

OMSA/17-00257

22 September 2017

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LONDON  
BIRMINGHAM  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Listed Building Consent for works to basement stairs at 22-23 Mecklenburgh Square**

I write on behalf of my client Goodenough College in relation to the above site to submit a Listed Building Consent for internal works to the basement staircases of The Goodenough Club, a 4\* hotel at 22-23 Mecklenburgh Square.

**Content of Submission**

The Listed Building Consent comprises this letter and the following supporting documents:

- Application forms and certificates
- Site Location Plan – 16010-A-0010 P01
- Existing Stairs House 22 – 16010-A-2002 P01
- Existing Stairs House 23 – 16010-A2003 P01
- House 22 – Proposed Works – 16010-A-0007 P01
- House 23 – Proposed Works – 16010-A-0008 P01
- Stair Survey Review prepared by CBP Architects
- Design, Access and Heritage Assessment prepared by Dr Ramona Usher Conservation
- Method Statement prepared by CPB Architects

**Site and Surrounding Area**

The Goodenough Club (21-15 Mecklenburgh Square) is Grade II\* listed and was first listed on 10 June 1954, (listing reference 477496). The listing description is as follows:

CAMDEN TQ3082SE MECKLENBURGH SQUARE 798-1/96/1112 (East side) 10/06/54 Nos.11-26 (Consecutive) and attached railings, Byron Court (No.26) GV II\*

*Terrace of 24 houses forming the east side of Mecklenburgh Square. No.26 incorporates former Nos 27-34. c1810-20. By Joseph Kay. Thomas Penthrin built Nos 11-19 & 30-34; George Payne Nos 20-29. Nos 15 and 27-34 rebuilt in facsimile c1950. Multi-coloured stock brick with stucco ground floors. Centre pavilion (Nos 21-25) and end pavilions (Nos 11-15) and (31-34) in stucco. EXTERIOR: formal composition of 4 storeys, basements and Nos 26-33 with C20 dormers. No.23 with large dormer. Mostly 2 windows each. Centre pavilion: ground floors rusticated stucco with round arched doorways with fluted pilaster-jambs and cornice*

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heads (Greek key pattern), fanlights and panelled doors. Centre 5 bays slightly recessed with 4 Greek Ionic columns rising through 1st and 2nd floors, flanked by 3 bays articulated by 4 pilasters. Enriched entablature with projecting cornice at 3rd floor level. Recessed sash windows; ground floor outer bays segmental headed with small panes to edges, 1st floor centre 6 with pedimented heads, outer bays square-headed in shallow round-arched recesses. All 1st floor with cast-iron balconies. Between 1st and 2nd floor outer bays enriched recessed panels with swags reflecting the round-arched windows in the attic storey. Attic storey with moulded pilasters carrying cornice, the centre pilasters terminating in segmental anthemion stops. Blocking course. Outer pavilions: similar but with only 2 Ionic columns, segmental headed ground floor windows and square-headed 1st floor windows. Nos 16-20 & 26-30: round-arched doorways with fluted pilaster-jamb and cornice-heads (Greek key pattern), fanlights and panelled double doors. Doorways to former Nos 26-34 replaced by windows except former No.29, now main entrance to Byron Court. Segmental headed ground floor windows. Upper floors with gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor with cast-iron balconies. Plain stucco entablature at 3rd floor level. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas; Nos 12, 14, 16 and 19 with wrought-iron lamp brackets. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.21 was the residence of RH Tawney, historian, teacher & political writer (GLC plaque). No.15 and Nos 22-25 (consec) were listed on 14/05/74. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood (St Pancras part IV): London: -1952: 47-50).

The listing of the building relates to the external qualities, and confirms that the interiors were not inspected at the time of listing to ascertain the significance of the internal features.

### Surrounding Area

The site is located within Bloomsbury Conservation Area, which 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.

The initial designation of Bloomsbury as a conservation area in 1968 sought to protect elements of development from the Georgian and earlier eras, but excluded areas where there had been significant later redevelopment. There have been numerous subsequent extensions that have mostly reflected a growing appreciation of Victorian and Edwardian and high quality 20th century architecture.

The Goodenough Club is located within Sub-Area 12 – Coram's Fields / Brunswick Gardens, which is dominated by large-scale, green open spaces of historic significance in and around Coram's Fields. The spaces provide a sense of openness which contrasts with surrounding areas. There is a predominance of institutional (hospital, university, education), recreational and community uses with secondary residential and office uses. The remaining fragments of the townhouses developed on the Foundling and surrounding estates in the late 18th and early 19th centuries are mostly protected by listing.

In terms of the built form, the Georgian townhouses in the sub area form homogeneous terraces and tend to be listed. Some terraces have an overall classical composition giving them a greater sense of scale and presence; including the buildings on the east side of Mecklenburgh Square. The overall height and articulation of the facades, visually supported by front boundary railings provide a sense of enclosure and overall unity in this area.

### Relevant Planning History

The townhouses that make-up the Goodenough Club have been refurbished over the years to meet the requirements for the guest accommodation. Most recently listed building consent (Ref: 2017/4318/L) was granted 14 September 2017 for: *Internal alterations including repair and strengthening works to balusters,*

*treads, risers and kite winders of timber and stone staircases; removal of existing non-original dado rails and installation of new timber handrails; replacement of existing timber staircase between second and third floor levels to no.24; application of safety film to landing windows; installation of warning signs to walls.*

Listed building consent ref: 2014/7708/L was granted 25 February 2015 which permitted the refurbishment of 65 bathrooms, involving all new fittings, tiling, ventilation upgrades and replacement of existing water services.

Previous refurbishment works were approved under planning permission (Ref: PS9804805/R3), and listed building consent (Ref: LS9804806/R3), on 14 October 1999; these applications included the erection of the two storey mews buildings, and the restoration and refurbishment of the building. These consents have been implemented and the buildings underwent comprehensive refurbishment in 2001.

### **Pre-Application Enquiry**

A pre-application enquiry sought advice in relation to replacement and repair works to the staircases to 21-25 Mecklenburgh Square. A site visit was undertaken with case officer Sarah Freeman on 18/05/2017, and plans subsequently amended on 06/06/2016 to take into consideration the conservation officer's views, the written response was received on 26/06/2017.

In summary, the pre-application proposals sought advice in relation to:

- General repair and strengthening works to internal staircases, including the insertion of brackets;
- Installation of additional handrail and removal of existing dado rails to nos. 21-25;
- Replacement of basement staircases to nos. 22 and 23; and
- Improvements and replacement of sections of upper staircases to nos. 22, 24 and 25.

A written response was received from LB Camden on 26/06/2017, summarised as follows:

- Recognised that the staircases are in need of general care and maintenance as well as localised strengthening works and repairs to handrails, treads and risers and repairs to reinstate individual balusters;
- Recommends a minimum intervention approach to repair and strengthening works to maximise the preservation of original fabric;
- Concerns raised in relation to steel bracket supports, which would only be supported where it can be demonstrated that lateral movement is extreme and unsafe; preference is for the re-setting of existing balusters;
- The proposed infilling of gaps between balusters to no. 23 with bracing brackets is not supported due to harm caused to integrity and design of the original staircase;
- No objection in principle to the proposed removal of existing dado – as the dado rails are not original;
- Installation of additional perimeter handrails to staircases at all levels is considered to be justified by the desire to help ease pressure on balustrades;
- The proposed replacement of basement stairs to nos. 22 and 23 is not supported as it has not been sufficiently justified that the existing staircases are beyond repair;
- The proposed repair and strengthening of existing treads to nos. 22 and 25 and the proposed resin bond to the crack in the string at no. 25 is supported;
- Sufficient justification has been provided to demonstrate that the upper staircase to no. 24 is no longer fit for purpose and the replacement of sections as set out in the architectural report is considered acceptable;
- Submission of further information including Method Statement recommended.

The current application relates to the basement stairs of nos. 22 and 23; the proposed works to the stairs have been significantly amended in response to the pre-application comments received.

### **Proposed Works**

The current application seeks Listed Building Consent for the repair and reinforcement works to the basement staircases to nos. 22 and 23 Mecklenburgh Square, and the insertion of additional handrails to ease pressure on the balustrades. The proposed works have been guided by surveys and site inspections to identify and assess any defects to the stairs. The proposals represent a minimally invasive and bespoke approach to repair the defective staircases, in accordance with the recommendations of the pre-application response, and design and heritage assessments, submitted as part of this application.

Please refer to the supporting documents and drawings for further detail on the proposed works.

### **Planning Policy Context**

The statutory development plan consists of:

- Camden Local Plan (2017)

National planning policy advice in relation to the historic environment is contained within chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), which replaces the previous Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements.

The NPPF states in Paragraph 128 that:

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservations Areas) Act 1990 provides protection for buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The Act directs that listed building consent is required to demolish, alter or extend a listed building in a way that affects its character or appearance as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

Policy D2 – Heritage – of the Camden Local Plan, adopted July 2017 seeks to preserve and enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve public benefits that outweigh harm or loss.

### **Assessment**

The proposed works relate to the retention and refurbishment of the existing staircases and the insertion of additional handrails. At present the staircases are defective and possibly hazardous. The works would strengthen, preserve and enhance the existing staircases, enabling the continued use of the basement and building.

The new handrails will be custom-built to reflect the original handrails, crafted dedicated and highly skilled carpenters at Coulson building group.

The works to the staircases represent a minimally invasive approach to preserve the character of the listed building. The works will be carried out using like for like materials to ensure there will be limited effect on the

character of the building. These proposed works are sufficiently justified by the surveys and assessments undertaken as acceptable.

It is considered that the proposed works will not have a negative effect on the special historic character or architectural interest of the Listed Building, and the proposals are relatively minor in nature and will not negatively affect the heritage interests of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The proposed works will positively enhance and maintain the longevity of the existing fabric of the building. Therefore, the proposal will comply with the provisions of the NPPF and Policy D2 of the Local Plan.

I trust this meets the requirements to enable successful validation of the application; I look forward to hearing from you shortly with confirmation of registration. However, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

*Olivia St-Amour*

Olivia St-Amour (Sep 22, 2017)

**Olivia St-Amour**

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