Design and Access Statement

relating to

Refurbishment Works

at

81 Gower Street

London, WC1

for

The Bedford Estates

Contents

Section 1 - Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany a Planning and Listed Building application for 81 Gower Street, London.

81 Gower Street comprises 2,931 square feet and is arranged over basement, ground and three upper floors.

81 Gower Street is one of 18 consecutive symmetrical terraced houses on Gower Street, with Chenies Street to the East and Torrington Place to the North. As with all of the properties within the block, the property became Grade II Listed on 28 March 1969 (Listing Reference – 1322177). Supplementary to this document is a heritage statement which gives a commentary of the significance of the building and how the proposals impact on the original fabric of the building. This assessment has been submitted as part of this application.

On 13 August 1986, a planning application was submitted for 'repair and alteration to include installation of secondary glazing to front windows relocating door on second floor removal of partitions in ground floor front room and facing glazed partitions with plasterboard'.

On 9 June 1987 permission was submitted and subsequently granted for 'The installation of a 36cm wide x 11cm high nameplate in stainless steel with black lettering on the pilaster to the left of the entrance door.'

On 10 Feb 2000 a retrospective certificate of lawful development was submitted and a Certificate of Lawfulness was granted for existing use of basement, ground 1st, 2nd & 3rd floors as office use.

On 6 Feb 2003, an application was submitted and subsequently granted for 'The removal of an internal stud partition at second floor level'

On 19 June 2007 an application was submitted and subsequently granted for 'Change of use of lower ground, ground and first floors from office (Class B1) to dual use as office/educational use (Class B1/D1)'.

On 9 November 2007 an application was submitted and subsequently granted for 'Change of use of all floors from office use (Class B1) to an alternative use as either office or educational use (Class B1/D1).'

Section 2 – Design Statement

Use

The current use of the property is D1 on the basement, ground and first floor and B1 on the two upper floors. The application seeks permission to reinstate B1 use to all floors as permitted by the retrospective lawful development application in 2000.

Internal Proposals

Our proposal is to refurbish the property whilst conserving the original fabric of the building. We propose to install comfort cooling to all rooms within the main building. By undertaking the following works, the property will be brought up to a modern day standard, suitable for office use, which will hopefully secure a long term tenant.

- **Installation of comfort cooling to offices**

  A variable refrigerant volume (VRV), heat pump system is to be installed to provide heating and cooling throughout the building. The cooling installation will require indoor VRV units, 1 No. condenser unit located within the rear basement lightwell and associated pipe work connections. New, plain, electric panel heaters shall be installed in the common parts and WC's to provide heating during the winter months.

  The VRV condenser units will be sited within the rear light well and will not be visible from street level.

  The indoor units are to be chassis type, floor-mounted around the building perimeter, within bespoke joinery casings on the basement, ground and first floors. See drawing BB150-2017-DT01 for details of the bespoke casing. The units on the second and third floor are to be proprietary chassis mounted units with steel casings.

  The indoor units will be installed over five floors, from the basement to the third floor, where possible utilising existing risers and joist notches for the refrigerant pipework distribution. The location of the existing risers is shown on the drawings.

  Refrigerant and condensate pipework to and from the VRV units will be positioned within existing notches except where this is not reasonably practicable. The pipe runs will not disturb any external features and any notches made, will be made good and structurally sound via the addition of a metal plate, fitted and secured to the joist over the notch position as detailed in the timber notch plate drawing BB150-2017-DT02.

  In general, the pipework shall be installed within the existing joist notches where possible. Floor boards will need to be uplifted to facilitate the installation. This will be undertaken carefully and by numbering the floorboards, they will be reinstated in the same location. No other damage will be caused to the original fabric of the building by this installation and all of the proposals are fully reversible.

  Existing, redundant pipe work running across the joists will be removed and a repair will be made as detailed in the timber notch repair drawing BB150-2017-DT03.

A new service riser will be installed, as detailed under a later section, to conceal all vertical services and remove the need for other surface mounted cables, pipeworks etc.

- **Installation of cooling to communications room**

The proposal includes the installation of a wall mounted fan coil unit internally within the comms room and 1No external condenser unit located at basement level within the rear lightwell.

It will be necessary to core drill holes though the rear wall to run refrigerant pipework. A trench will be formed within the basement slab for the power supply and pipework connections between the fan coil unit and associated external condenser unit.

No other works are required to the original fabric of the building by this installation and all of the proposals are fully reversible.

- **Kitchen facilities**

The existing kitchenette in the basement RF05 will be removed and capped services will be provided for any future occupier to utilise.

A new tea point will be provided within the basement area, RB07, is association with the minor demolition works.

- **Upgrade of existing WC's**

We believe the existing WC's within the basement, first, second and third floors of No 81 Gower Street were installed as part of the comprehensive refurbishment undertaken in the early 1990s. The existing finishes comprise wall and floor tiles, white china sanitaryware and chrome fittings. Our proposals changes the layout in the basement to create 2no shower rooms, and a separate WC cubical. The WCs on the upper floors will largely maintain the existing layout but simply replacing the finishes and fittings to give a more contemporary feel.

See section 3 below for further details on changes to WC in the basement.

- **Testing and repairs to existing electrical installations**

81 Gower Street is currently configured for multiple tenant's, with each floor containing a dedicating electrical main and association distribution board. The propose scheme involve renewing all electrical installations from the point of entry into the building to facilitate a single occupier, designed and installed to new statutory standards. This full re-wire will involve lifting floorboards and chasing walls. All floorboards will be numbered and carefully reinstated on completion. Walls with decorative mouldings will not be touched as part of any re-wiring that may be required. Walls will be repaired to exactly match existing materials.

- **New lighting**

All light fittings throughout the property will be replaced. The type of fitting proposed depends on its location within the building. The lighting scheme will be similar in concept and design to the scheme

recently carried out at 25 Bedford Square by The Bedford Estates.

Generally, the existing chandeliers within the front principal rooms on the ground and first floors will be replaced with new contemporary chandeliers. This will ensure no damage is caused to the existing wall and ceiling finishes.

Slim line luminaries suspended from the ceiling will be installed in the basement, the rear rooms within the first, second and third floors.

The existing stairwell and landing lighting comprises both recessed spotlights and wall fittings. New fittings will be installed in a similar configuration.

When removing the wall fittings, the redundant cabling will be safely terminated and the walls made good. When removing the ceiling recessed fittings, the cabling will be removed and the plasterboard ceilings patched in. No lath and plaster ceilings will be affected.

Through our design, we have been careful to specify fittings which will not have a negative impact on the appearance of the building.

- **Fire Alarm**

A new wireless fire alarm system will be installed throughout to meet current building regulation requirements. We have deliberately selected a wireless system so that no walls or floors will need to be disturbed.

The fire alarm panels will be located behind the main entrance door within RG02.

- **Data / Telecommunications**

A new CAT 5e system will be installed throughout the property. Data points will be installed to all walls to provide flexibility for any incoming tenant. Where possible, existing wall mounted data points will be re-used to avoid chasing of walls and disturbance to existing skirting boards.

Floor boxes will be installed between the existing floor joists to support the installation and allow the installation to be configured as required.

- **Door Access Control**

A replacement door access control system will be installed to the main entrance at street level. The external door access panel will be recessed into the brickwork reveal (to match existing) and finished in brass.

- **Removal of Demountable Partitions**

The proposal extends to minor demolition works, much of which are not original. This includes the removal of the lobby doors adjacent to the main entrance doors on the ground floor, the three cupboards at basement level within room RB05 and a cupboard on the second floor room RS01. At third floor level it includes removing the door immediately adjacent to the staircase. The removal of these partitions will not disturb any historic fabric.

As part of upgrading the existing WCs at basement level a small section of solid wall will be removed, although this will change the form of this area, the impact is negligible due to the relative insignificance of the area in question.

- **New Partitions**

As part of reconfiguring the WCs at basement level and the creation of shower rooms, non load bearing demountable partitions will be installed within room RB09-RB13. Although this is changing the form of this room it will be fully reversible and does not impact upon the heritage asset.

- **Service Riser**

As part of modernising the property to meet the demands of a typical office user and to ensure its continued sustainable use, a shallow mechanical and electrical riser will be formed within the rear rooms at each level. The location has been chosen after careful consideration of the various options. It was decided that the recess formed by the chimney breast to the rear rooms would have the least impact. The riser would be set back from the front face of the chimney so that the delineation of the chimney is retained. The cornice to each room would be replicated and extended around the exposed edge of the riser. The original cornice behind will be retained. The doors onto the riser will be a frameless concealed type so as to minimise the impact. They will be decorated to match the adjacent walls. To ensure the projecting chimney breast remains balanced on either side, a false partition will be constructed on the other face and finished to match.

The introduction of the riser will be fully reversible and have no significant impact on the historic fabric of the building.

- **Flooring**

All existing carpets throughout the property will be replaced with new carpet. Stair runners with satin stainless steel stair rods will also be installed on staircases.

The existing floor tiles to all WC's will be replaced with new porcelain tiles.

- **Ironmongery**

  All existing ironmongery which was installed as part of the refurbishment undertaken in the early 1990s will be replaced with new satin stainless steel fittings. The existing brass furniture to the front door will be replaced with new antique brass door furniture. The secondary glazing to the front windows, installed as part of the application from August 1986 detailed above, will be replaced with Selectaglaze Slimline 20 (VS) secondary glazing.

- **General Repairs**

  Inevitably, there will be a need to undertake repairs to walls, floors and ceilings. Where required, these repairs will be undertaken to match the existing in terms of materials and method applied.

  Any patched in wall and ceiling mouldings and joinery items will be made to match the existing as closely as possible.

- **Redecorations**

  All existing ceilings, walls and joinery items will be suitably prepared and redecorated. We do not propose to carry out poultice cleaning to the decorative coving unless it is deemed essential on site. Most of the areas of redecoration are sound but in some areas we may need to strip and reline the walls where damage has occurred, either through impact or water. It may also be necessary to replace plasterwork in those areas which is only obvious once we commence repairs. If repairs are required, we will use traditional lathe and plaster.

External Proposals

- **External Condensers**

  It will be necessary to install external condensing units to serve the cooling for the offices and the communication room as detailed above.

  The external plant will be located within the rear lightwell, see drawings drawing BB150-2017-GA01.

  We have commissioned an acoustic report to assess the impact these external condensing units will have on the adjoining buildings. This report confirmed that the noise levels will not exceed the permissible levels detailed within Camden planning policy. A copy of this report is included within the application.

Section 3 – Use / Layout

The need to provide modern shower facilities to allow employees to commute to their place of work via bicycle has driven the layout changes at basement level. These changes are minor in nature, and with the exception of a small solid wall, this will not impact upon the original building and will be fully reversible.

The door at the head of the 3rd floor staircase provides a smoke lobby, however the door being so close to the last riser poses a health and safety risk. The creation of a larger smoke lobby will mitigate the hazard that the original configuration presents.

Section 4 – Access

As part of the design phase, we have undertaken an assessment of the current access arrangements with the view of improving access where possible.

The benefits of installing a motorised lifting platform to assist wheelchair users gaining access to the property from street level have been considered. Even if a wheelchair user could access the property, the changes in levels and the lack of an internal passenger lift will prevent access to all but the ground floor rooms.

Due to the above and as the building is Grade II Listed, it is our opinion that it is not feasible to make all of the necessary adaptations without having a detrimental effect on the fabric of the property. The visual appearance of an external motorised lifting platform within the Conservation Area would also be contentious and the introduction of an internal passenger lift will result in significant loss of historic building fabric.

Every effort will be made to bring access opportunities up to the best available standard within the constraints imposed by the listed nature of this building.

The following best practice guidelines have been considered:

- Equality Act 2010
- Building Regulations Approved Document M and K
- BS 8300:2001 – Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people Code of Practice

Section 5 – Landscaping

The front entrance steps will be refurbished to prevent to continuous water ingress to the storage room below. A new mosaic finish is proposed, similar to the entrance steps to No. 85 Gower Street.

The asphalt hard standing above the rear undercroft will be refurbished using traditional asphalt repair techniques to ensure that it provides protection to water ingress.

Section 6 – Vehicular and Transportation Links

The vehicular and transport links to the building will not be affected by the proposed works.

Section 7 – Conclusion

We believe that the proposed works will not adversely affect the original fabric of the building. Finishes installed within the early 1990s refurbishments will be removed and replaced with more modern and contemporary finishes whilst being sympathetic to the building.

Through our design, we have carefully considered the most discreet and practical location for the external plant to minimise the impact on the building externally and internally. The introduction of a vertical riser is essential to allow for the building to be modernised and will negate the need for surface mounted services and unsightly boxing.

A careful considered approach will be implemented whilst lifting floorboards to run the pipework and cables to each of the fan coil units internally. The units are also to be positioned on the floor, which will minimise potential damage caused to original skirting and joinery items.

In our opinion, the installation of comfort cooling will not adversely affect the original fabric of the building and will benefit all future occupiers. By improving the service provision within the property, such as lighting, data, WC's, small power etc, we anticipate securing a long term tenancy.