

Heritage Assessment

Bedford House, John Street, London



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CONTENTS

Pages

1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Legislative and Planning Policy Framework	
2.1 Legislation	4
2.2 Planning Policy and Guidance	5
3.0 Architectural and Historic Appraisal	
3.1 Historical Development of Bedford House	7
3.2 Historic Map Regression	8
3.3 Site Assessment	10
3.4 Assessment of Heritage Assets: Conservation Area	11
3.5 Assessment of Heritage Assets: Listed Buildings	12
4.0 Proposals and Assessment of Impact & Conclusion	14
5.0 Conclusion	22
Appendix A - Listing Descriptions	23
Appendix B -Conservation Area	27

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1.0 BEDFORD HOUSE, LONDON

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by WYG and considers the impact of the proposed development, Bedford House, John Street, Bloomsbury, WC1N 2BG henceforth referred to as 'the site'.

The application relates to a twentieth century building located within the borough of Camden. While the site is not listed, it falls within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, Sub Area 10. Additionally, to the north lies the Grade II listed No 21 John Street, The Duke of York Public House, and 1-4 Mytre Court. Similarly to the south is the Grade II listed 22-28 John Street, with associated railings. On the opposite side of the street the terrace of houses is also listed Grade II, including Nos. 10-20 together with their attached railings.

The proposals seek to create a single storey roof extension to the building fronting John Street; a single storey roof extension to the building fronting John's Mews; a seven storey extension within the south lightwell containing a new staircase, two new lifts, toilets and showers; the installation of a metal fire escape staircase to the north lightwell; and the replacement and relocation of plant with a new enclosure at roof level.

This report will present a summary of the relevant legislative framework and planning policy at national, strategic and local levels, with special regard to that which relates to development affecting heritage assets. It will also provide an assessment of the significance of the site and its surroundings, as well as an assessment of the impact of the described proposals.

This report finds that the proposals for the site are in accordance with the relevant local, regional and national planning policies and guidance. The proposals should therefore be found acceptable on heritage grounds.



Figure 1: Aerial view of Bedford House. Source: Bing Maps



Figure 2: Bedford House viewed from the North along John Street.



Figure 3: Location within a simplified map of London. Source: Historic England.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 LEGISLATION

Legislation regarding buildings and areas of special architectural and historic interest is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The relevant legislation in this case extends from Section 66 and Section 72 of the 1990 Act. Section 66 states that special regard must be given by the planning authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their settings, while Section 72 refers to the special regard to be given to the preservation and/or enhancement of conservation areas.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. When determining Planning Applications the NPPF directs LPAs to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development; the 'golden thread' which is expected to run through the plan-making and decision-taking activities. This encourages LPAs to approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Where a development plan is absent, silent or out-of-date, permission should be granted except where adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh those benefits, when assessed against NPPF policies as a whole; or where specific policies contained within the NPPF (including those with regard to designated heritage assets) indicate that development should be restricted to some degree.

Section 7 of the NPPF, 'Requiring Good Design' (Paragraphs 56 to 68), reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places. Paragraph 58 states that new design should respond to local character and history.

Section 12, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' (Paragraphs 126-141) relates to developments that have an effect upon the historic environment. This is the guidance to which local authorities need to refer when setting out a strategy in their Local Plans for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. This should be a positive strategy where heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. For clarification, the NPPF provides definitions of terms relating to the historic environment in a glossary in Annex 2.

Of particular relevance to this report are Paragraphs 132-135 which are concerned with the potential impacts of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset. Paragraph 132 states that where a development is proposed, great weight should be given to the asset's

conservation and that the greater an asset's significance, the greater this weight should be. Paragraph 134 emphasises that where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of an asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, bearing in mind the great weight highlighted in Paragraph 132.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (March 2014)

National planning guidance has subsequently been adopted in order to guide the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.

Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally the degree of substantial harm will only be at a level where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed.

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008)

Conservation Principles outlines Historic England's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in Historic England's own advice and guidance, the document is recommended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.

The guidance describes a range of heritage values which enables the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main 'heritage values' being:

Evidential value: which derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

Historical value: which derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

Aesthetic value: which derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal value: which derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

The PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn in March 2015 and replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) published by English Heritage (now Historic England). **GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans** provides guidance to local planning authorities to help them make well informed and effective local plans. **GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Making** includes technical advice on the repair and restoration of historic buildings and alterations to heritage assets to guide

local planning authorities, owners, practitioners and other interested parties.

GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets replaces guidance published in 2011.

At present there are some gaps in guidance, formerly provided by PPS5 Practice Guide. It is hoped that these gaps will be filled by the emerging GPA 4: Enabling Development and Heritage Assets, and the two Historic Environment Advice Notes entitled Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (HEA 1) and Making Changes to Heritage Assets (HEA 2), for which the consultation process finished on 17 April 2015.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 1 (GPA1): The Historic Environment in Local Plans

This advice note focuses on the importance of identifying heritage policies within Local Plans. The advice echoes the NPPF by stressing the importance of formulating Local Plans based on up-to-date and relevant evidence on economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area, including the historic environment.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment

This document provides advice on numerous ways in which decision making in the historic environment could be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. The advice suggests a structured, staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information:

- 1) Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- 2) Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
- 3) Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
- 4) Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- 5) Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance balanced with the need for change; and
- 6) Offset negative impacts to significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.2 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets

This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This guidance updates that previously published by English Heritage (The Setting of Heritage Assets 2011) in order to ensure that it is fully compliant with the NPPF and is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 document. It does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.

Setting is defined as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve’. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset or a heritage designation and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset itself. Elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of a heritage asset.

While setting is largely a visual concept, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by other environmental factors, including historic associations.

This document states that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset. It is further stated that the contribution made to an asset’s significance by their setting will vary depending on the nature of the asset and its setting. Different heritage assets have the capacity to accommodate change differently within their settings, possibly without harming the significance of the asset (or even enhancing its significance) and, therefore, setting should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Although not prescriptive in setting out how this assessment should be carried out, Historic England recommend using a ‘5-step process’ to assess any effects of a proposed development on the setting and significance of a heritage asset:

- 1) Identifying the heritage assets affected and their settings;
- 2) Assessing whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- 3) Assessing the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s);
- 4) Maximising enhancement and minimising harm; and

- 5) Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes.

Strategic Policy

The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (Greater London Authority, March 2015)

On 10 March 2015, the Mayor of London published adopted *The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011*. From this date, the policies set out in this document are operative as formal alterations to the London Plan the Mayor’s spatial development strategy and form part of the development plan for Greater London. In particular, the document encourages the enhancement of the historic environment and looks favourably upon developments which seek to maintain the setting of heritage assets.

Policy 7.8 *Heritage Assets and Archaeology* seeks to record, maintain and protect the city’s heritage assets in order to utilise their potential within the community. The policy requires that developments which have an affect upon heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

Policy 7.4 *Local Character* requires new developments to have regard to the local architectural character in terms of form, massing, function and orientation. This is supported by Policy 7.8 in requiring local authorities in their LDF policies, to seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London’s environmental quality, cultural identity and economy, as part of managing London’s ability to accommodate change and regeneration.

Policy 7.9 *Heritage Led Regeneration* advises that regeneration schemes should ‘identify and make use of heritage assets and reinforce the qualities that make them significant’. It is recognised that heritage assets should be put to a use suitable for their conservation and role within sustainable communities and that successful schemes can help stimulate environmental, economic and community regeneration.

Local Planning Policy

Camden Core Strategy 2010-2025, adopted 2010

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a group of documents setting out planning strategy and policies in the London Borough of Camden. The principle LDF document is the Core Strategy, which sets out key elements of the Council’s planning vision and strategy for the borough and contains strategic policies. The following Core Strategy policies relate to development concerning the historic environment in the borough:

Policy CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

This policy seeks to ensure that places and buildings are attractive, safe and accessible by: requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character; preserving and enhancing Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens; promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces; seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible; protecting important local views.

Camden Development Policies 2010-2025, adopted November 2010

As part of Camden Council’s LDF, Development Policies 2010-2025 set out detailed planning criteria that are used to determine applications for planning permission in the borough. Policies pertinent to the historic environment include the following and are to be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy document:

DP25 Conserving Camden’s heritage

This policy emphasises that where development is proposed within a conservation area the Council will: take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications; only permit development that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area; prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention; not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area it is in; and preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden’s architectural heritage.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted April 2011

Bloomsbury Conservation Area covers an area of approximately 160 hectares extending from Euston Road in the north to High Holborn and Lincoln’s Inn Fields in the south and from Tottenham Court Road in the west to King’s Cross Road in the east. This appraisal has been prepared to define the special interest of the Conservation Area in order that its key attributes are understood and can be protected, and that measures are put in place to ensure appropriate enhancement. It replaces a Conservation Area Statement adopted in 1998.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.2 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Camden Draft Local Plan (2016)

Emerging Policy D2 Heritage

This policy states that Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's heritage and their settings including conservation areas. With regards to designated heritage assets the policy states that the Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

Conservation Areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas. The Council will:

- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;
- f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;

Listed Buildings

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

- k. resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF BEDFORD HOUSE

Bloomsbury represents a period of London's early expansion northwards, dating from the mid-17th century, which continued through the Georgian and Regency periods to around 1840. This period of expansion, which followed the Plague in 1665 and the Great Fire in 1666, replaced a series of medieval manors on the periphery of London and their associated agricultural and pastoral land. The first swathe of building created a mix of uses, however later expansion northwards focused on providing grander residential districts for wealthy families.

This was carried out speculatively by a number of builders on leases from major landowners and followed a consistent form with terraced townhouses constructed on a grid pattern of streets and landscaped squares. The progression of development across the Conservation Area illustrates the subtle changes in taste and style in domestic architecture that occurred throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The Victorian era saw the establishment of University College and an expansion in specialist hospitals around Queen Square.

Much of the Bloomsbury area was held by the Bedford estate, which held 112 acres in the 18th century. The holdings of the Duke of Bedford originated as the estate of Thomas Wriothesley, later Earl of Southampton, who acquired them at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1545.

It was the widow of the fourth Duke, Gertrude Leveson-Gower, who was a prime mover in the residential development of the estate in the late eighteenth century. Much of this development was in the form of "wide streets and grand squares fit for the gentry". It was a well-timed development; the Bedford Estate's Bloomsbury rental was worth about £13,800 in 1805, but jumped to £17,242 in 1806 because of all the new buildings.



Figure 4: 32-36 John Street 1942. Source: London Metropolitan Archives.



Figure 5: 5-8 John Street 1942. Source: London Metropolitan Archives.



Figure 6: View of Bedford House from the south in 1942. The location of the site is indicated by the red arrow. Source: London Metropolitan Archives. Even at this time it can be seen from this image that the terrace featured a number of structures and roof extension which break with this Georgian roof line.



Figure 7: View of the earlier Bedford House within Bloomsbury square from which the site takes its name.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF BEDFORD HOUSE

Conforming to the gradual evolution of the street for institutional as opposed to residential use from 1818, the site was occupied by a Baptist Chapel, built for the renowned preacher James Harrington Evans.

Figure 8 and 9 gives an indication of the size and scale of the chapel which was unusually large. This was described in 1820 as, 'in front 175 feet and in depth to John's Mews 125 feet'. The images show a steep hipped roof and asymmetric façade. The plot of the building is also wide, and the chapel thought to fit a congregation 400 to 500. These images show how the site breaks with the otherwise consistent terrace forms which populate the street front.

Although the images in Figures 8 and 9 are not clear, it is appreciable that at this time the tall building to the north of the site, was still occupied by nineteenth century development. This plot was to be redeveloped in 1933 with a striking mixed use development which occupied No 21 John Street, The Duke of York Public House on Roger Street and Nos. 1-4 Myre Court on John's Mews. This dramatically altered the character of the northern end of the street, both in terms of height, materiality and massing, introducing an element of Art Deco asymmetry.

During the Second World War the Baptist Chapel became damaged and was earmarked for demolition. Its replacement, the present day Bedford House was constructed on an 'H' plan in brick. While a nominal attempt to reference the proportions of the Georgian terrace to the south was made, the resulting building lacks the attention to detail and appears monotonous in the streetscape. This building also lacks the visual interest inherent in the Baptist Chapel roofscape. A awkward junction is created between Bedford House and 21 John Street, with a blank large flank wall prominent in views.

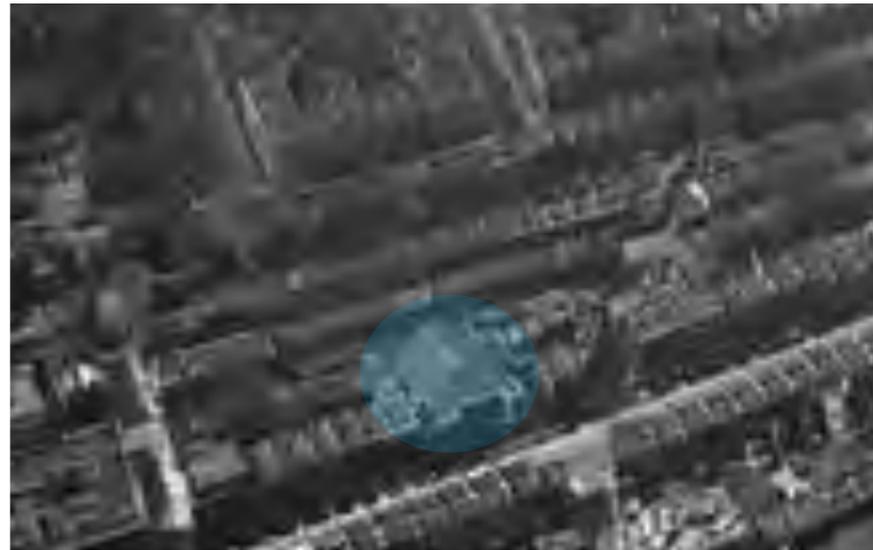


Figure 8: View of the Baptist Chapel which once occupied the site of Bedford House, looking west. 1931. Source: Historic England.



Figure 10: View of the Baptist Chapel which once occupied the site of Bedford House, looking north west. 1931. Source: Historic England.



Figure 9: View of the Grade II listed 21 John Street.

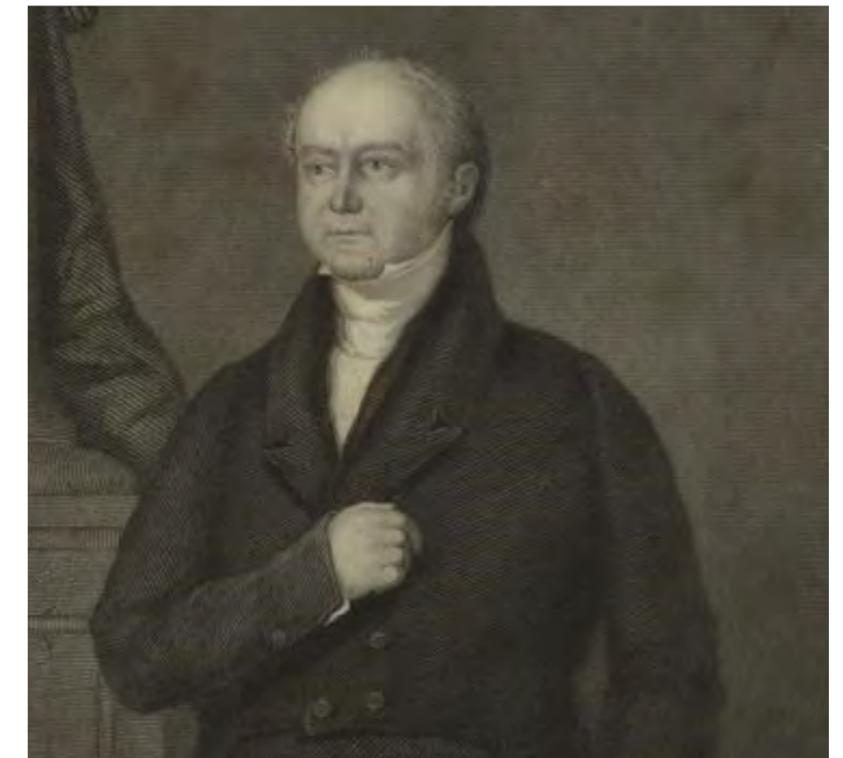


Figure 11: Portrait of James Harrington Evans, for whom the Chapel which once occupied the site was constructed.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

3.2 HISTORIC MAP REGRESSION

As can be seen from Figure 13 Bedford House postdates the layout of the majority of Bloomsbury, constructed in the post war period. This was following the clearance of the site after the Second World War. Bomb damage records indicate that the site, once occupied by the Baptist Church, sustained blast damage during the blitz, with a small structure to the rear completely destroyed.

While the street layout and terraced character along John Street appears to have largely survived, the immediate surroundings of the site were redeveloped throughout the twentieth century. This included the corner plot to the north of the site as well to the immediate rear of the site. This area is currently occupied by St George Primary School.

The 'H' shape of the current ground plan of the site is apparent by 1965 with little major alteration to the property in the latter half of the twentieth century. It is noted that the site to the north appeared to be completed prior to the works to construct Bedford House, with the building finished by 1937.

The planning history of the site up to the present day is set out in the Town Planning Statement. This records various minor works which did not alter the nature of the 'H' plan of the original building.



Figure 12: 1916 OS map. The site location is indicated by the red transparency.



Figure 14: 1965 OS map. The Site boundary is indicated by the red line.



Figure 13: 1952 OS map. The site location is indicated by the red transparency.



Figure 15: Present day. Source: Historic England. The Site boundary is indicated by the red line.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

3.3 SITE ASSESSMENT

The Site, is a part six, part three storey building faced in brick. The three storey element faces to the west towards John's Mews. Two small courtyards are created to the north and south, either side of a central link. The exterior comprises red brick cladding, unrelieved by decoration. While the majority of the site's surroundings are also brick, by virtue of the larger plot size and height of the building, the site possesses a bland appearance. The modern replaced windows on the main façade are of no interest as are the railings to the front of the building. The lack of decoration is particularly marked, given the subtle variance of materiality and brick bond visible in the neighbouring listed building to the north. This structure is two storeys higher than the site, leaving a blank brick façade adjacent to the upper storeys, visible in views from the south. A small railing circles the top of the site, and is entirely functional in appearance. While the elevation to the rear is a lower height, consistent with the historic hierarchy of the street layout, this façade is similarly of no interest possessing an unremarkable, pedestrian appearance. Consequently the building is at odds with the domestic character of the surroundings.

The setting of the site is composed primarily of long brick terraces, many of which have since been converted into offices. The residential origins of the street are however still appreciable. As a consequence the obvious commercial use of the building makes it stand out in the street. It is noted that unlike the majority of the site's surroundings, Bedford House is not identified by the council as having a positive contribution to the surrounding townscape.

The regular appearance of these terraces contrast with the small scale and intimate spaces along the mews to the rear. These streets create a series of unfolding views in contrast the comparatively lengthy vista down John Street itself. The character of John's Mews is mixed, including piecemeal development including bold contemporary additions such as found at 14 Doughty Mews. Adjacent to the site, properties to the south whilst mimicking the domestic scale of the original mews buildings that would have occupied the majority of the street, have been much altered. This includes the creation of a roof terrace screened by glass bricks to number 11 John's Mews. Views within the site of the rear yards are dominated by the tall central portion of the building and exposed external fire escape. These areas are of no interest, entirely functional in appearance and façade design.

While other buildings along John Street are set within gardens to the rear, the tall central element within the site is relatively close to the rear building line. As such, it dominates views along the otherwise smaller scale street to the rear. While the interiors of the site are of a more modern appearance, reflecting the continued use of the building as offices, these are nevertheless without interest, featuring strip lighting, modern partitions and fixtures and fittings.

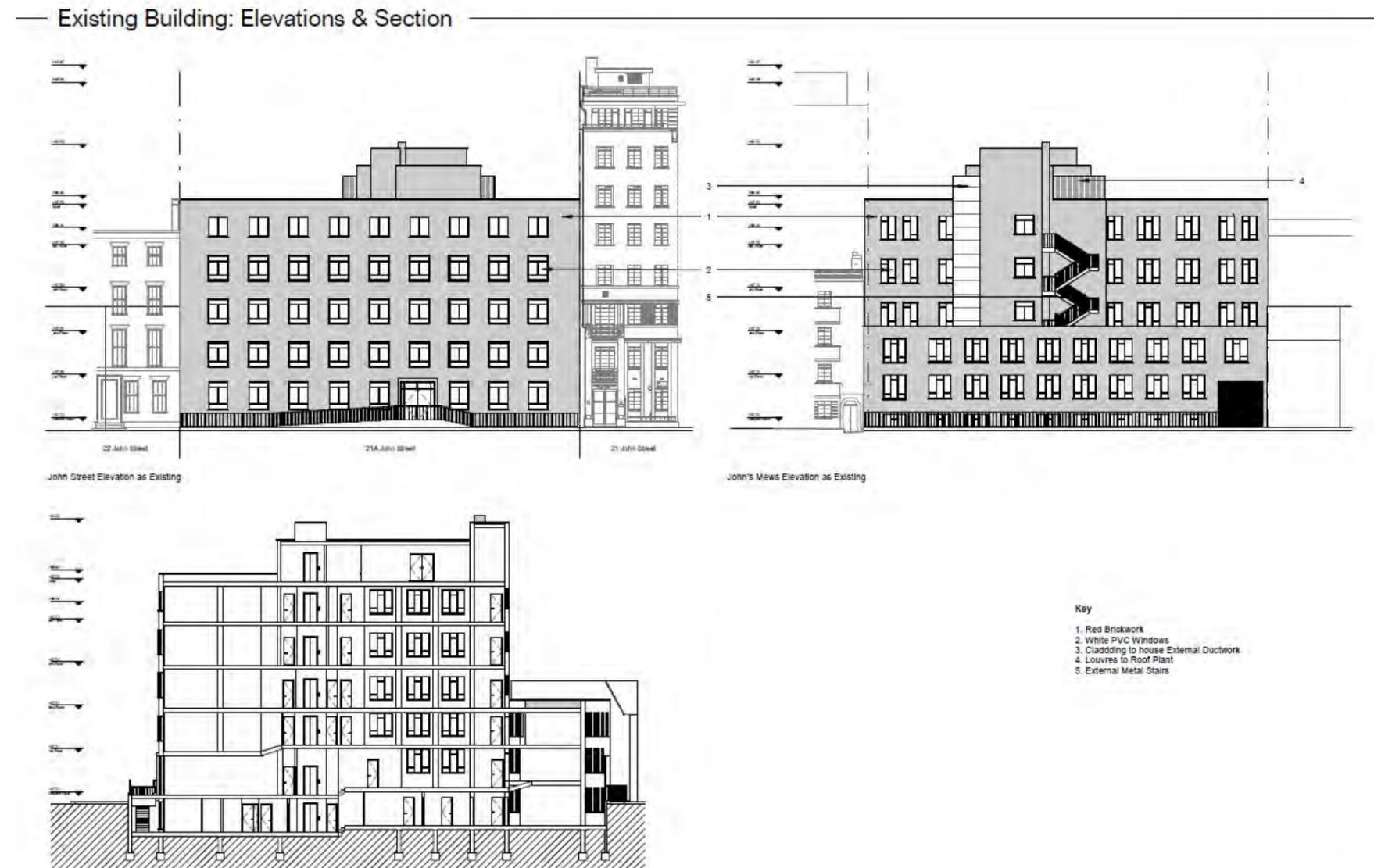


Figure 16: Existing survey drawings. Source: CG Architects.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC APPRAISAL

3.4 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: CONSERVATION AREA

Bloomsbury Conservation Area, designated in 1968, covers an area of approximately 160 hectares extending from Euston Road in the north to High Holborn and Lincoln's Inn Fields in the south and from Tottenham Court Road in the west to King's Cross Road in the east.

Sub-Area 10 is described as a high quality piece of late 18th and 19th century town planning, consisting of terraced housing built speculatively by a number of different builders to a street layout predominately produced by Nicholas Barbon. The terrace frontages have a strong uniformity since they are of similar scale and proportion and feature neo-classical architectural elements.

The main streets within the sub area include John Street, the location of the site. As noted most of the buildings on this street are listed, reflecting the high quality of the built environment. The streets are wide, providing long vistas down their centre. They are also noticeably of a grand scale, comprising mainly three- and four-storey Georgian terraced houses. The conservation area appraisal notes however that a few of the street's corner plots were altered, with many refaced in the 19th century, or as with this case to the north of the site, rebuilt following bomb damage. It is considered however that these alterations provide greater architectural emphasis on the street junctions and are a largely positive addition.

The townhouses which populate the street front date from the 18th and 19th centuries. These are generally of three or four storeys, raised on basements fronted by cast-iron railings. The terraces are of a broadly consistent appearance, featuring three windows per floor, establishing a repeated rhythm of window and door openings along each terrace.

Consistency of materials creates a wider sense of cohesion in the area, with London stock brick used mostly commonly. Some decorative relief is provided in the use of stucco, particularly at ground floor level. There is a mix of uses within the sub area although this is now largely residential.

Given the unprepossessing bland quality of the architecture within the site, which does not relate successfully to either the formal terrace frontage along John Street or the mews behind, the site detract from the general character and appearance of the conservation area.



Figure 17: Conservation Area Sub Area 10 Map. Source: Camden Council.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC APPRAISAL

3.5 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: LISTED BUILDINGS

No 21, John Street, The Duke of York Public House on Roger Street, and Nos 1-4 Mytre Court on John's Mews.

The special interest of this building resides in its architectural quality as a fine example of interwar design and town planning. The building also is an early twentieth century example of mixed use development, combining offices, apartments and a public house. Constructed in 1937 by DE Harrington, the style of the building is characteristic of the 1930s, also considered to respond well in terms of scale and materials to the existing streetscape of Georgian Bloomsbury. While the external decoration is twentieth century in date, it is of a high quality with varied use of brick bond and features stone facing at lower levels. By virtue of its location on a corner plot the building is a strong presence within the surrounding townscape, identified in by the council for its positive contribution to the townscape character. The quality and consideration of this building contrasts with the bland architectural style and lack of decoration seen in the site.

22 to 28 John Street and Attached Railings

This terrace of seven houses dates to c1800-19. Typical of the area the buildings are constructed out of yellow and multi-coloured stock brick, featuring with stucco bands at 1st floor levels. There is however a degree of variety within the houses with Nos. 27 & 28 including slated mansard roofs and dormers. The houses include cast iron balconies to the first floor, apart from No. 28 where this feature is missing. The terrace reflects the early layout of the surroundings and is a well preserved example of grand nineteenth century housing. The buildings are reflective of the expansion of London during this period and are expressive of the social hierarchies of the time, illustrated through the clear layout of grand residential streets with quarters for servants and staff behind. The site can be seen to disrupt this hierarchy, with a lack of decorative detail contrasting with the otherwise considered surrounding townscape. It is also noted that the untidy and adhoc appearance of the rear of the building detracts from the setting of the listed terrace to the south.



Figure 18: View towards the rear of Bedford House, with the apartment buildings of 1-4 Mytre Court visible to the north. The tall fire escape structure is visible to the top right. This image contrasts with the homogenous small scale seen within the majority of the mews streets in the area (see figure 19)



Figure 19: Typical scale of building within a mews street within the area.



Figure 20: Glimpsed view of Bedford House from the east. As can be seen the junction with the listed building to the north appears clumsy and out of scale. The red arrow indicates the location of the site.

3.0

3.5 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: LISTED BUILDINGS

10-20 John Street together with their Attached Railings

This listed terrace of eleven houses was constructed between 1799-1824. The houses are predominately constructed out of multi-coloured stock brick, with occasional repairs completed in yellow stock brick. Additional decoration includes rusticated stucco to the ground floors, with an another band at the first floor level. As with the opposite side of the street, the whole creates a homogenous appearance to the street front with a largely consistent appreciable nineteenth century character, adding to the architectural significance of the terrace as a whole. Several of the properties feature cast-iron decorative details including balconies to 1st floor windows of Nos. 12-19 as well as the original fluted lead rainwater heads and pipes and railings to the street front. The listing description notes that several of the properties have retained original internal features including balustrades and fireplaces.

It is noted that this terrace faces directly on to the site. The plain façade and large scale of the Bedford house is considered to disrupts the otherwise relatively intact eighteenth century character of these buildings' settings, making an overall negative contribution to the surrounding townscape. The roof of Bedford House does not contribute to the significance of the surrounding listed terrace, in either structure or visual impact.



Figure 21: View of Bedford House with listed terrace to the south. Nos 22-28 John Street.



Figure 22: View south along John Street. The site can be seen to contrast with the otherwise high quality buildings which comprise the majority of the townscape.



Figure 23: View of the listed building to the north of Bedford house. The prominence of the large flank wall is identifiable from this image. This feature is uncharacteristic of the conservation area.

4.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The design of the proposals have been carefully considered to ensure they preserve the setting of the nearby listed buildings and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The resolution of the appearance of the building from the rear, consolidating the present adhoc character of the building's massing in views along John's Mews has been a key concern. Similarly the need to provide an element of decorative relief has been identified, in order that the building sits more easily within its present context and alleviates its stark appearance. Fundamentally the present roofscape of the site when seen from the rear presents an untidy cluttered façade, falling short of the quality of the surrounding townscape.

John Street

The structures in the immediate vicinity of the site incorporate a variety of materials, massing and decoration, including the plain façade of Bedford House, the uniform historic terraces to the south and the asymmetric façade of 21 John Street to the north. Views of the upper levels of the site to the south along John Street, are negatively impacted upon by the prominence of the large flank wall. This is identified as a key concern, resulting in a ill considered junction with the listed building to the north.

The proposed roof extension, illustrated in figure 24, responds to the existing atrium on the listed building to the north as well as resolves the present blank appearance of the flank wall in distant views from the south. The set back of the extension and reduced height ensures the proposals are only visible in oblique and glimpsed views from John Street. Figure 29 demonstrates the proposed extension will result in a minor change in views from Rogers Street to the east. This view presently takes in a varied streetscape including a number of roof extensions the modern buildings. As such the proposals will improve the appearance of Bedford House without altering the existing character of the conservation area.

The proposals include alterations to the St John Street entrance, widening the existing doorway. The current design of the entrance has been found to be of no architectural or aesthetic interest. The proposed improvement are subtle in nature and will not alter the existing character of the building, maintaining its present subdued contribution to the street front.

John's Mews

A similar recessed glazed roof extension will be added to the lower rear element, resolving the present untidy appearance and cluttered roofscape apparent along John's Mews. Fundamentally the proposals to enclose and resolve the appearance of the rear yard whilst a broken massing ensures this elevation remains subservient in appearance compared to the main facade. These designs respond to the small domestic character and scale along John's Mews. Subsequently the proposed roof extension is delineated in bays to



Figure 24: Proposed front view of Bedford House, John Street. Source: CG Architects.

5.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT



Figure 25: Proposed front view of Bedford House, from John Street. Source: CG Architects. The roof extension to Bedford House is just visible, the form of the extension can be seen to be an appropriate modern addition to the twentieth century building. This extension is viewed within the context of the existing roof extensions viewed along John Street.

5.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT



Figure 26: Proposed front view of Bedford House, from John Street. Source: CG Architects. This image demonstrates that views of the roof extension disappear entirely as you approach the site along John Street.

4.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

match the widths of the adjacent properties. This is to give a rhythm to the rear façade and break up the mass of the existing rear elevation. The use of a repeated brise soleil to the eaves to match that seen on the adjacent property is also used to create a cohesive domestic character in views down the street to the north and south. The character of John's Mews as well as other mews streets within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area has supported a number of high quality contemporary architectural additions. These works are considered to successfully protect the domestic appearance, quality and scale of the built environment along these narrower streets. For example, 1A Doughty Mews to the north of the site is completed using a mix of confidently contemporary materials and asymmetric massing. This building terminates views to the north along John's Mews, and imbues views along the street with a contemporary character.

Similarly development at 14-17 King's Mews (2009/4991/P) to the south of the site within Bloomsbury Conservation Area includes a roof terrace, incorporating a mix of considered contemporary materials. This terrace is partially screened by a frosted glass balcony.

This scheme was at appeal where the inspector commented, "King's Mews has only limited architectural consistency or coherence of style as a result of the piecemeal development that has occurred...In my view the appearance of this part of the conservation area is in fact harmed by the somewhat drab and unremarkable appearance of the appeal buildings." It is considered that these comments are also applicable to the site assessed in this report given the plain, cluttered appearance of John's Mews, as well as the formal appearance of the site to the rear which is notably not of a domestic character or scale. This engenders an inconsistency of character at odds with the quality of the conservation area.

Equally a roof terrace at 13 King's Mews (2011/5394/P) included a "glazed balustrade and installation of plant and associated enclosure at roof level" as well as a 2.3m high rendered enclosure to shelter a staircase and a 1.97m high privacy screen is proposed at the boundary of the terrace. Commentary on the application by the council noted that while the privacy screen would be visible, within the context of the height of adjacent development, it was an appropriate addition. Similarly the proposed glass balustrade by virtue of its "modern simple design" was also considered acceptable and in keeping with the character of adjacent development. This terrace was consequently considered to "preserve and enhance the conservation area."

The proposals for the application site considered in this report, similarly provide an appropriate quiet addition, seeking to create a more domestic appearance to the current starkly office-like blank rear façade of Bedford House. Elements such as the emphasises of existing bays rhythms found in



John's Mews Elevation as Proposed
1 : 200

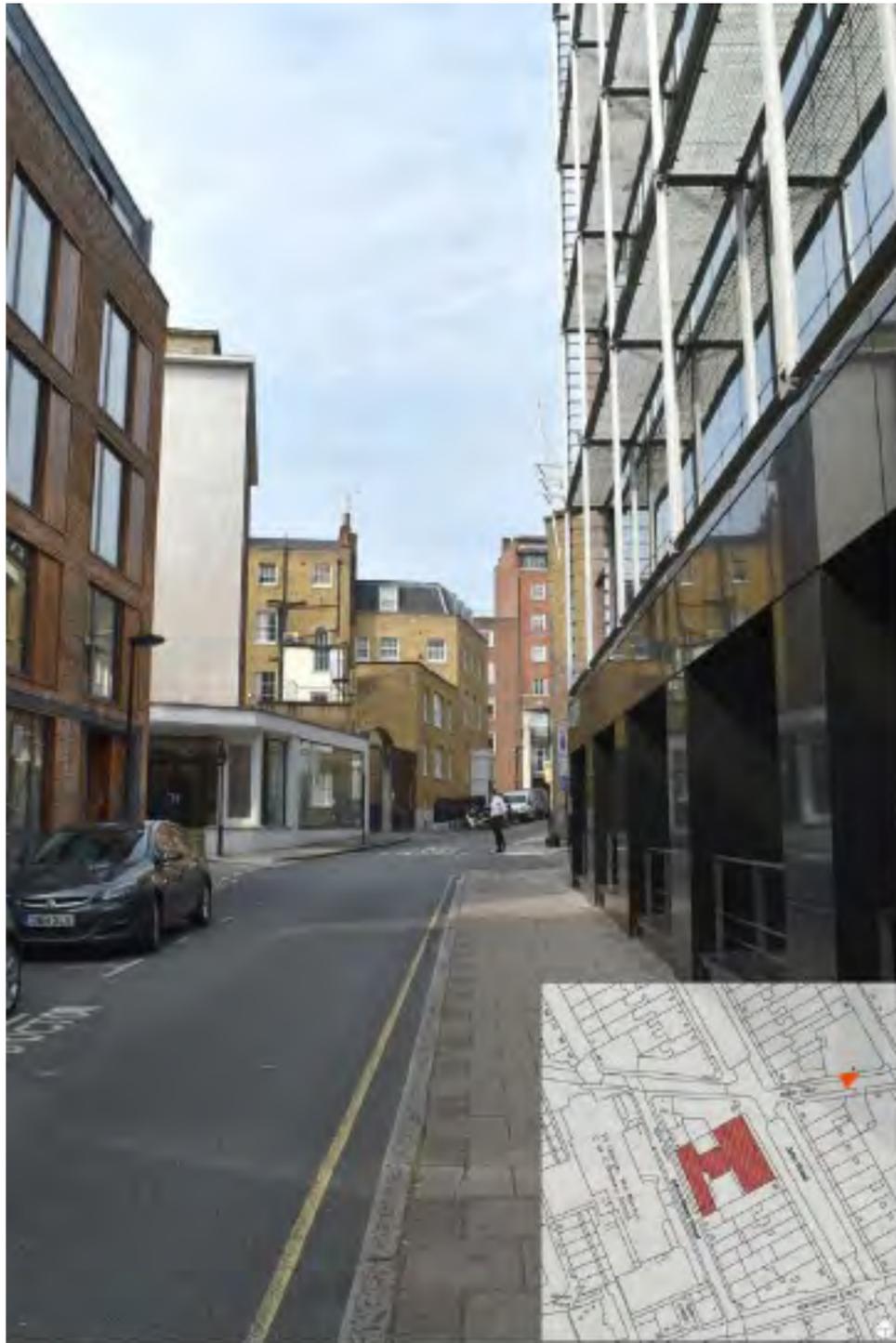
Figure 27: Proposed rear views of Bedford House, John's Mews. Source: CG Architects.

4.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT



Figure 28: Proposed rear view of Bedford House, seen from John's Mews. This image demonstrates that the proposals sit well within the existing varied roof scape from the rear and imbue a more domestic appearance. This alleviates the stark formality of the existing elevation to the rear.

4.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT



Existing



Proposed

Figure 29: Proposed rear view of Bedford House, seen from Roger Street. This image shows the proposals will create a minor change in views from the east. These are glimpsed in nature and take in the improved junction between Bedford House and 21 John Street.

4.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT



Figure 30: Development at 14-17 King's Mews within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, to the south of the site. Above: View of the site in 2008. Below: View of the site in 2016 following planning permission for a roof terrace.



4.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

the street scape, look to draw together long views down the street and instil a sense of cohesion which is currently lacking. The addition of the roof terrace in particular will create a sense of occupation in what currently appears as untidy back land clutter. Given the height of the adjacent properties at 21 John's Mews, as with 13 King's Mews, the additional height in the form of the roof terrace can be seen to provide an appropriate addition. A similar mix of high quality materials is also employed, improving the buildings present drab appearance.

Careful attention has been paid to the comments and design advice given at pre-app stage. This has resulted in the reduced massing to the roof extension facing John Street, as well as modifications to the rear elevation to alleviate the current office-like appearance, and views into the cluttered rear façade.

The assertion of a domestic scale and detailing in the emphasis of bays to the rear façade recreate a residential quality currently lacking in what was historically a mews street.

Within the building core, the present courtyard within the site centre, contributes negatively to views from John's Mews. The void above the existing façade to John's Mews possess an adhoc appearance, and creates an uncomfortable junction with the John's Mews façade below. Therefore the creation of additional massing within the building core which retains a stepped, recessed profile can therefore be seen to partially resolve the fragmented appearance of the building from the rear. The stepped profile of the proposed addition ensures the unobtrusive appearance of the upper storeys in distant views from the rear is maintained.

As such the proposals are considered to improve the overall appearance of what is currently a bland, architecturally unremarkable building. These alterations have been developed to improve the junction of the existing structure with the surrounding listed buildings, enhancing views along John Street and John's Mews.

Consequently the proposals are considered to improve the settings of the surrounding listed buildings, as well as the character and appearance of the conservation area.

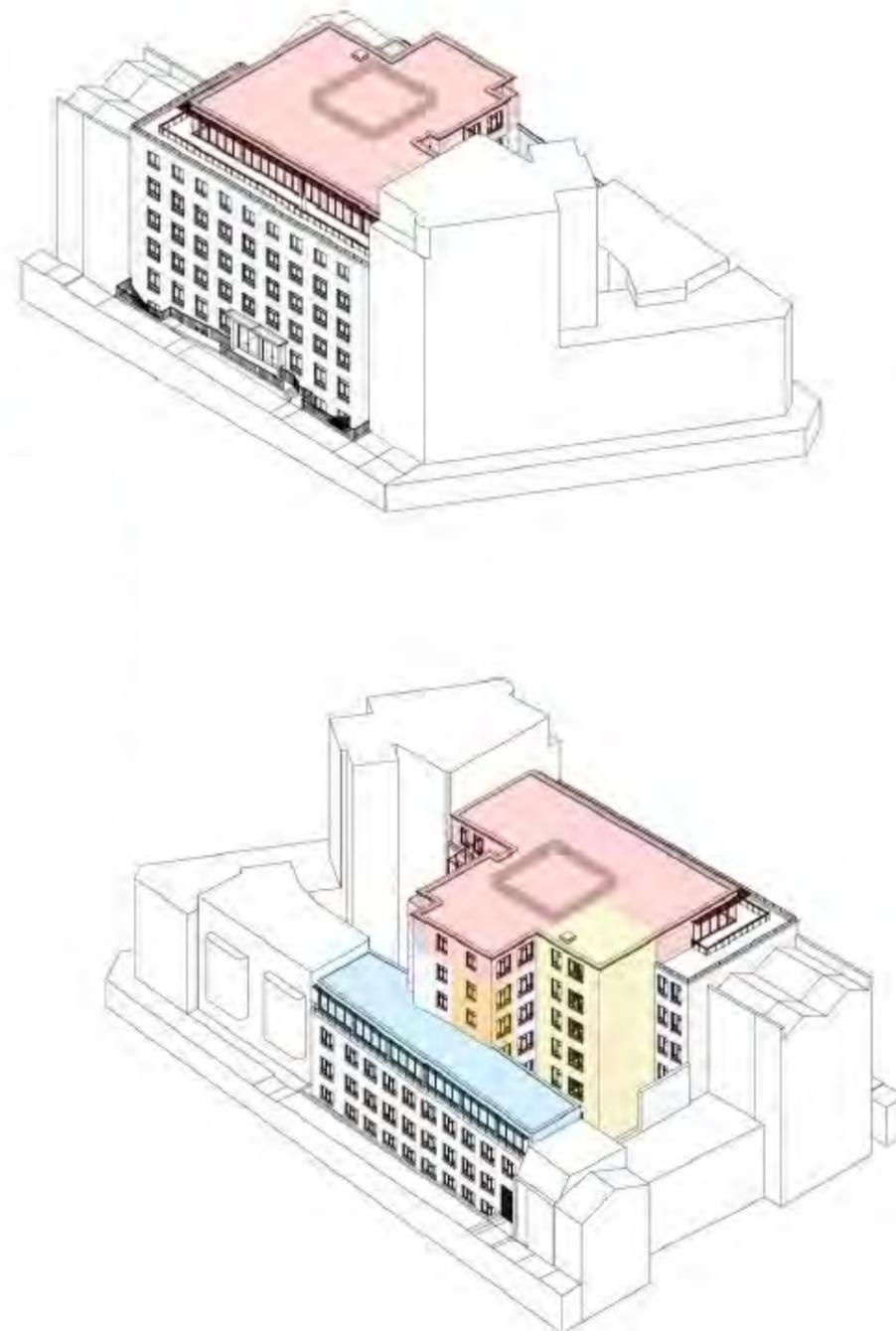


Figure 31: Proposed volumetric study. Source CG Architects.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This report has provided a full assessment of the site. The National Planning Policy Framework states that in determining applications, local planning authorities require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, to fully understand the impact of the proposal. This heritage statement has provided an analysis of Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the study site. It has further assessed the effects of the proposals on the significance of any heritage assets affected.

It is considered that the proposals are acceptable when assessed against London Plan policies as well as local policy 'CS14 Promoting High Quality Places'. It has been demonstrated that the proposals conserve the heritage significance of the conservation area, listed buildings and their settings. Close attention has been paid to the local character and streetscape so that the proposed alterations and extensions can be seen as an attractive, appropriate additions and unobtrusive in locally important views.

In accordance with policy 'DP25 Conserving Camden's Heritage' the proposals seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. It has been shown that Bedford House, an unlisted building that is not identified by the council as a non designated heritage asset, presently does not make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. The proposals seek to improve the appearance of the building and by extension its contribution to the conservation area, through the introduction of a more attractive roofscape to the front and rear facades. These proposals reduce the stark quality of the existing rear extension whilst remaining unobtrusive to the front, improving the quality of the local streetscape. For these reasons the proposals also comply with emerging policy D2 of Camden's Draft Local Plan.

Therefore this report has demonstrated that the proposals are in accordance with chapter 12 of the NPPF. The new roof, by virtue of its high quality design and removal of roof clutter, improves the settings of the surrounding listed buildings and enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area. Therefore there is no heritage reason why this application should not be viewed favourably by the Council.

APPENDIX A: LIST DESCRIPTION

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

Grade: II

Date first listed: 24-Oct-1951

List entry Number: 1379156

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.

NO. 21 JOHN STREET, THE DUKE OF YORK PUBLIC HOUSE ON ROGER STREET, AND NOS. 1-4 MYTRE COURT ON JOHN MEWS

List entry Number: 1393968

Grade: II

Date first listed: 17-Sep-2010

Mytre House, the Duke of York Public House and Mytre Court, a development of 1937 by DE Harrington, should be listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * architectural: a stylish design characteristic of the 1930s, which responds in scale and materials to the existing streetscape of Georgian Bloomsbury * sculptural embellishment: two engaged pylons with sculpted tops flanking the main entrance * materials and detailing: good brickwork and careful detailing on the pub and flats * intactness: an unusual degree of surviving original fabric in the Duke of York public house * planning interest: a mixed use development combining commercial offices with a block of flats and a public house, and therefore particularly forward-looking for its time

NUMBERS 22 TO 28 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 22-28, JOHN STREET

Grade: II

Date first listed: 24-Oct-1951

List entry Number: 1379157

Terrace of 7 houses. c1800-19. Yellow and multi-coloured stock brick with stucco bands at 1st floor levels. Nos 27 & 28 with slated mansard roofs and dormers. 4 storeys and basements; Nos 27 & 28 with attics. 2 windows each; Nos 26 & 27, 3 windows each; No.28 double fronted with 5 windows. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars; 1st floors with cast-iron balconies, except

No.28. Parapets. No.22: square-headed, architraved doorway with patterned rectangular fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on ground and 1st floors. Stairs with square balusters. No.23: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on 1st and 2nd floors (original centres covered in). No.24: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces with original centres on ground floor. No.25: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces on ground floor. Good marble fireplace 1st floor front room with bas relief on front panel, reeded and with rosettes; original iron centre. Nos 26 & 27: round-arched doorways with reeded doorframes, lion mask stops, mutule cornice-heads, patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. No.27 with lamp-holder incorporated in fanlight. No.26 with fluted lead rainwater head. No.28: round-arched doorway with attached Doric columns carrying entablature; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Cornice and blocking course. Wrought-iron overthrow lamp-holder. Return to Northington Street with 1 window and mid C19 entrance with stucco surround and console-bracketed cornice. Dentilled cornices. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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