4 Bloomsbury Place London WC1A 2QA

Heritage Assessment For the Bedford Estate

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The Leathermarket 11-13 Weston Street London SE1 3ER November 2017

1 **Scope**

- 1.1 This conservation assessment has been produced to accompany a planning and listed building submission for 4 Bloomsbury Place, London WC1.
- 1.2 It has been prepared by Anthony Walker, a chartered architect with a postgraduate Diploma in Building Conservation and on the register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation.
- 1.3 It is based on a visual inspection of the building, reference to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Camden Local Plan, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal, the pre-application advice dated 6th October and other similar relevant information.

2 Background

- 2.1 Location.
- 2.1.1 The property is situated between Bloomsbury Square and Southampton Row on the north side of Bloomsbury Place.
- 2.1.2 It is in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, sub-section 6 Bloomsbury Square, Russell Square and Tavistock Square.
- 2.2.3 It forms part of a short terrace, numbers 1-5 Bloomsbury Place, all of which are listed Grade II.

2.2 Outline of historic background

- 2.2.1 Southampton House, later in 1734 to be called Bedford House, was built on the north side of Bloomsbury Square about 1657 for Thomas Wriothesley, 4th Earl of Southampton. He died without an heir so the Estate passed to Rachel, wife of William Russell, the second son of the Duke of Bedford, and in 1700 his son inherited the title and Estate of the Dukes of Bedford. Bedford House was a low brick building with two short wings; this layout is shown on William Morgan's map of 1682 with terraces of houses running to the east and west on the line of the present Great Russell Street and on either side of the main frontage.
- 2.2.2 The 1746 plan shows the main house facing on to the Square with a small open area on either side of the main house, facing the Square and leading to a development on either side which on the eastern side links to Southampton Row and on the western side to smaller properties as far as Montague House which was on the site of the present British Museum. At this stage Montague Street did not exist and the development crossed the end of the future road.

APPENDIX A

2.2.3 In 1800 the Duke of Bedford was granted permission in two Acts of Parliament to develop his Estate and in the same year James Burton, who had been working with the adjacent Foundling Estate, started the demolition of Bedford House which, it is reported, was no longer to the liking of the Duke as development to the north had marred his view of the hills of Hampstead and Highgate.

APPENDIX B

2.2.4 This development enabled Burton to create two roads leading due north to a new open space which was named as Russell Square, thereby creating a substantial amount of value in new development for the Bedford Estate. The layout for this can be seen on the map of 1800 which shows Montague Street, Bedford Place and two new terraces of houses facing the northern side

of Bloomsbury Square but with open space beyond them reaching to the corners of Southampton Row and the new Montague Street.

- 2.2.5 The earliest records of development in the area on the eastern side date from 1664 when a lease for 42 years was granted to Valentine Baily, with an agreement for a back door on to Long Fields, indicating the open nature of the land to the north. The first lease for 24 Bedford Place in the Bedford Estate archive dates from 1666 and was from Thomas Earl of Southampton to James Smith.
- 2.2.6 It is recognised that the two terraces along the north side of Bloomsbury Square and on either side of Bedford Place are the work of James Burton dating from about 1800, however the Leases do not necessarily show his involvement and in the case of 27 Bloomsbury Square a Mr Fitzgerald was the Lessee and there is allowance for his costs in the construction of the property. It is probable that Burton set out the general design, or the main layout, but was not involved in the execution, not least because he was not in London during this period having departed to Tunbridge Wells for a few years to deal with a major housing estate in that town and he did not return to Bloomsbury until 1807.
- 2.2.7 By 1824 the two empty blocks at either end of the two 'Burton' terraces are indicated on a map of that date as having been developed but the one to the east has a step outwards in the frontage with the adjoining terrace and does not follow the currently existing line.

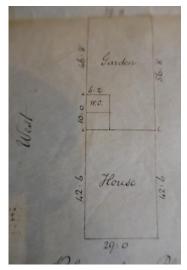
APPENDIX C

2.2.8 In 1839 a lease was granted by the Duke of Bedford to James William Mylne with a lease plan showing a back wing extending the full length of the garden, with a small back closet apparently one floor taller and directly behind the main house on the western side, and a slightly larger back closet wing on the eastern side. Some of this however is crossed out and there is no evidence that these plans were actually implemented.

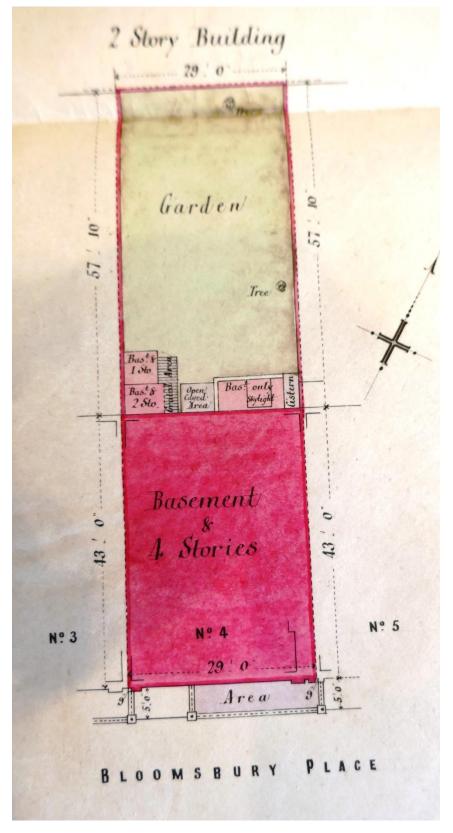
> In 1856 a lease of 21 years was granted to Chas Grey, an architect, with the first six months at a peppercorn rent, followed in 1888 by a lease to J Peacock, this time with three months at a peppercorn. These concessions suggest that the lessee was expected to carry out substantial works. According to the listing description the terrace was re-fronted in the middle of the nineteenth century while the Estate record book lists extensive works to numbers 2 and 3 in 1866. A sketch plan of what was agreed for the lease in 1888 shows a simple two-room back closet, one of which is labelled WC, overall ten foot deep and six foot two inches wide.

2.2.9 The lease plan for 1888 shows a slightly more complex back closet extension and an open area across the back of the remainder of the house. The section shown as a WC in the sketch plan is annotated as 'basement plus one storey' while the section attached to the house is 'basement plus





two storeys' as is seen today but this is wider than the two-room extension referred to above. A grated area is shown on the eastern side of the block indicating that the basement extended further than the building footprint at ground level.



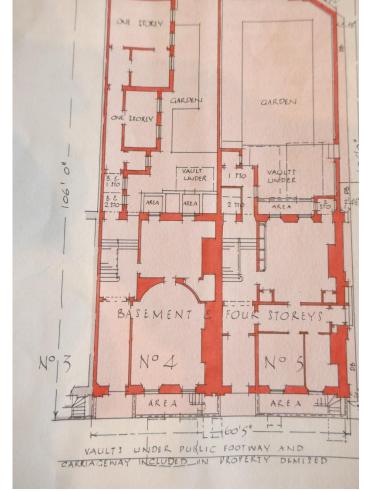
2.2.10 In 1901 a lease was granted to J G Chambers for a period of 28 years and the plan incorporated in this lease shows a back extension reaching to the end of the garden. The leaseholder gave notice to guit in January 1914 and there was an assignment first to Mr Walter Dewes who, in 1922, applied for a licence to assign his interest to Mr John Frame. There followed a tenancy agreement for the ground and first floors of number 4 to Aaron Wright and Albert Van den Bergh for use as offices for the Jewish National Fund. This progressed to an agreement in 1944 for all floors other than the basement, which had been taken over by Holborn Borough Council, as an air raid shelter. Correspondence between 1945 and 1948 showed that the basement suffered damage to the extent that it could not be let for office use although agreement was reached that it be used by the National Fund for storage. Part of the problem was a shortage of labour and materials to carry out the restoration works.



NE 67 SOUTHAMPTON ROW

2.2.11 In 1951 there was agreement to grant a joint lease for numbers 4 and 5 and a schedule of works was identified as needed which included a new asphalt roof. A lease was granted for both number 4 and number 5 for 21 vears to the National Benevolent Institution which had held the lease of number 5 from 1859 through a series of leases. This new lease was entered into in 1954. The delay was due to detailed studies basically to gut both buildings however it was concluded that with the prospect of road widening for Southampton Row these would not be viable. During that period there had been a series of leases and the plans in 1954 were as shown on the right.

> In 1971 there were alterations to the basement to number 4 and strengthening of the roof over the stairs to the main flat roof in 1972.



In 1976 a Party Wall Agreement was granted to

provide an escape route from number 4 across the garden to number 5.

- 2.2.12 The works carried out to number 4 were covered by licences in 1965 and 1969. These included extensive works and a selection of the plans are shown in the APPENDICES. The works include suspended ceilings with new decorative mouldings and, in the case of the 2nd floor, these were to be installed to conceal the existing ceiling which consisted of asbestos sheets with cover strips.
- 2.2.13 In 1976 a lease was granted to Hammett and Norton who were the architects employed by the previous tenants.
- 2.2.14 In 1979 a licence was granted to underlet the third floor to solicitors John Wood and Roger Higham.
- 2.2.15 Planning applications 95/70339 and 01895 were granted in 1995 to allow the demolition of the last bay of the listed back closet wing, to enable the construction of the adjoining building in Southampton Row. It is clear that this demolition and the basement underpinning involved were not considered to harm the interest of the listed building.

3 Significance

- 3.1 The terrace, numbers 1-5. was listed grade II in 1969.
- 3.2 In the description it is noted that:
 - Nos.1-5 (Consecutive) and attached railings II Includes: No.65 SOUTHAMPTON ROW. 5 terraced houses. Late C17, refronted 1857-62 possibly by Searle & Trehearne. Stucco with rusticated ground floor with band above. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Each house treated as a bay with paired rusticated pilasters rising through ground, 1st and 2nd floors and extending as panelled pilasters through 3rd floor. Entrances with consoles, pulvinated friezes, cornices; square-headed fanlights and panelled doors. Recessed sash windows; 1st floor with consoles, bracketed cornice and cast-iron window-box guards; 2nd and 3rd floor with architraves. 3rd floor with pulvinated frieze and cornice. Bracketed cornice at 3rd floor. Cornice and blocking course. INTERIORS: No 3, some panelling and turned balusters to stairs. No.4, panelled staircase and square balusters and shaped ends to stairs. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.4 was the home of Sir Hans Sloane (GLC plaque).
- 3.3 There have been no modifications to the description. It may be considered curious that it was not noted as having group value in the light of the description and that contained in the Conservation Area Appraisal which makes specific reference to the similarity in the refacing of the two wings on either side of Burton's short terraces and either side of Bedford Place. It is noticeable that while the front facades have retained a uniform appearance the back facades are less coherent. Number 2 has a canted bay which appears to be an original feature and other buildings in the terrace have back closet wings of varying sizes but number 4 differs significantly from the rest in having been developed right to the northern back wall of the site. This not only exists today but was first proposed in the nineteenth century, thus development of the garden area can be considered as an inherent part of the character of this property.
- 3.4 The terrace is clearly of significance on account of its relationship with the development of the area and its role in the changes in the Bedford Estate. Although not included for Group Value it is of significance as part of the overall composition of Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury Square and

Bloomsbury Place and as such it is a contributing element in the character of the area and its development to a master plan by Burton.

3.5 The staircase in number 4 and the panelled hallway are clearly identified as having significance.

4 Relevant national and local legislation

- 4.1 National Planning Policy Framework
- 4.1.1 **The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)** maintains the protection of the built heritage but emphasises the need for proper evaluation of the significance of the assets. The Core Planning Principles set out in paragraph 17 include, as bullet point 10, the following statement: 'Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'.
- 4.1.2 Paragraph 126 confirms the earlier statement in paragraph 17 that heritage assets should be conserved in accordance with their significance.
 'Significance' can of course vary throughout a heritage asset; it is universally recognised that conservation areas can include elements which are at best neutral and sometimes even detrimental to the significance of the asset.
- 4.1.3 Paragraph 131 requires that the LPA take account of the desirability of: sustaining the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; recognising the positive contribution heritage assets can make including economic vitality, and the desirability that any new development makes a positive contribution.
- 4.1.4 In paragraph 132 it is recognised that the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset should be assessed. In paragraph 134 it is recognised that where harm is less than substantial an assessment should be made of the benefits of the proposals, including securing a viable use.

4.2 *Conservation Principles*

Conservation Principles, published in 2008, provided a basis for assessing significance. The principal message in Conservation Principles is that change is a natural and inevitable process. In paragraph 86 it is stated that 'keeping a significant place in use is likely to require continual adaptation and change but provided such interventions respect the values of the place they will tend to benefit public (heritage) and private interests in it.'

4.3 Camden Local Plan

4.3.1 **CS14** Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;

b) 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.

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 if it preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the 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 where this harms the character or appearance of that conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;

d) not permit development outside a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and

e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a 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 that outweigh the case for retention; g) only grant consent for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building; and

h) not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

Archaeology

The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

Other heritage assets

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and London Squares.

4.3.2 **Camden Planning Guidance 1 Design**.

Section 3 deals with Heritage and the key messages state: Camden has a rich architectural heritage and we have a responsibility to preserve, and where possible, enhance these areas and buildings. • We will only permit development within conservation areas that

preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area

• Our conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans contain more information on all the conservation areas

Most works to alter a listed building are likely to require listed building consent

• Historic buildings can and should address sustainability

4.4 Bloomsbury Conservation Area

Bloomsbury Square lies in sub area 6 of the Conservation Area. The following extracts are relevant to the current proposals:

'..... there is general consistency in building heights: four storeys to the north and west sides, and three storeys to the south and along Southampton Place. The buildings are predominantly constructed from yellow brick with stucco decoration, although there are some fronts which are entirely stucco-faced. Window openings are vertically-proportioned, diminishing in size above large first-floor openings, with recessed sliding sashes subdivided with slender glazing bars. The majority of properties have iron boundary railings around basement areas.

5.84 The square is a unifying element and, owing to its comparatively small size and relatively narrow peripheral streets, has a strong relationship to the buildings facing it.'

5.85 Looking north, Nos 18-22 (consec) and Nos 23-27 (consec) Bloomsbury Square are two terraces of grade II listed brick townhouses by James Burton, dating from 1800 –1805, which frame the vista along Bedford Place. Flanking these are Nos 1-5 Bloomsbury Place and Nos 74-77 Great Russell Street, two stucco-faced terraces of the same height; of 17th century origin they were re-fronted in the mid 19th century and have a more decorative, classicallyinfluenced elevational treatment.

5 Proposals

- 5.1 The proposals are set out in more detail in the architect's Design and Access Statement.
- 5.2 The following are the key points in considering the Heritage Impacts:
- 5.2.1 It is proposed to reinstate the historic staircase from second to third floor, much of which still exists behind the partitions, including the newel post.
- 5.2.2 Remove surface mounted services and run these in dedicated risers or within floor voids.
- 5.2.3 The joinery and decorative plaster work has been significantly disturbed in many areas, often reflecting changes in room layouts. It is proposed to restore both of these to coherent decorative schemes which are appropriate to each level of the building. Simple schemes will be adopted at basement and third floor levels.
- 5.2.4 Basement. Front room: The modern partition to provide access to the front area will be removed and two simple interlinked rooms provided at the front and the back. The door in the front façade at the western end of the front light well is to be removed and replaced with a window to match the original form of the building.

The main staircase will be retained.

The back light well and adjoining vaults will be retained.

Behind the main house basement a new basement will be formed under the existing back closet wing and under the garden area, inset from the northern and eastern boundary and with a sunken courtyard to provide natural light to the basement areas. The development of 67-73 Southampton Row necessitated extensive excavation and temporary works, including demolition of the last bay of the back wing of 4 Bloomsbury Place, the formation of a new basement wall at the far end, and underpinning of the party walls in the garden between 4 and 5, and 3 and 4. The pattern of the developed area of the garden reflects the existing paving and also the form of the roof to the back wing when seen from above.

Ground floor. The form of the main house will be retained with the two interconnected main rooms, a hall and staircase. The form of the back wing will be retained. This has been through a number of alterations including changes to partitions and ceilings. The link to the main house will be rebuilt including the first floor, with access from the half landing on the main staircase, to a width closer to the original 1888 foot print (see 2.2.9 above) and that which has been retained in number 5. In view of the rebuilding of the end of the wing in the mid 1990s when 67-73 Southampton Row was developed combined with the numerous alterations internally and lack of significant historical detail it is proposed to rebuild the wing retaining the existing form but allowing for cavity wall construction thereby enhancing the thermal performance of the wing.

First floor. The basic layout of the building is retained. The subdivision of the front room would not have been an original feature and this is confirmed by the decorative cornice which passes through the wall. The intrusive modern partition will be removed.

The small closet wing off the main staircase landing will be rebuilt for functional reasons to provide better space for two lavatories and to a width similar to the closet wings on either side and to a depth similar to number 3 at this level. While the front facades of 2,3,4 and 5 are very similar the backs vary considerably with a quite ad-hoc approach to the back closet wings. It is considered that the proposals will create a greater degree of uniformity.

Second floor. A single room is retained across the front of the building with another smaller room beside the staircase.

Third Floor. This floor has been substantially altered with the removal of the upper flight of the main staircase during the second half of the last century and the introduction of a new bathroom and kitchen. The partition which was introduced as part of the late 1990s alterations concealing the rising flight from the second floor will be removed thus revealing the historic staircase. See Appendix G4



Turned balusters hidden by infill wall.

New stair to top floor with simple square balusters matching main staircase



This section, unlike the lower levels of the main staircase which have simple square section balusters, has strongly modelled turned mouldings. Similar mouldings are found in the main staircase of numbers 3 and 5 on either side although none of them are identical.

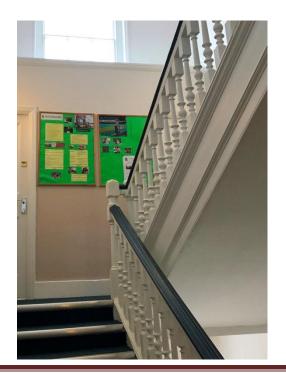
3 Bloomsbury Place Ground floor



Top floor



5 Bloomsbury Place Top floor



The variations in balustrading and the similarity between the embedded balustrade and those used in the adjoin buildings reinforces the benefit in revealing the historic rail to the top floor in number 4.

- 5.2.5 The roof is already a flat area with a narrow staircase access from the third floor below. It is proposed to rationalise the use of this area with a boarded terrace area set well back from the parapet wall. Cooling plant will be located on the roof and screened partly through the rebuilding of the original chimney stacks between 4 and 5.
- 5.2.6 New cooling and heating systems will be introduced with joinery casings to the units within the building. The chillers will be in two groups to serve the main areas of the building and these will be discreetly provided at roof level and the far end of the open space at ground floor level. Both locations are well shielded from wider views.

6 Impact of proposed works

- 6.1 The objective of the works is to enhance the historic forms of the building while providing efficient accommodation, thereby securing the optimum viable use of the building in accordance with paragraph 134 of the Framework.
- 6.2 There is no change to the overall appearance of the front of the building from the public releam it will retain its role as part of the listed terrace which is of particular interest having been uniformly refaced in stucco in contrast to Burton's brick-faced terraces on either side of Bedford Place. There are two changes which are beneficial to the use and appearance of the building. First is the provision of discrete railings set back from the edge of the building and providing necessary protection for users of the existing terrace area. The second is the reinstatement of the end window at basement level which was converted to provide a doorway into the front light well. This will enhance the appearance of the building seen from the public realm.
- 6.3 Seen from the public realm there is no significant change to the appearance as seen from the back in Southampton Row. The small back closet wing will be rebuilt to accord more closely with the proportions of the original back closet wing – see 5.2.4 Ground floor – and remain similar to the adjoining properties although not identical since none of the back closet wings are the same..
- 6.4 The new basement area will only be visible from the upper levels of number 4 and the adjoining properties. It will be largely screened by the existing roof of the back wing and the pattern of the courtyard will reflect the existing paving. It has been carefully designed to reflect its presence as a modern intervention, retaining the form of the historic back wing and respecting the hierarchy of the different spaces.
- 6.5 The flat roof to the main body of the building already provides an accessible roof space. The proposals, in defining the useable area of this roof and the screening provided by rebuilding the original chimneys between 4 and 5, will not only ensure the safety of the users but also that the use of the roof will be carefully controlled and not apparent from street level.
- 6.6 Internally the restoration of the top level of the main staircase will have a significant beneficial impact on the appearance of the staircase and its role in

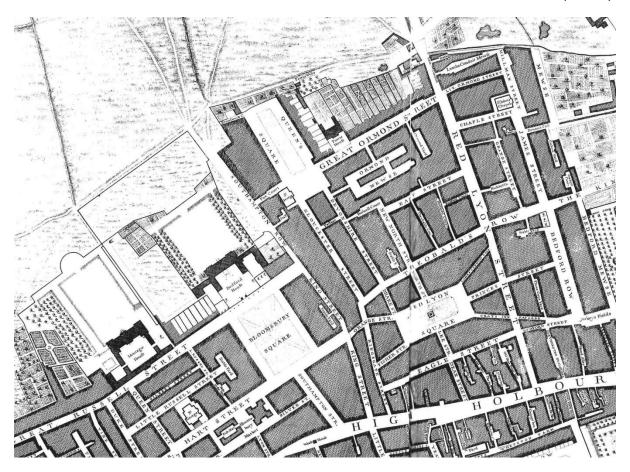
relation to the rooms on the top floor, as well as the restoration of original fabric.

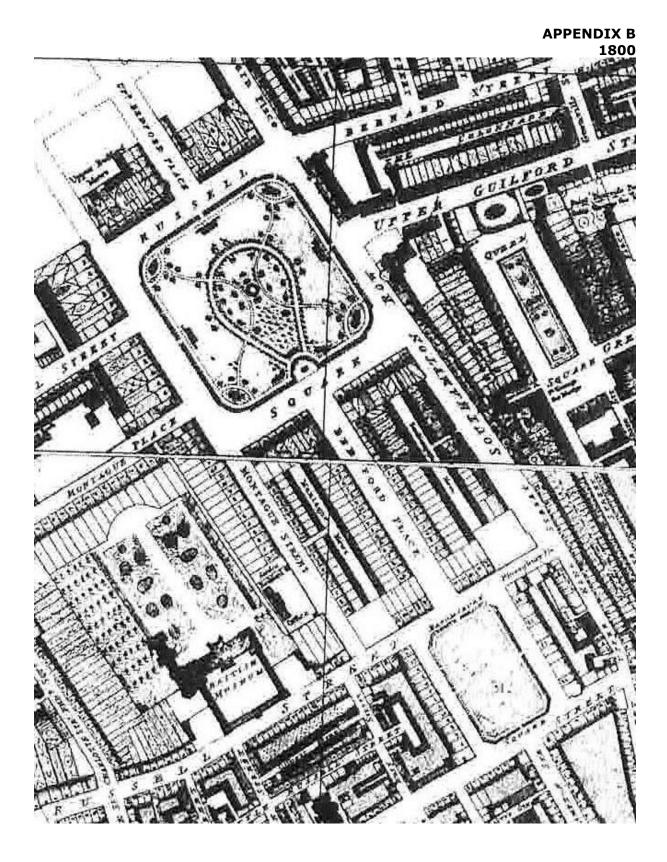
- 6.7 The restoration of coherent decorative joinery and plaster work reflecting the proposed room layouts will enhance the appearance and significance of the building.
- 6.8 The removal of random, largely surface mounted, services will enhance the appearance of the building and its functionality.
- 6.9 A comprehensive cooling and heating system with internal units encased in purpose-built joinery units similar to those used in several properties in Bedford Square (grade I listed) and Gower Street (grade II listed), with carefully located chillers at roof and basement levels, will enhance the appearance and environmental conditions consistent with achieving an optimum use for the property. The units will be fully reversible and could be removed in the future if needs change.

7 Summary

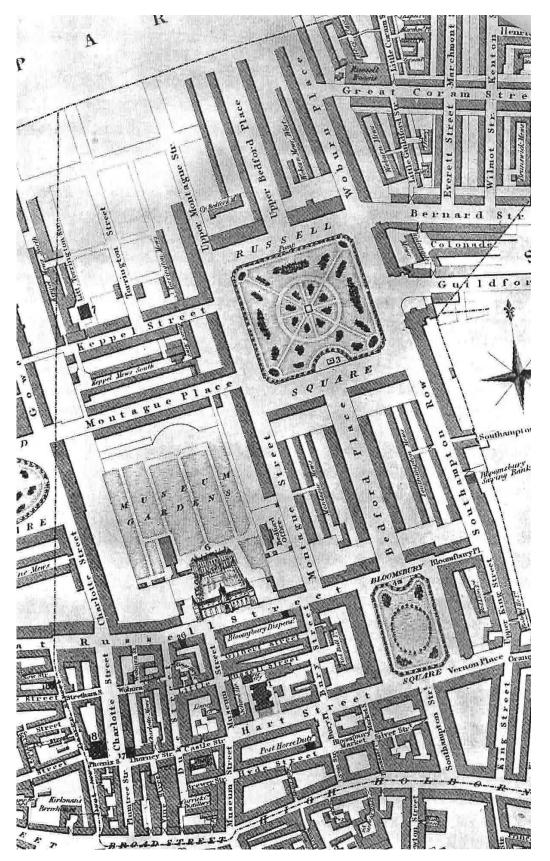
- 7.1 The proposals are based on a careful analysis of the building and its current condition to enhance the appearance and functioning of the building so as to secure its optimum use in accordance with paragraph 134 of the Framework.
- 7.2 The exterior of the building remains unchanged apart from the rebuilding of the two storey closet wing at the back, the reinstatement of a window at basement level in the front elevation and the introduction of the small sunken courtyard and two flush roof lights to a basement in the garden. In the case of the back closet wing it is considered that its scale is better related to the original wing in this location and to those on adjoining buildings. The small courtyard reflects the modelling on the existing back wing from the early 20th century. It is considered that these alterations do not harm the architectural or historic interest of the building.
- 7.3 The roof terrace already exists with staircase access from the third floor. The proposals as set out in section 6.5 provide a better controlled use of the space. This is considered to benefit both the appearance of the building and the architecture and character of the conservation area.
- 7.4 For the reasons set out in 7.2 and 7.3 it is considered that the proposals do not harm the appearance or character of the Conservation Area.
- 7.5 The proposals to restore and, where appropriate, to install appropriate decorative plasterwork and joinery will enhance the appearance and historic interest of the building. The removal of inappropriate partitions in the first floor front room and basement front room will significantly improve the appearance and understanding of the building. On the upper floors the areas have been modified on a number of occasions and it is considered that providing effective office accommodation combined with the benefits of restoring the upper floor off the main staircase, is a balanced and considered response as required by paragraph 134 of the Framework.
- 7.6 It is therefore considered that the proposals do comply with both national and local conservation guidance to protect the architectural and historic interest of the designated heritage asset and to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Anthony Walker Dip arch (dist), grad dip (cons) AA, RIBA, AABC November 2017

APPENDICES APPENDIX A 1746 Rocque Map



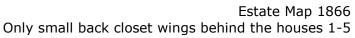


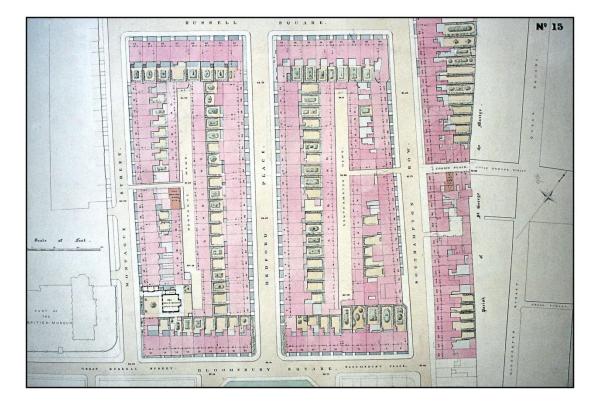
APPENDIX C Estate map 1824



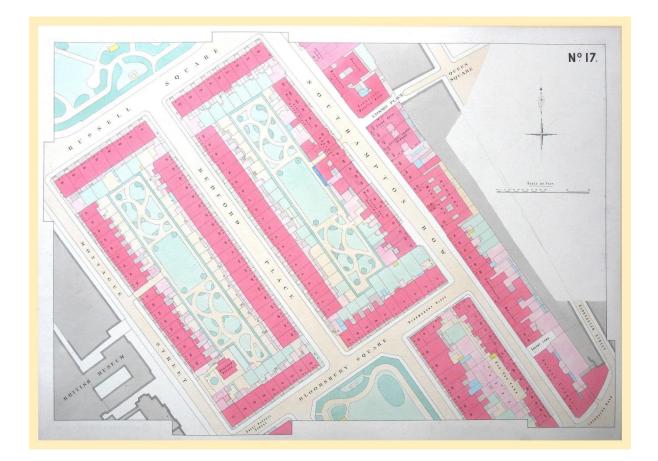
Note that the Estate office is still on the western side of Montague Street.

APPENDIX D

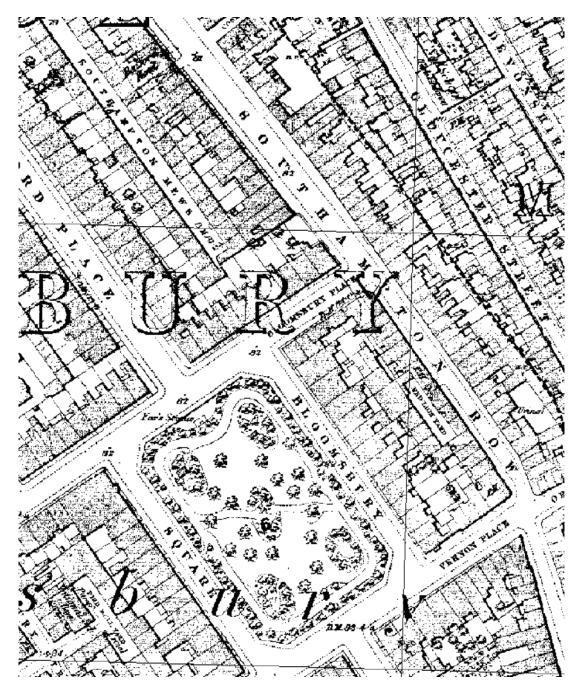


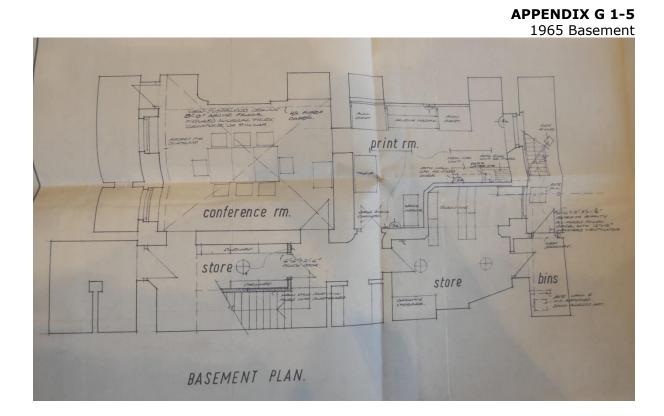


APPENDIX E 1900 Estate Plan The back of the terrace 1-5 still only have small back closet wings

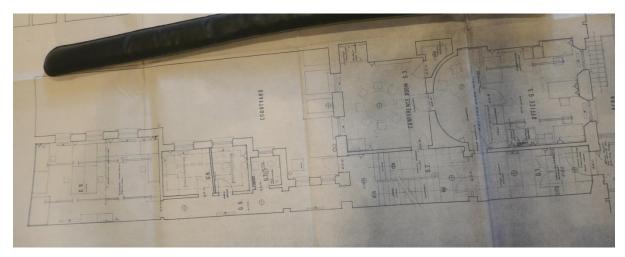


APPENDIX F 1872 OS

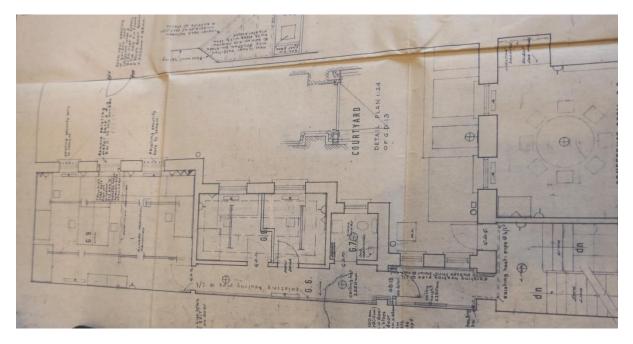




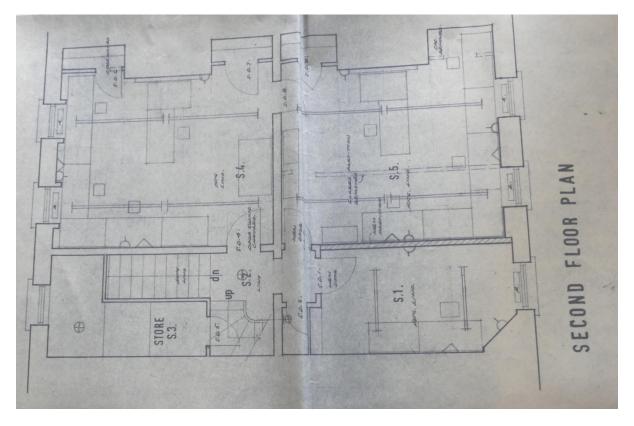
Ground floor G2



Variations in partitions G3



Second floor G4



Third floor G5

