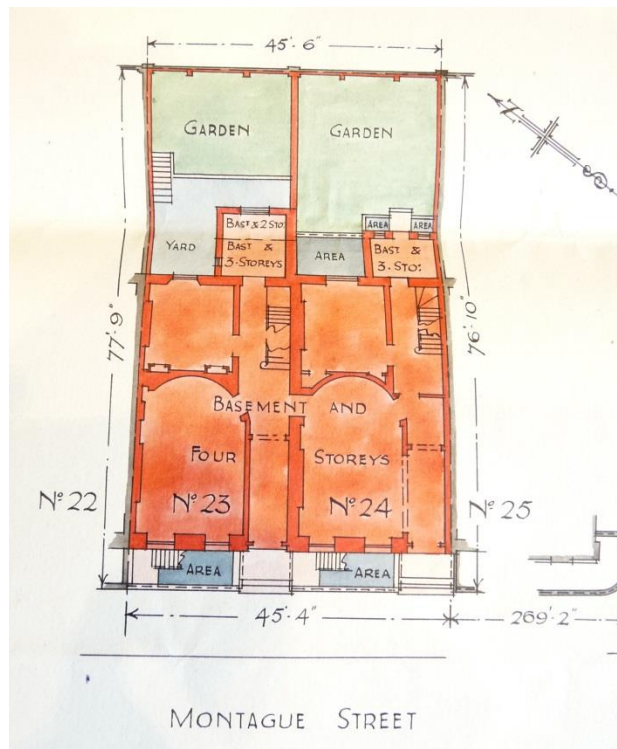




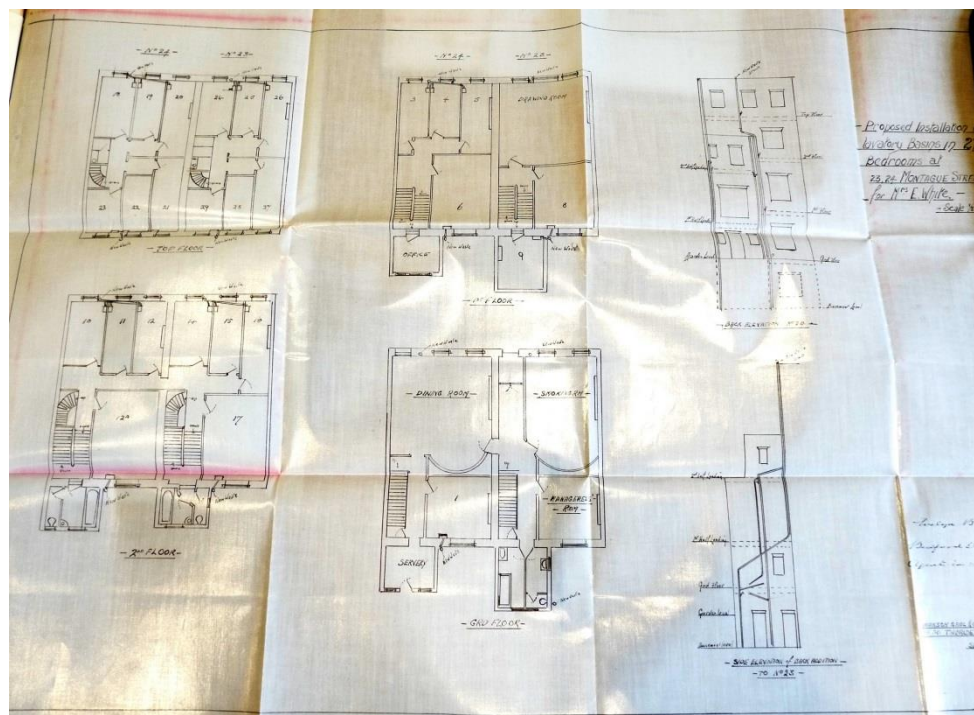
3.1.4 An underlease was then granted in 1913 for both numbers 23 and 24 from Mr Kenyon to Mr Ralph with the plans below incorporated in the document.



3.1.5 In 1917 the leasehold of numbers 23 and 24 were assigned by Mr Kenyon to Mrs EW White and in 1927 a new lease was granted from the Duke of Bedford to Mrs Edith Weston White for $17\frac{3}{4}$ years until Ladyday 1943.

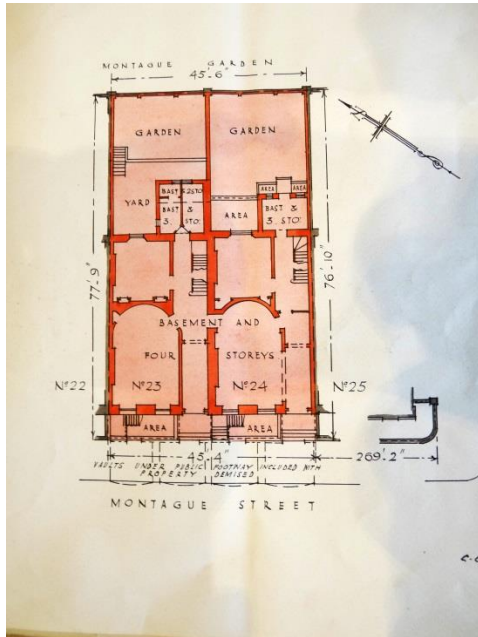


3.1.6 In 1933 consent was granted for alterations to 23 and 24. The combined room at the front of 24 on the ground floor was retained and the upper floors substantially subdivided as shown on the plan below.

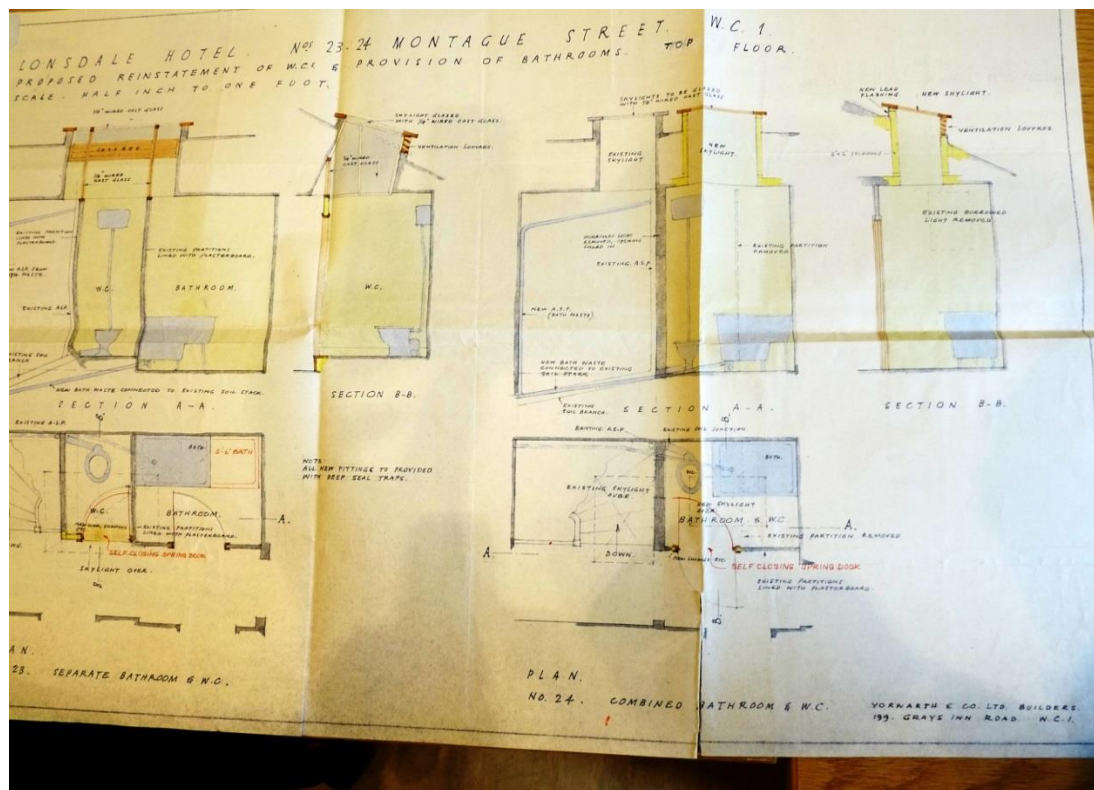


Basins were installed in all rooms, the back closets provided bathrooms and lavatories and some larger rooms were retained.

- 3.1.7 A lease was granted in 1949 to E V Larkin for numbers 23 and 24 for a period of 21 years to 1970.

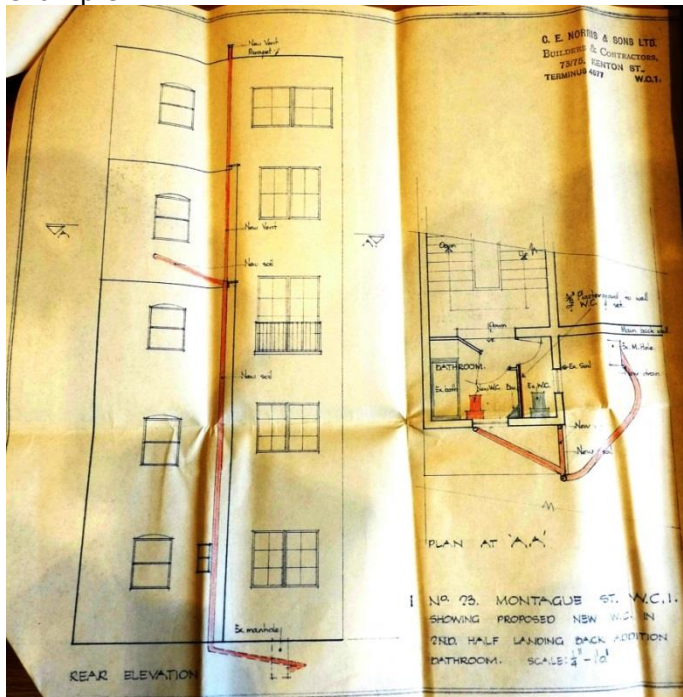


- 3.1.8 Various detail alterations were approved as indicated on the plans below. Odd angled partitions were introduced which appear to have cut across the historic decorative plaster work and skirtings.

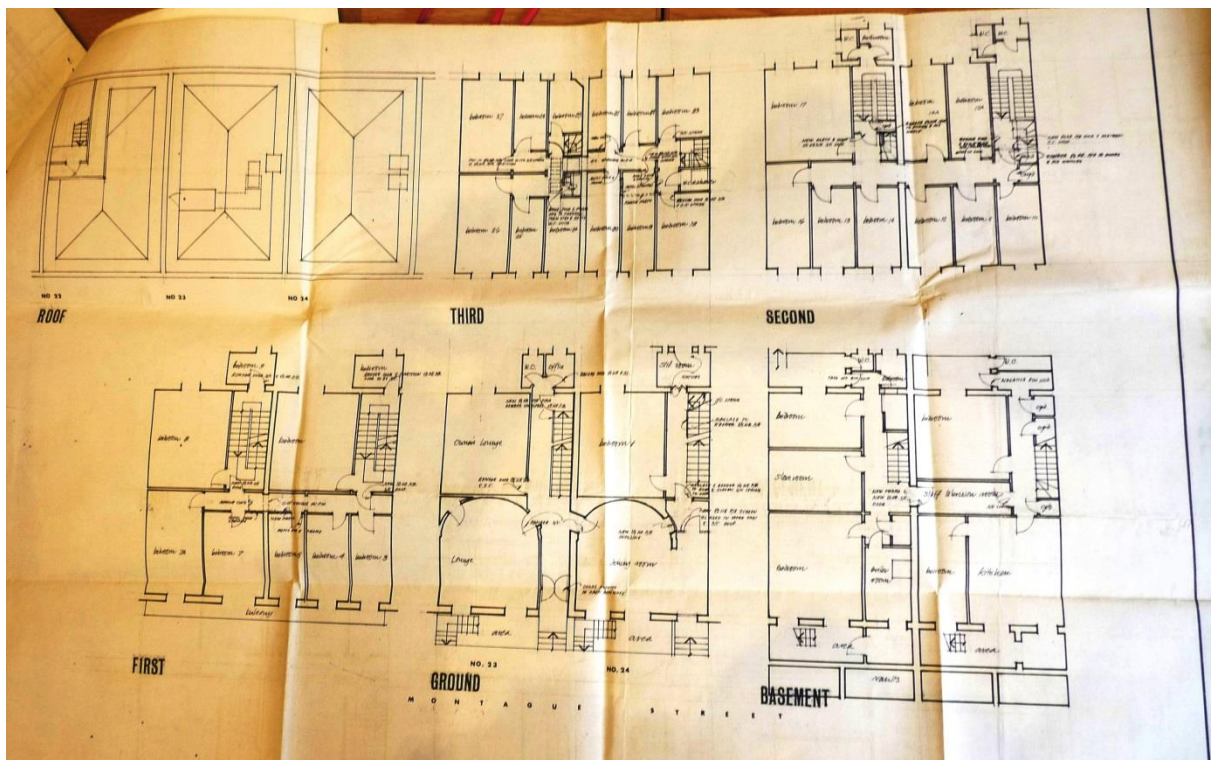


Numbers 23 above and 24 below

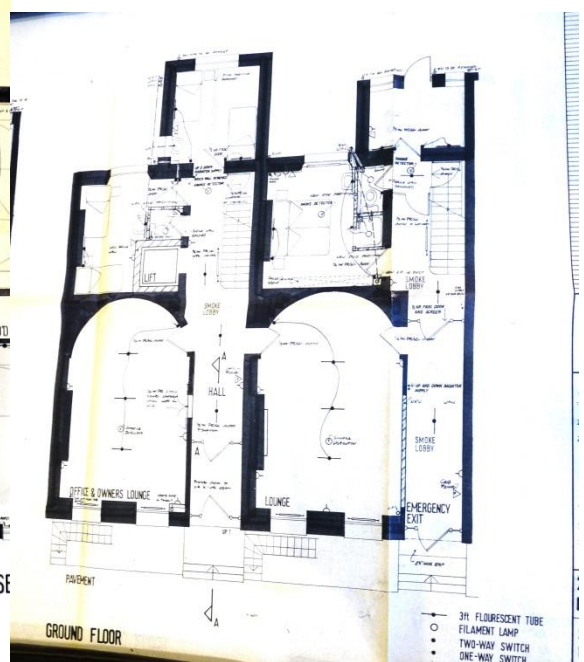
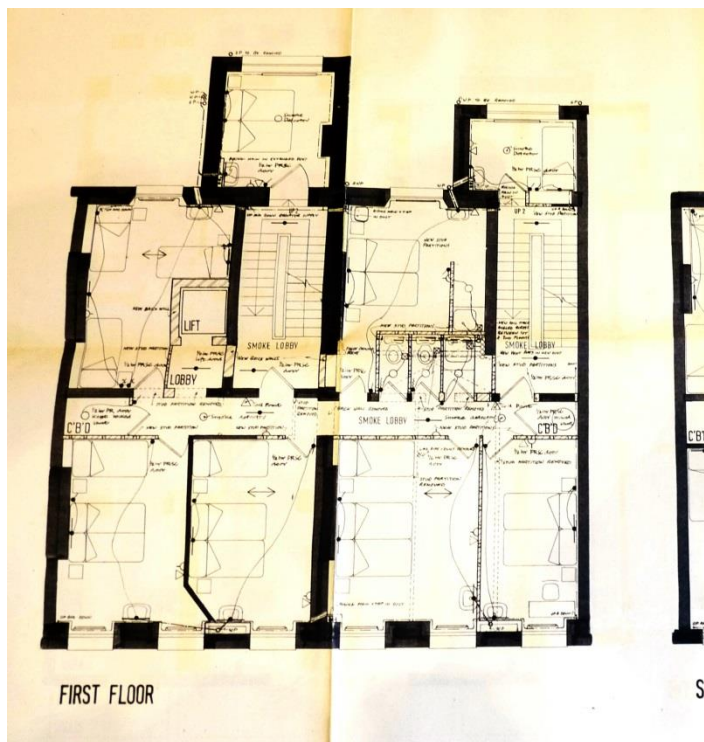
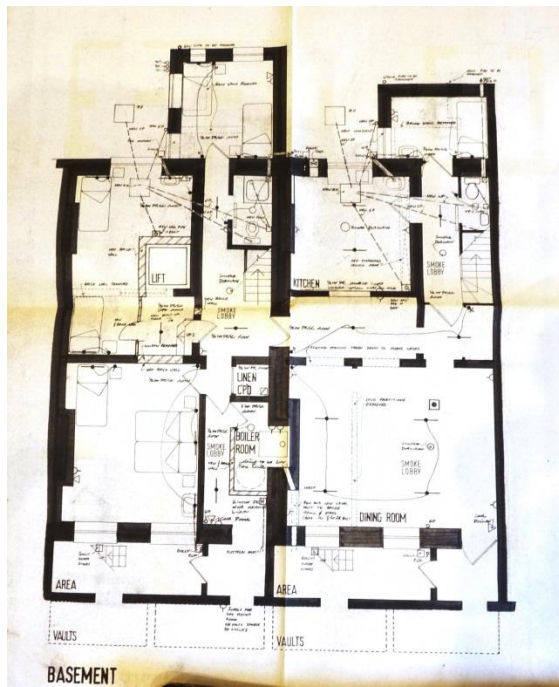
3.1.8 Further alterations were proposed and approved in 1963 to incorporate additional lavatories in the back closet wings of which the drawing below is an example.

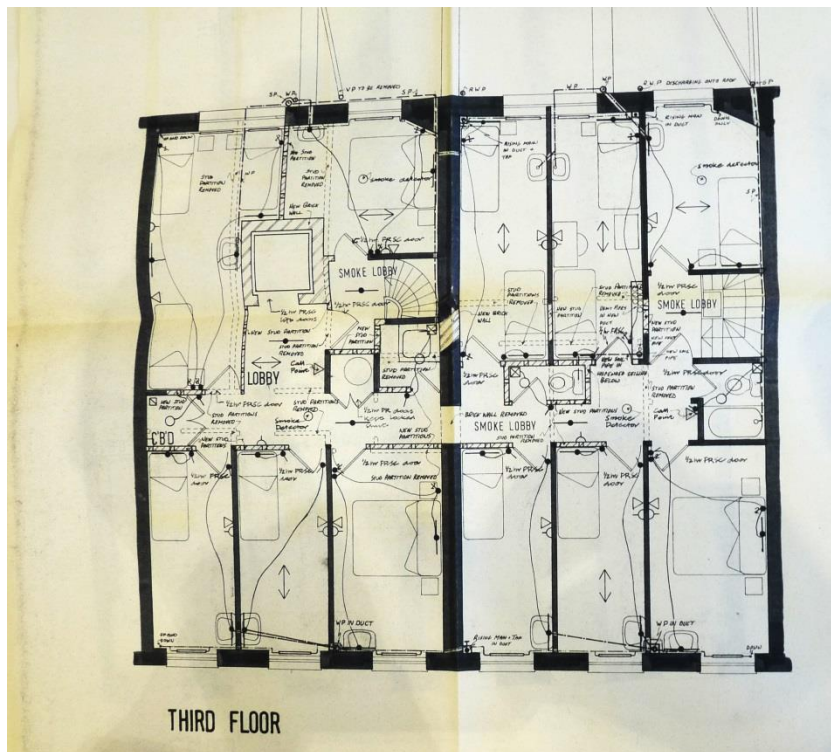


3.1.9 Yet more alterations were proposed in 1971. Although the form of the principal rooms on the ground floor were generally retained the alterations at the front of the first floor destroyed the form of these rooms.



3.1.10 The building was then again modified in 1976 to incorporate a lift in 23 and re-establishing the segregation of the front room and the hall in 24. These plans substantially reflect the building as it exists to day.





3.2 Summary of alterations

- 3.2.1 It is apparent that the accommodation went through a series of changes reflecting changing standards from basic bed and breakfast hostel to a moderate quality hotel with basins in all rooms, lift access to all floors and lounges and dining space on the ground and basement.
- 3.2.2 This involved both the formation of lateral corridors and the subdivision of many of the larger and medium size rooms. Thus the hierarchy of rooms with larger spaces on the principal floors has been lost and the lateral connections have destroyed the sense of individual buildings which is an essential part of the significance of a terrace.
- 3.2.3 The significance of details such as the corncing within the principal rooms has been destroyed by allowing partitions to cut across them thus destroying their relationship with the spaces created.
- 3.2.4 Much of the significance of the exterior of the buildings has been retained and is largely based on their contribution to the overall appearance of the terrace along the street frontage. There are alterations in the detail of different windows both at the back and the front of the buildings.

4 The proposals

- 4.1 The proposals are set out in the architects drawings combined with the DAS. For the purposes of this initial assessment they reinstate the two buildings as independent entities sealing up the openings which were created through the Party Wall in 1907 and allowing for the creation of three self-contained flats in each building.

- 4.2 The objective in each case has been to restore the form of the principal rooms at basement, ground, first and second floors with smaller scale rooms on the third floors in accordance with traditional conventions. Initial proposals linked the back rooms on the first and second floors with the back closet wing. Following the pre-application visit to site it was decided to introduce a bathroom within the original back room on the basis that these areas had already been substantially disturbed. The height of the bathroom would be kept to just above door height thus allowing the original form of the room to be reinstated and avoiding an uncomfortably small tall room for the bathroom.
- 4.3 The proposals also offer the opportunity to reinstate the significance of the historic details such as the cornices noted in 3.2.3 above where their relationship to the primary spaces has been negated. There are also opportunities to restore damaged cornices and joinery thereby enhancing their significance. Shutters in the principal rooms will be restored to working order.
- 4.4 Due to the similarities the proposals are considered floor by floor for both properties side by side.
- 4.4.1 Basement
- 4.4.1.1 The lift introduced in the back half of number 23 has destroyed the large room at the back at all levels. On some floors this has been aggravated by the introduction of smaller service rooms such as lavatories and shower rooms.
- 4.4.1.2 The original wine stores which still exist in some properties in the street have been lost in one case due to the lift and in 24 by the space being added to the front room.
- 4.4.1.3 The proposals in both 23 and 24 reinstate the main rooms at the back and front of each house and the general form of the wine store.
- 4.4.1.4 The alterations at this level substantially enhance the historic and architectural interest of both properties.
- 4.4.2 Ground floor
- 4.4.2.1 The back rooms in both buildings have been substantially changed with the introduction of the lift and miscellaneous lavatories. The front room to 23 has been subdivided to provide a reception with an opening onto the hall and while the front room to 24 is generally intact there is a link through to 23 and the wall between the hall and the front room still shows the evidence of it having been opened up to a single space.
- 4.4.2.2 The proposals reinstate the principal rooms in both buildings as self-contained spaces allowing historic joinery and decorative plaster work to be restored.
- 4.4.2.3 There is a discrete separation of the ground floor maisonette from the main staircase upwards flight thus retaining the significance of the main staircases.

4.4.2.4 It is considered that the restoration of the historic plan form in both buildings and the opportunity to reinstate the decorative plaster and joinery to reflect that plan form is a significant enhancement of both the architectural and historic interest of the buildings. It is recognised that the door in each house between the front and back rooms is not original but it is considered that these follow the precedent established by the historical doors set into the curved wall to provide a cupboard and access from the front room into the hall.

4.4.3 First floor

4.4.3.1 On first, second and third floors a lateral corridor has been cut through both properties through the back section of the front rooms. This has destroyed the relationships of the different floors in each building and the traditional hierarchy of the rooms. The decorative cornice work is generally hidden in the corridor and the new partitions just cut across the historic decorative work. This has caused substantial harm to the significance of both buildings.

4.4.3.2 The back room in number 23 is compromised by the introduction of the lift. The back room to 24 has been equally harmed by the introduction of a series of lavatories and shower rooms.

4.4.3.3 The proposals reinstate the principal rooms in the back and the front of both buildings. With significant rooms back and front the challenge is to introduce lavatory and similar accommodation. The principle is set out in paragraph 4.2.

4.4.3.4 The entrance to the flat at this level in each building is achieved making use of the existing doorways off the main staircase landing with a link to the back room again using one of the door locations on the existing plan.

4.4.3.5 It is considered that this removes the substantial harm caused by the previous alterations and restores the architectural and historic significance of both the floor plan and the decorative details of the interior.

4.4.4 Second floor

4.4.4.1 The existing floor plans have caused similar harm to the layout and decorative detail of the rooms to that set out for the first floor.

4.4.4.2 The proposals reinstate the basic layout of a single room at the back of the building adjacent to the main staircase. At the front there is a single room across the frontage with a wide opening linking it to the back room. This wall has had a series of openings for the lift, bedrooms and lavatories and there is no loss of historic fabric.

4.4.4.3 The back closet wing is used to provide independent utility rooms for each flat with access from the main staircase as existing..

4.4.4.4 It is considered that the proposals reinstates much of the historic plan of the floor of each building and allows a comprehensive decorative scheme for decorative joinery and plasterwork.

4.4.5 Third floor

- 4.4.5.1 Traditionally the top floor contains smaller rooms and both buildings have over the years been subject to significant changes including the introduction of the lift and lateral corridor.
- 4.4.5.2 The proposals adopt the same principle of smaller rooms although of course with the removal of the lift and corridor there is the opportunity to reconfigure the precise layout without the loss of significant historic material.
- 4.4.5.3 It is considered that the reinstatement of each house as a self-contained building together with the removal of the lift enhances the historic interest of each building.

4.5 Overall assessment.

- 4.5.1 It is considered that the restoration of the original two buildings with the reinstatement of the majority of the original plan together with decorative plasterwork and joinery significantly enhances the historic and architectural interest of the buildings and aids their contribution to the conservation area by reinstating their individual contributions to the terrace of which they are a part.

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.
- 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 extracts from 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 and through the installation of services
- 5.4 There are no changes to the exterior of either building other than repair and maintenance. Thus there is no harm to the designated heritage assets of the buildings themselves nor to the Conservation Area.
- 5.5 Internally the proposals substantially enhance the architectural and historic interest of the buildings by:
- Restoring the general plan form of the building and in particular by removing subdivisions and other interventions including basins, surface mounted services and the lateral corridors the restore the principal rooms of the buildings and their significance.
 - They retain features such as decorative plaster work on the principal floors, and allow for the restoration of shutters on the principal floors,
 - Provision is made to remove intrusive surface mounted services and sanitary ware in individual rooms.
 - Intrusive existing secondary glazing will be removed and enhance the appearance of the rooms.
- 5.6 Thus the significance of the buildings is dramatically enhanced by:

- The removal of the lateral connections thus restoring the hierarchical significance of the rooms with the principal rooms being clearly preserved on the first and ground floors respectively.
- Within the principal rooms the removal of inappropriate subdivision due to the lateral corridors and partitions dividing up rooms such as the front room on the first floor reinstates the significance of the individual rooms,
- The main staircase is carefully preserved in its original form other than a small section of subdivision to provide separation at ground floor level between flat 1 and the upper levels. To achieve this it has been necessary to form links between the back closets and the flats at each level. This is proposed as a discrete entrance in the corner of the principal rooms.

5.7 The main role of the buildings 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 exterior and it is therefore considered that there is no harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.8 It is considered that the proposals provide a viable optimum use of the buildings which is in accordance with their historic role to provide living accommodation on the Bedford Estate and as such they accord with the objectives of the NPPF.

5.9 It is considered that the proposals for both buildings do comply with national and local conservation policies. They positively enhance the significance of the buildings through the restoration of the historic plans, the repair and restoration of historic details and the creation of viable and sustainable residential.

Anthony Walker
December 2016