

Heritage Statement



No. 212 - 214 High Holborn, London

On behalf of Austringer Capital Limited

May 2018

Project Ref: 2941

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Project Number:	2941	Date:	10/05/2017
Authored by:	Hugh Taylor	Document Version:	v.1
Reviewed by:	Jon Lowe		

INTRODUCTION

1. This heritage statement has been written by Heritage Collective on behalf of Austringer Capital Limited. It relates to the proposed works at Nos. 212-214 High Holborn, a Grade II listed bank located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It accompanies an application for listed building consent and planning permission for proposed works, which will involve external and internal alterations to the building, so as to return use to the upper floors and provide a rear extension.
2. The application site is a bank which dates to the mid-19th century. At present only the ground floor and basement are in use, with the first, second and third floors all currently vacant. The building fronts on to the south side of High Holborn, near to the main junction with Southampton Row, and is highly prominent in views south down Southampton Place from Bloomsbury Square Gardens. There are also several listed buildings nearby.
3. Although the front elevation remains unaltered areas of the interior of No. 212-214 High Holborn have undergone substantial alterations. Whilst the basement and ground floor retain their original use, much of the original fabric in these areas have been removed in order to accommodate modern styles and finishes. The first floor retains much of the original plan form and decorative fabric although the third and fourth floors and the rear elevation and yard have been subject to unsympathetic alteration. These changes have, in places, eroded the significance of the listed building.



Figure 1: Aerial view of 212-214 High Holborn, from the north.



Figure 2: Site location plan showing application site (outlined in red) and listed buildings (blue triangles).

4. The purpose of this heritage statement is to present the local authority, the London Borough of Camden, with a description of the significance of these designated heritage assets and the effects of the proposals. Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets affected are presented and the effects of the proposals on that significance are appraised. In doing so due regard has been given to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and local planning policy and guidance.
5. Specifically, this statement will assess the capability of the site to absorb change without negatively impacting on its significance. Consideration is given to the effects of the proposed alterations on the significance of the listed building and the conservation area.
6. A full schedule of the proposals, together with an assessment of their impact on the significance of heritage assets is set out in section 5 of this report. Details of the proposals are also set out in the Design and Access Statement and proposal drawings. In brief, the proposals seek to bring about a change to the form and appearance of both the interior and exterior of the building that will help facilitate a change of use to retail or restaurant use at basement and ground floors and office use on the floors above and within a proposed rear extension.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Legislation

7. Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act places a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historical interest which it possesses. Section 72 of the Act places a similar duty on the decision maker with respect to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
8. The Act does not require the prevention of change within conservation areas as such. Instead it is an administrative duty to ensure that the special interest of these areas are properly taken into account as material considerations, where relevant. The Act does not require enhancements to the character and appearance of a conservation area, although that would be a relevant material consideration.

National Planning Policy Framework

9. The NPPF constitutes the Government's current national guidance and policy regarding development in the historic environment. It is a material consideration and includes a succinct policy framework for local planning authorities and decision takers. It relates to planning law by stating that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
10. Paragraphs 126 to 141 of the NPPF deal with conserving and enhancing the historic environment with much emphasis on "significance", defined in annex 2 as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."
11. Paragraph 126 of the NPPF encourages local planning authorities to recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. On the other hand, the same paragraph recognises the fact that new development can make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, which is one of the factors to be taken into account, and that is reiterated again in paragraph 131.
12. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, providing a proportionate level of detail. The effects of any development on a heritage asset therefore need to be assessed against the four components of its heritage significance: its archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interests.
13. Paragraph 129 requires LPAs to identify and assess "the particular significance of any heritage asset". This should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, including by development affecting its setting.
14. Paragraph 131 requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of new development, making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
15. Paragraph 132 applies specifically to designated heritage assets. It states that great weight should be given to their conservation and it requires a proportionate approach (i.e. the more important the

asset, the greater the weight attached to its conservation). It also notes that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Setting of a heritage asset is defined as:

'The surrounding in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'

16. Conservation (for heritage policy) is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF:

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."
17. The importance and relevance of this definition is that it does not suggest conservation to be the same as preservation. Indeed, what sets conservation apart is the emphasis on proactively maintaining and managing change and not on a reactive approach to resisting change. In its simplest interpretation conservation could amount to a change that at least sustains the significance of a heritage asset.
18. Paragraph 133 deals with substantial harm to, or total loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset. Paragraph 134 deals with cases of less than substantial harm and notes that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Heritage protection and the conservation of heritage assets are recognised as of benefit to the public. Harm is identified by Historic England as change which erodes an asset's significance.

National Planning Practice Guidance

19. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and recent case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset. Where a less than substantial harm is found it is for the local authority to weigh that harm against the public benefits of the proposal.
20. Paragraph 020 of the NPPG recognises that public benefits include heritage benefits, such as:
 - i. Sustaining or enhancing the significance of the heritage assets and the contribution of their setting;
 - ii. Reducing or removing risks to the heritage assets;
 - iii. Securing the optimum use of the heritage assets in support of their long-term conservation.
21. One of the 12 core planning principles for achieving sustainable development within the NPPF is to 'conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for the contribution to the quality of this and future generations'.

Local Policy and Guidance

The London Local Plan (2011)

22. The London Plan 2011 (incorporating minor alterations from October 2013 and 2015) is the spatial development strategy for greater London and as such a piece of relevant planning policy.
23. **London Plan Policy 7.4** discusses the local character of buildings, streets and open spaces and notes that development should have regard to the pattern and grain of development, allow positively

contributing buildings to influence future character and is informed by the historic environment.

24. **London Plan Policy 7.6** relates to architecture and requires buildings to be of the highest architectural quality and of a scale, composition and proportion which enhances the public realm. The policy notes that materials and details should complement the established local character and that the amenity of surrounding areas should not be unacceptably harmed by new development.
25. **London Plan Policy 7.8** indicates that development should be sympathetic to the form, scale, materials and architectural details of heritage assets, and should, where appropriate conserve, restore and re-use heritage assets. The policy requires historic environments such as conservation areas to be preserved and enhanced and development affecting heritage assets and their settings to conserve their significance in a sympathetic manner.
26. **London Plan Policy 7.9** requires the significance of a heritage asset to be assessed when development is proposed and schemes designed so that the heritage significance is recognised, and where possible repaired, restored and put to a suitable and viable use that is consistent with their conservation.

Camden's Local Development Framework

27. Within Camden's Core Strategy, Policy CS14 "promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage" is of relevance. This policy states that the Council will "ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive safe and easy to use...": It will do this 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 views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites;*
 - *inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views.*
28. Camden development policies (2010-2025) are set out as part of the borough's Local Development Framework. Policy DP25 'Conserving Camden's Heritage' is applicable. With respect to listed buildings, it states that the Council will -
- *prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*
 - *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*
 - *not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.*
29. Although, proposals relate primarily to the listed building, policies concerning conservations areas are also of relevance. Policy DP25 states that the council will -

- *Take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
 - *Only permit development within conservation areas 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 that conservation area; 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.*
30. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement forms supplementary planning guidance. It includes a description of the character and appearance of the conservation area and its constituent parts – the conservation area is divided into a number of sub-areas. The document also includes guidance relating to management of change within the conservation area, and specifically targets alterations and extensions to existing buildings and how they can have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. Relevant points include -
- *Inappropriate design of extensions including size and proportions of openings;*
 - *The use of inappropriate materials, including detailed doors and windows;*
 - *Inappropriate roof level extensions - particularly where these interrupt the consistency of a uniform terrace or the prevailing scale and character of a block, are overly prominent in the street;*
 - *Extensions of excessive scale, massing or height;*
 - *Loss of original details such as traditional shopfront elements, frontage railings and balconies, cornicing at parapet level, chimneys and chimney stacks.*

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSETS

31. In order to inform the assessment of significance in relation to the heritage assets, some relevant historical background is set out in the following section.

Development of the Bloomsbury Area

32. The Bloomsbury area has its origins in the medieval period, when it was likely used for pasture and grazing of livestock. However, large scale development was not underway in Bloomsbury until the mid-17th century, when the 4th Earl of Southampton began building Southampton - later Bedford House - on what is now Bloomsbury Square.
33. Bloomsbury's development is representative of London's early expansion northwards, dating from around the 1660s through the Georgian and Regency periods up to the early Victorian period of the 1840s. This period of expansion followed the Plague in 1665 and the Great Fire of London in 1666 and replaced a series of medieval manors and their associated agricultural and pastoral land on the periphery of London with a mix of new houses, markets, commercial and cultural buildings, hospitals and churches.
34. Later expansion comprised grander residential districts for wealthy families, which were carried out speculatively by a number of builders on leases from major landowners. These new developments followed a consistent form with terraced townhouses constructed on a formal grid pattern of streets and landscaped squares. The pattern of progression of development across the Bloomsbury area illustrates the subtle changes in taste and style in domestic architecture that occurred throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

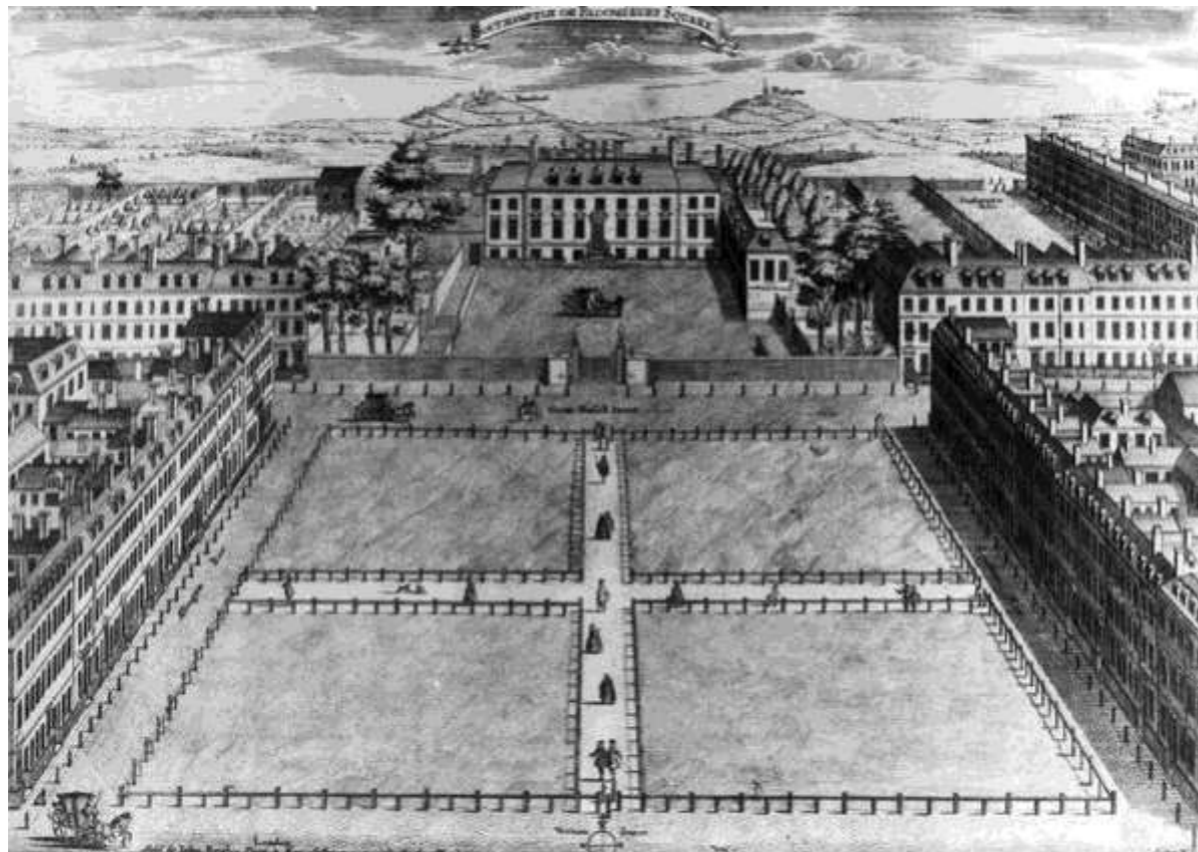


Figure 3: Print of circa 1725, showing Bloomsbury Square and Bedford House, looking north.

35. The Victorian era saw the urban area evolve with a movement of the wealthy to newly developing urban and suburban areas to the north. In their place arrived new uses and the expansion of existing ones within the area. Industrial uses appeared on the eastern fringes along the Fleet Valley, the establishment of University College, an expansion in specialist hospitals around Queen Square, and the development of the British Museum. The development of a series of railway terminals along Euston Road also saw an expansion in hotel developments, and office development took place throughout the Bloomsbury area. In line with the growth in commercial and retail prospects within Bloomsbury, the London and Westminster Bank, a British retail bank, opened their Bloomsbury branch at No. 213 High Holborn on the 4th January 1836, and in 1850 the branch moved to No. 214 High Holborn.
36. This change and expansion also continued into the 20th century. Bomb damage from the Second World War led to the replacement of some older housing stock with large scale new development. Later 20th century large scale development has also occurred, some of which encloses the application site.

Development of No. 212 - 214 High Holborn

37. Prior to the construction of the building that currently forms Nos. 212-214 High Holborn, three townhouses occupied the site. These are shown 1815 Map of St. Giles and St George (Figure 4) and in *Tallis's 1838-1840 Street view of London* (Figure 5), and the London and Westminster Bank was first established in No. 214 before its redevelopment several decades later. The commercial nature of High Holborn around the application site looks to have been well established by the middle of the 19th century, with the south side of High Holborn comprising mostly of shops with accommodation above.



Figure 4: St. Giles and St. Georges Map, 1815, showing the former arrangement of properties on High Holborn. Application site circled in red.

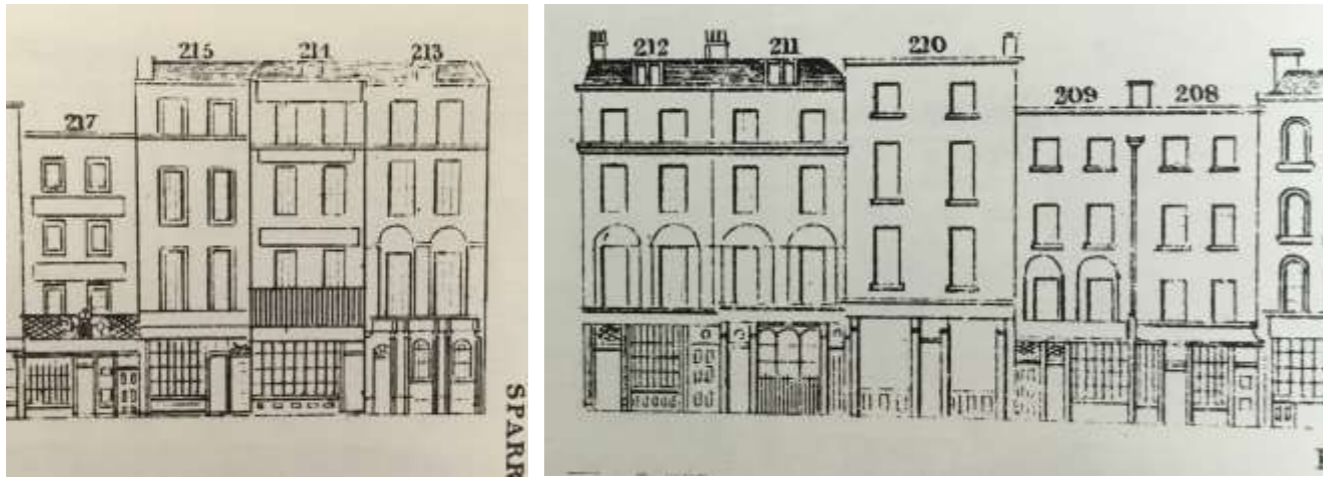


Figure 5: Tallis's 1838-1840 Street view of London, showing No. 208 to 217 High Holborn.

38. Although London and Westminster Bank had opened their Bloomsbury branch at No.213 High Holborn in the 1830s, the Bank sought to expand their premises by the 1850s by the purchasing of a lease from The Crown Estate. On the 18th February 1852, Mr Eivings (manager of the Bloomsbury branch) wrote to The Hon. Charles Gore on behalf of the Directors of the London and Westminster Bank. He stated that: *"For the purpose of having enlarged premises to carry on here this branch of our bank, it is desirable we should have the house No. 212 occupied by an undertenant of the ground lease of the crown."*
39. On the 25th of March 1852 architect James Pennethorne wrote to The Hon. Charles Gore:
- "I am (of the) opinion it is advisable to agree to accept surrender of the present leases upon the terms proposed, and in return to grant them a Building Lease of the whole site as shown by the Plan in the Margin – for a period of 99 years from the 5th day of April next, and at a rent of £145 per Ann: for the whole Term. The Directors, within the first three years, to pull down the Houses and rebuild on the site with new Materials one large House according to Plans and Elevations and Specification to be previously submitted to and approved of by the Board, and a cost of not less than £10,000 – the new Lease to be granted on a Certificate from the Board's Architect of about two thirds of such expenditure having been made and the (?) of the Building completed in a satisfactory manner."*
40. In July 1852, 212 High Holborn was purchased by London and Westminster Bank, and Henry Baker (1802-1878) was appointed architect on 22 December 1852. Mr Baker wrote to James Pennethorne on the 27th March 1854:
- "This is to certify that the Premises in Holborn, agreed to be leased to the Directors of the London and Westminster Bank, have been wholly pulled down, and rebuilt with the best materials in the most substantial and workmanlike manner, that the premises are covered in and all the walls carried up to their full heights, and that in the construction thereof, the sum of seven thousand pounds at the least has been already expended"*
41. On 13 April 1853, the tender of George Myers, builder, was accepted at a cost of £7,676. The building was opened on 4 October 1854 and represented one of the first phases of expansion for the London and Westminster Bank, who had previously only opened six branches in its first three years (since being founded in 1834) and established no additional offices until almost 20 years later. London and Westminster continued to expand during the second half of the 19th century and into the 20th century, becoming one of the 'Big Five' banking institutions in the country before its merger with the National Westminster Bank in 1970.



Figure 6: 1915 view of the London County and Westminster Bank.

42. A review of historic plans and the existing fabric reveals internal alterations and additions have been made throughout the 20th century and that save for the first and second floors, little remains in terms of historic fabric and plan form. Plans of proposed changes are contained within documents saved at the Camden and National Archives. A list of recorded changes are detailed below:
- **1917:** Plans showing proposed construction of WC and new drains at ground floor level (Plans shown in Figure 7 this arrangement has been further altered and expanded);
 - **1925-1926:** Plans showing proposed alterations to the basement to create current plan form. Also showing alterations to the ground floor, and proposed new granite balustrade to the front of the Bank (Figure 8 & 9);
 - **1932:** Alterations to the third floor comprising the addition of a bathroom and WC to the third floor apartment (Figure 10);
 - **1963:** Proposal to erect three signs at No. 212-214 High Holborn, and proposal to construct a mezzanine floor above the rear ground floor of the Bank (Figure 9 & 11).
 - **1966:** Proposal to construct fire escape stairs to the rear (Figure 11 & 12).

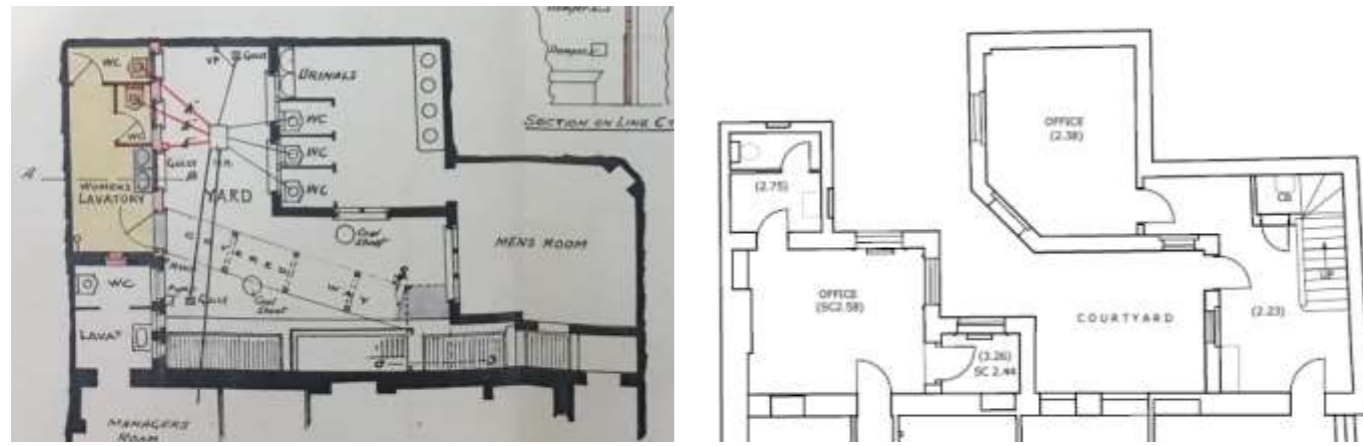


Figure 7: 1917 Plan of rear basement (left) and plan of existing basement at rear (right).

43. The above plans show the rear yard as it was in 1917 (left image) and as the yard is now (right image). Comparison of the two reveals gradual expansion/contraction and addition of elements comprising the ancillary structures to the rear of the Bank and a localised change in use from WCs to use as offices.

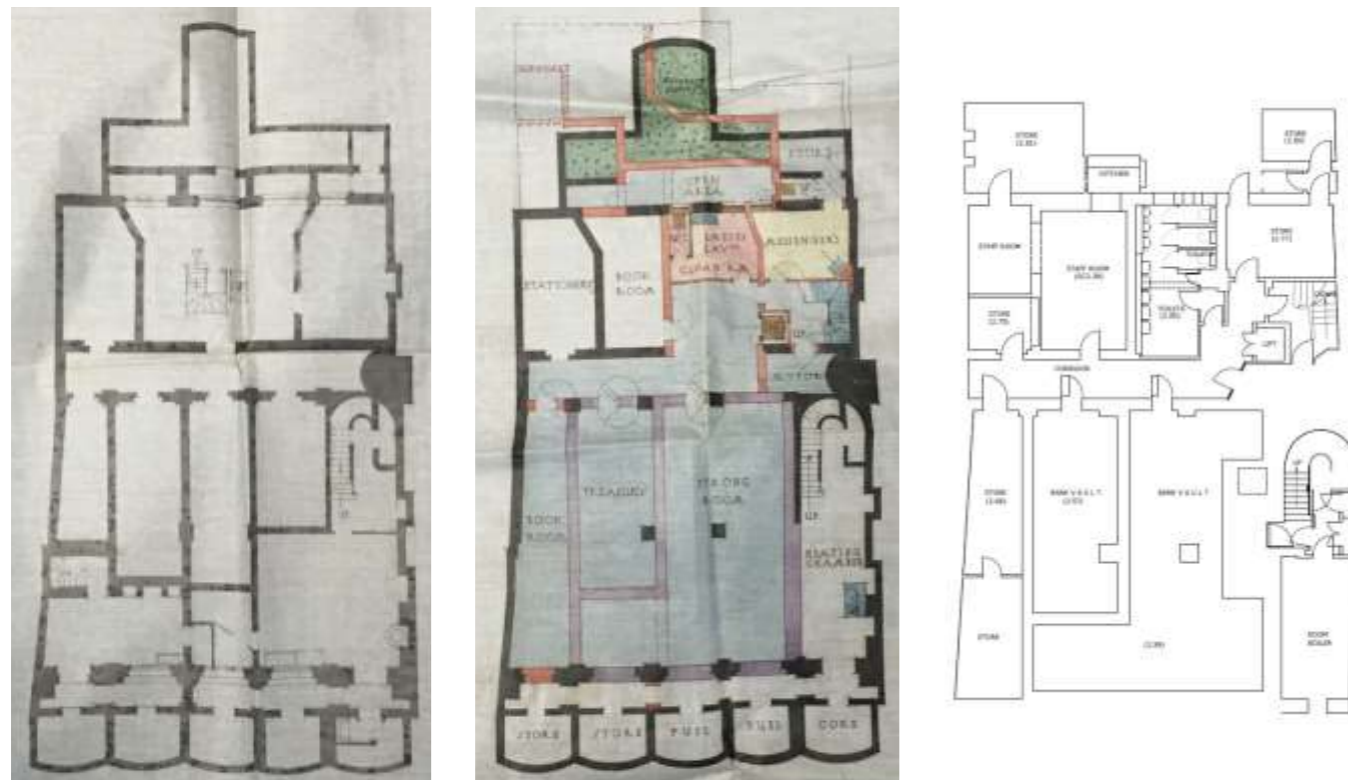


Figure 8: Existing basement plan in 1925 (left), proposed basement plan in 1925 (centre) and existing basement plan (2016).

44. Basement plans shown above reveal how the plan form was heavily altered in the 1920s to form a new arrangement of strong rooms and stores. This new arrangement broadly exists today, although small alterations including the provision of a larger toilet block, the insertion of a number of new partitions and expansion to the rear were undertaken in the 1960s.
45. The 1925-26 plans (Figure 8) also show the ground floor as it was at the beginning of the 20th century and proposed plans for substantial internal rearrangement. These proposals don't appear to have been undertaken as a plan of the ground floor from 1963 shows a different arrangement. This plan form at ground floor level has been further altered and the existing arrangement is substantially different from what is shown in the 1960s plans, although the mezzanine level still remains.

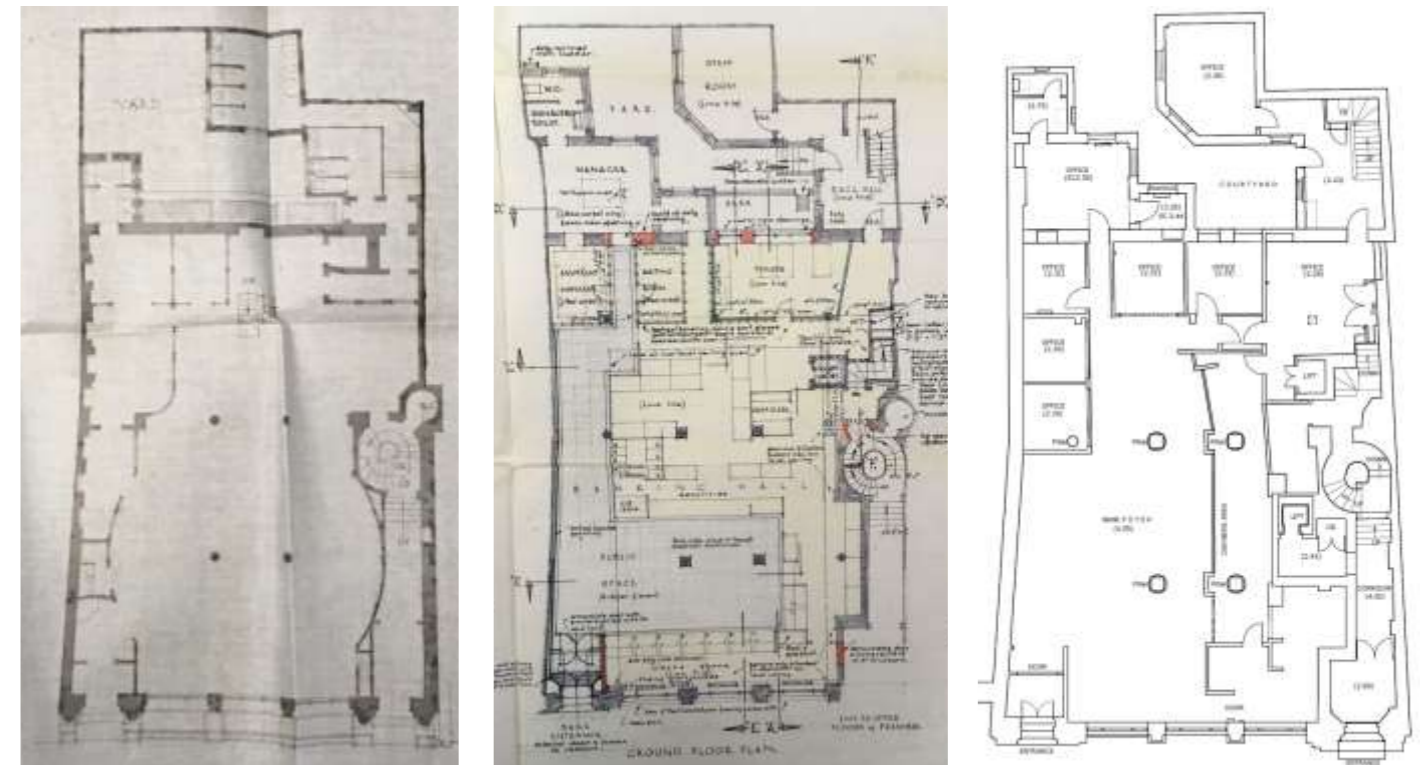


Figure 9: Existing ground floor plan in 1925 (left), existing ground floor plan in 1963 (centre) and existing ground floor plan (2016).

46. Plans drawn up in 1932, below, show that the third floor was in use as an apartment and underwent change in the form of a new bathroom and WC and associated partitioning, inserted into what was the kitchen area. We understand the residential unit was created for use by the bank manager. Later alterations were more intrusive, with the most substantial being the provision of a roof extension up from the second floor to the rear range. This change looks to have been undertaken in the mid to late 20th century, with the fabric, style and fixtures and fittings indicative of this. This alteration has also resulted in the upwards extension of the existing curved staircase, the provision of a lift lobby and toilet block, the removal of the landing area (which was incorporated into the front office rooms) and the insertion of a skylight to illuminate the stairwell. The 1932 WC and bathroom have also been removed, the former kitchen subdivided and stairs leading up to the modern fourth floor/roof apartment inserted.

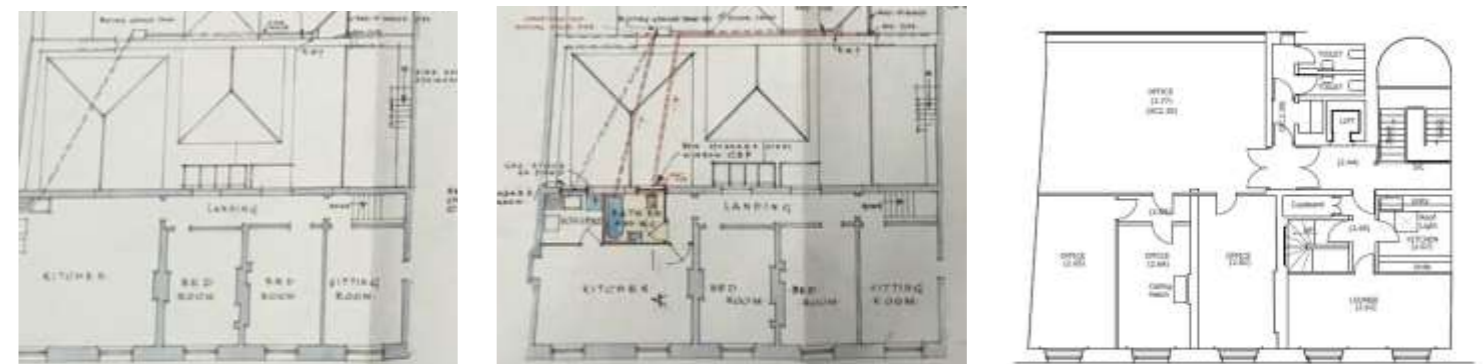


Figure 10: 1932 third floor plan (left), 1932 proposed plans (centre) and existing third floor plan (right).

47. The plan form of the first and second floors remain relatively unchanged and retains original partitioning and decorative fabric. However, comparison of proposed plans for the installation of an external fire escape from 1966 with modern drawings reveals some alterations have been carried out on these two levels. Although the plan form is still largely legible, the 1960s plans show a higher

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

49. It is recognised that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. In some cases certain aspects or elements could accommodate change without affecting the government's objective, which includes 'intelligently managed change' and which seeks to ensure that decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of significance of heritage assets.
50. Change is only considered to be harmful if it erodes an assets significance. Understanding the significance of any heritage asset affected and any contribution made by their setting (NPPF, para. 128) is therefore fundamental to understanding the scope for and acceptability of change,
51. A description of significance of Nos. 212-214 High Holborn, the setting of nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The descriptions are proportionate to the significance of the assets and are sufficient to understand the nature of the impacts the proposals may have upon that significance.

Nos. 212 - 214 High Holborn Significance

52. Nos. 212 -214 High Holborn was designated a building of special architectural and historic interest in 1955. The list description states:

Name: NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK

Location: NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK, 212, HIGH HOLBORN

List entry Number: 1378886

Date first listed: 14-May-1974

GV II

Bank. 1854. By Henry Baker. Portland stone. 4 storeys and basements. 5 bay symmetrical facade in Palladian style. Slightly projecting entrance bays at ends with rusticated quoins. 3 segmental-arched ground floor windows. Round arched doorways with vermiculated rusticated surrounds and coat of arms in cartouches on keystones; engaged columns (to left) and brackets (to east) with blind balustraded balconies at 1st floor level; doorways with fanlights and double panelled doors. Sill strings at floor levels. Architraved sash windows, 1st floor with bracketed pediments, 2nd with cornices. Console-bracketed cornice with Greek fret frieze below with paired lion-head stops. INTERIOR: not inspected

53. The building has architectural and historic interest and significance. Its interest and significance are not archaeological or artistic.

Architectural Interest

54. Its architectural interests stem primarily from the grand Palladian front elevation, which Pevsner notes on:

'No. 212 (NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK) by H. Baker, 1854, but except for the segmental arches on the ground floor, surprisingly pure Palladian'

55. The frontage derives interest due to its formal composition, classical detailing, materiality and clear hierarchy. The frontage of Nos. 212 - 214 High Holborn is relatively well preserved and its integrity is maintained although unsympathetic modern signage associated with its use and ATMs mounted into one of the window bays has diluted its significance. The property's frontage and roof line are

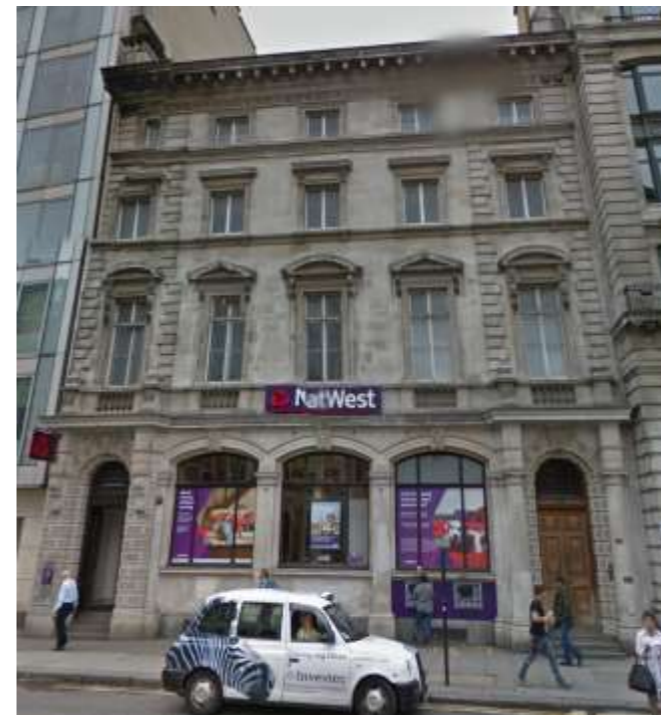


Figure 13: Front elevation (top left), rear elevation to first and second floors (top right), rear extension to basement and ground floor (bottom left) and rear extension at first floor height (bottom right).

important elements in the townscape, particularly when viewed from the north down Southampton Place, and both make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

56. As would be expected the rear elevation of the building is stylistically and architecturally subservient with a functional but traditional appearance. At first and second floor levels the plain finish of the original rear elevation illustrates the importance of the frontage as part of a formal townscape. There is much less consistency in terms of building lines and the continual addition of rear extensions and alterations at both ground and basement levels and at third floor and roof levels during the 20th century has introduced visual inconsistencies that detract from the significance of the listed building. Large modern developments on all sides at the rear have totally enclosed the rear courtyard and it is difficult to experience the rear of the listed building as a whole.

57. Architectural interest is also derived from the interior of the building. At basement and ground floor levels the continual use and modernisation of these floors has left little in the way of original fabric, other than in the plan form of the basement, although this has also been altered throughout the 20th century. The one remaining feature of note at basement and ground floor is the original spiral staircase which transitions into curved half landings above ground floor level and extends up to the third floor. The staircase is a key part of the building's special interest and comprises cantilevered stone treads with decorative wrought iron balusters and timber handrail.
58. Good details survive at first floor level and the plan form remains more or less in its original state. Each room retains decorative joinery and plasterwork. This decorative fabric comprises of two-part skirting boards, richly detailed dado rails and cornicing, architraves with corbelling and pediments above doors, stone fireplace surrounds. Emblems and crests have been painted on to some sections of cornicing - St. George's cross and the London and Westminster Bank emblem. The decorative elements of the first floor and its relative completeness adds considerably to the architectural interest of the building. Some interest has been lost through the insertion of a lift shaft and the subdivision of one of the rear rooms to provide WCs. The need to provide modern services has also impacted on the decorative fabric, with trunking attached to the skirting boards in a number of the rooms.



Figure 14: Pediment joinery over door between front and rear office on the first floor (top left), decorative cornicing with painted emblems and crests on first floor (top right), fireplace surround to first floor (bottom left) and cantilevered landing to staircase between first and second floors (bottom right).



Figure 15: Office to the second floor, showing fireplace and surrounds with skirting, picture rails and cornicing.

59. At second floor level, decorative fabric does remain but it is more modest in scale and embellishment than that of the first floor, in line with its location on the second floor and with the clear hierarchy of the building which is expressed by the front elevation. The rooms on the second floor display simple joinery items and plasterwork, and comprises skirting, picture rails, cornicing, architraves to doors and windows and simple fireplace surrounds. As with the first floor the insertion of a lift and subdivision has resulted in the loss of heritage value from this part of the listed building.
60. The third floor has been heavily altered and retains few items of interest. A number of rooms to the front that formed part of the former apartment retain some decorative items such as skirting and cornicing, similar to that on the second floor, although the other front rooms have been subdivided to form a modern apartment and stairs have been inserted to provide access to the fourth floor apartment. The large rear room, lift and toilet block room were added following the addition of the roof extension in the mid to late 20th century.
61. The fourth floor is an entirely modern addition and does little to reference the host building in terms of design, both internally and externally. As such the fourth floor, which extends outwards from the rear pitch of the original roof in the form of a large dormer, harms the significance of the building.



Figure 16: Large rear office to the third floor with modern structural element (left) and landing area to the fourth floor (right).

Historic Interest

62. No. 212 - 214, as part of the Bloomsbury Townscape, has illustrative and associative historic value for representing the growth and development of the Bloomsbury in the late 17th and 18th centuries and then the redevelopment of the area in the 19th century as new uses and industries were introduced to the Bloomsbury area. The building also has associative interest through its connection with and occupation by the London and Westminster Bank, one of the Big Five banking groups in the country before their merger into the National Westminster Bank in 1970. The building is also representative of the growth of the London and Westminster Bank during the 19th and 20th centuries, who redeveloped the site in the mid-19th century before expanding across London and the country.

The Setting of Nearby Heritage Assets

63. There are several nearby listed building to No. 212 - 214 High Holborn. Nos. 207 and 208 High Holborn are located to the west along High Holborn, separated from No. 212 - 214 by the large bank building of No. 210. Both are listed (Grade II and Grade II* respectively) and both enjoy similar settings to that of No. No. 212 - 214 and are experienced in much the same way - when moving east or west along High Holborn, though the curve in the road and the build up larger, modern neighbouring structures means the listed buildings quickly disappear from view when moving away. Their setting is defined by High Holborn's busy commercial character and the mix of building types and ages along it. Any contribution made by the application site to the setting of neighbouring listed buildings on High Holborn is incidental as part of an urban context in which other listed buildings are experienced. It is not a key or deliberate element within the setting of other listed buildings.

64. Southampton Place to the north is also lined with a number of listed buildings; Nos. 1 to 8 Southampton Place and Nos. 14 to 22 Southampton Place are both Grade II* listed terraces that line the east and west sides, with Nos. 127 and 129 High Holborn, located at the junction between High Holborn and Southampton Row grade II listed. Whilst the properties at Nos. 127 and 129 have a setting similar to that of the application site and Nos. 207 and 208 High Holborn, the Southampton



Figure 17: View east along High Holborn towards the application site, although the curve of the road prevents oblique views of No. 212 - 214.

Place properties are experienced in a more residential setting. The application site is a prominent feature within their setting as views down Southampton Place, which take in the front elevations of both sets of listed terraces, are lead to and eventually terminated by the front elevation of No. 212 - 214 High Holborn (Figure 18).



Figure 18: View south down Southampton Place towards the application site (top), rear element of No. 15 - 19 Newton Street (left) and the flank elevation of No. 215 - 222 High Holborn (right).

No. 212-214 within the Townscape

65. Recent development of neighbouring sites have left No. 212 - 214 High Holborn looking subservient within the local townscape. No. 210 High Holborn, although historic, is a number of storeys higher than Nos. 212 - 214, and has been extended rearwards at full height whilst No. 215 - 222 High Holborn is a relatively modern structure that has recently been reclad and towers over its neighbour by at least four storeys. The rear area of the property has also been totally enclosed through the development of a multi-storey structure that fronts on to Newton Street to the west (No. 15 - 19,

which is linked to No. 215 - 222 High Holborn, see Figures 18). Even with modern development that has dwarfed the application site, it is still highly visible in sensitive views south down Southampton Place (as shown in Figure 18) and the front elevation can also be clearly seen in views south from Bloomsbury Square Gardens.

Character and Appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area

66. First designated in 1968 the Bloomsbury Conservation Area has been extended on several occasions to include development beyond the Georgian core of the area. An appraisal was produced by Camden in 2011 and is adopted supplementary planning guidance (see map in Figure 19). The area covers up to 160 hectares and incorporates what is considered to be an internationally important example of town planning based on formal landscaped squares located on a grid of streets. There is much uniformity in the townscape of the area, despite changes in the use of the buildings from residential to office and commercial uses during the 19th and 20th century. Cultural institutions and educational establishments also form a significant part of the area
67. This is a conservation area with very high architectural and historical importance and interest. Its architectural value is derived not only from the variety of built form, but also the quality of the design of the terraces and individual architectural details that make up the area and its built environment. Listed buildings within the area possess the most important architectural interest but other unlisted buildings also contribute to the architectural value of the place as a whole. Historical value and importance is derived from the people associated with the development of Bloomsbury and the past inhabitants of its buildings, including significant composers, artists, scientists, authors and members of parliament who lived and worked in the centre of London during the 18th and 19th century. Historical interest is also derived from the development of the street scene and the buildings over time and of course the overall town planning concept that underpins the entire character of the area
68. Bloomsbury is also of archaeological significance given its location and potential for as yet unknown archaeological evidence of past occupation. It is also of high artistic value as an area which contains works of art and sculpture in and around the institutions within the area.
69. No. 212 - 214 High Holborn is located within Sub Area 8 of the Central conservation area, which covers New Oxford Street, High Holborn and Southampton Row. This area is characterised by areas of large-scale, late 19th and 20th century blocks fronting busy thoroughfares. Development of this area followed the construction of new routes with combined with the widening of earlier streets, thereby cutting through the earlier 17th and 18th century street pattern. The predominant use is commercial, with a range of shops, banks, offices, hotels and theatres.

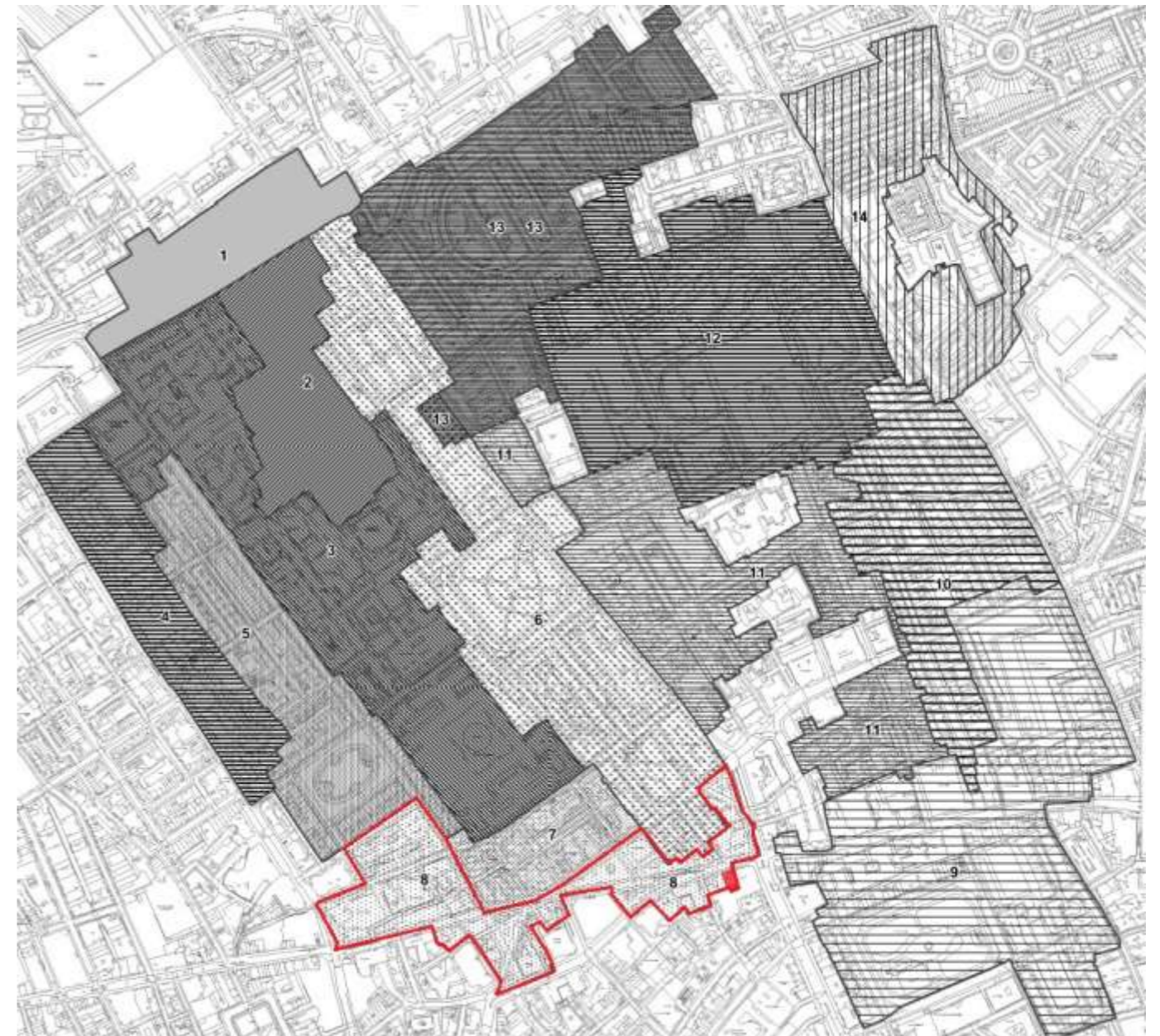


Figure 19: Map of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area with Sub Area 8 highlight in red and the application site filled in with red (from the *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, 2011*).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS

70. This section appraises the impacts of the proposals on the heritage sensitivities identified within the report. It supports the Local Planning Authority in their decision making process and includes an appraisal of the compliance with national and local planning policy in the context of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act.

Proposed Development

71. The proposed development is shown in the architect's drawing pack and is described in detail in the Design and Access Statement which also forms part of the planning application and should be consulted before reading the following section. In brief the proposals involve the addition of a rear extension and internal rearrangement of the existing building at all levels. Proposals for the refurbishment and extension of the existing building have been the subject of extensive discussions with Camden Council. The council's comments have been reflected in the designs of the current proposal.

Effect on the Listed Building

External

72. It is proposed for an extension to be added to the rear of the building. The proposed extension will comprise six stories and will extend above the height of the existing building.
73. The addition of the proposed extension will involve the removal of the existing two storey extension at ground and first floor levels, and other projecting elements at the rear of the building. Areas of the rear of No. 212 - 214 High Holborn have been subject to numerous additions and alterations and exist in different forms and arrangements from when it was constructed. As such the removal of these elements will not impact on the heritage values of the listed building.
74. It is proposed to retain the existing rear elevation in front of the proposed rear extension, leaving the windows and brickwork exposed. A glass link structure will effectively enclose the visible elements of the rear elevation and will provide a legible transition between the original structure and the new.
75. At roof level little historic fabric remains to the rear of the ridge due to the continual addition of extensions and other alterations during the 20th century. The development of the extension will retain the front pitch of the existing hipped roof but will result in the removal of the inconsistent jumble of roof extensions and alterations that at present detract from the listed building's significance, presenting instead a high quality, unified addition that enhances heritage value.
76. In order to preserve the listed building's facade and roofscape, the proposed extension at roof level is to be set well back from the front elevation, behind the existing ridge of the hipped roof. This approach retains the overall form and appearance of the front elevation when viewed from the public realm and allows for a legible separation between the highly significant front elevation and roof of the application site and the proposed modern addition. The extension has been designed in a contemporary style with a simple palette of high quality that will further denote the addition as a modern but respectful addition to the exterior of the listed building.
77. The only proposed change to the front elevation will be the removal of the ATMs associated with its current use as a bank. The removal of these modern features and reinstatement of the elevation will improve the appearance and heritage interests of the building and how it contributes to the street scene.



Figure 20: Existing front elevation (left) and proposed elevation (right).

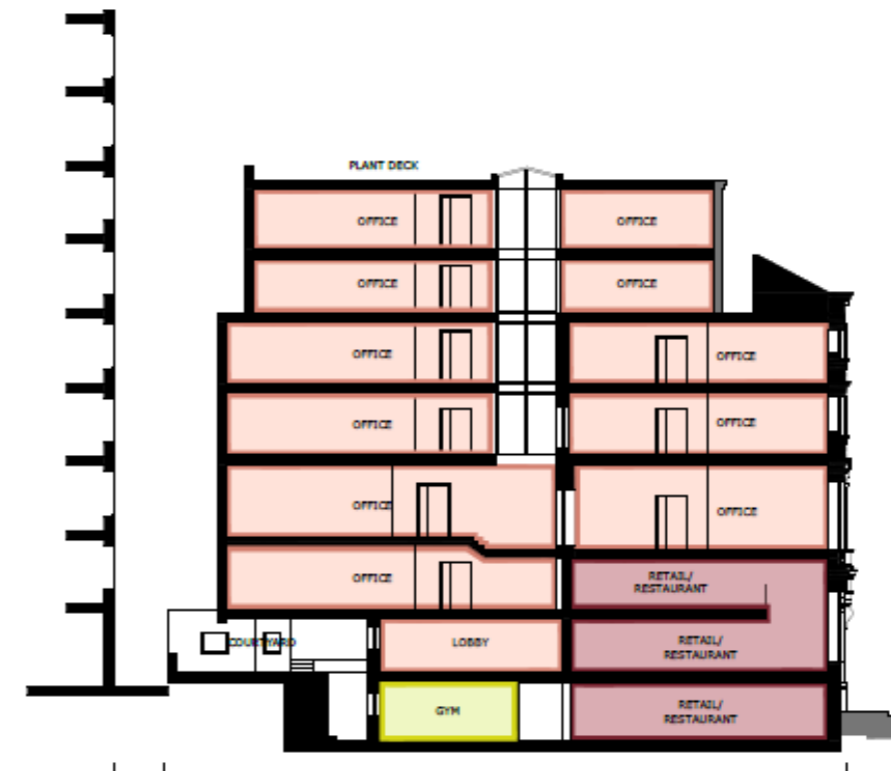


Figure 21: Rough sectional view of the proposals.

78. An assessment of the proposed internal alterations is shown on the preceding pages.

Internal

78. In order to better understand the proposed internal changes and their effect on significance, they have tabulated below -

Basement

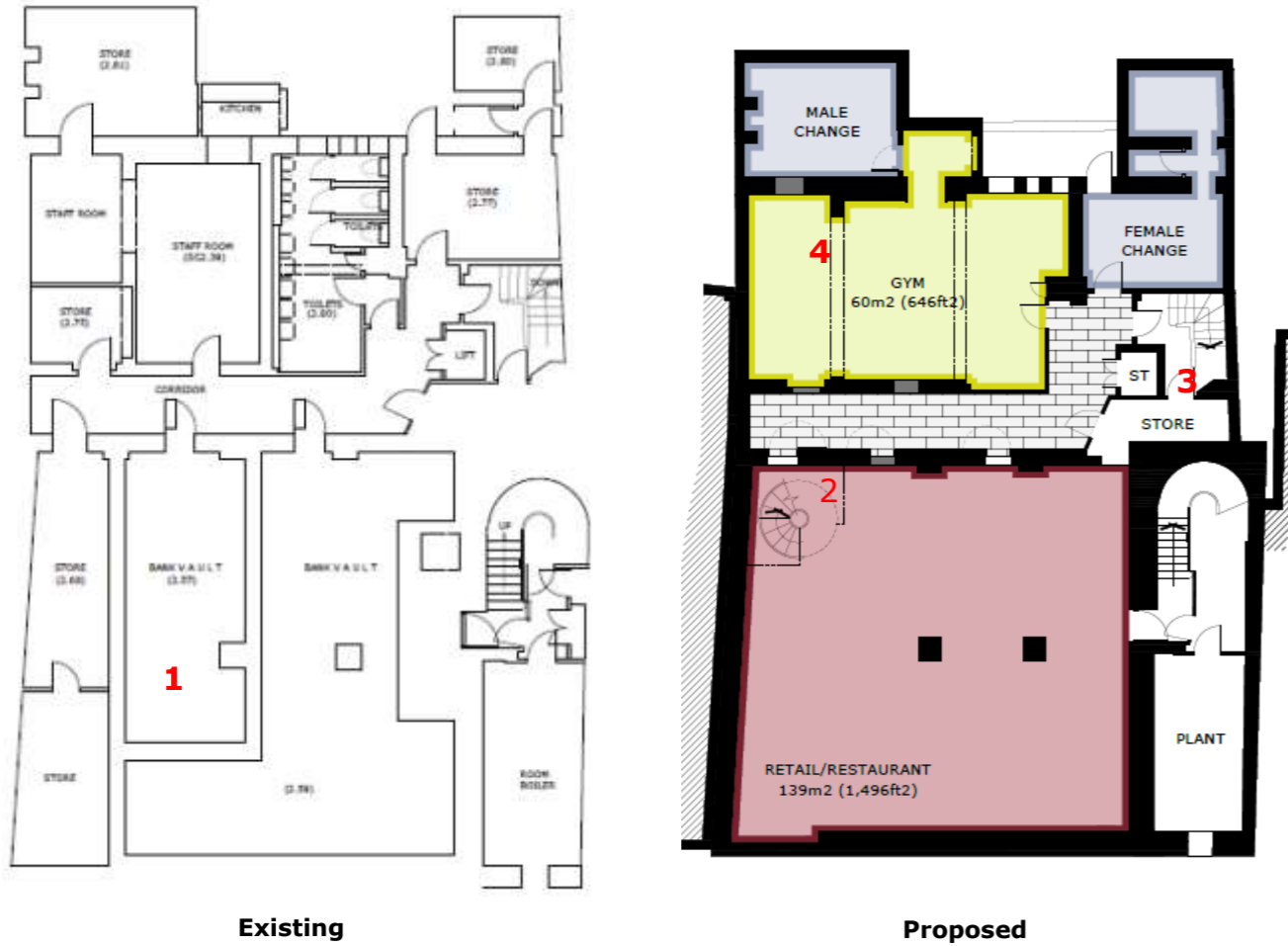


Figure 22: Existing basement (left) and proposed basement (right).

Work Proposed	Effect	Impact
1	Removal partitions that formed the existing bank vaults, storage areas and staff rooms.	Alteration to plan form. Neutral Impact - The existing plan form is a relatively modern arrangement that dates to 1925(see figure 8) that has undergone change throughout the 20th century. As such the removal of these elements will preserve significance.
2	Insertion of spiral staircase to south-east corner of proposed retail/restaurant area.	Insertion of new fabric and alterations to circulation. Neutral Impact - Alteration occurring within an already heavily altered area of the building that has lost most elements of interest. The proposal will therefore preserve the significance of the listed building.
3	Replacement of lift with storeroom and addition of second storeroom	Insertion of new fabric. Neutral Impact - these changes will occur in an area that has previously been altered and will therefore no impact on the significance of the listed building.
4	Creation of gymnasium and changing rooms	insertion of new fabric. Neutral Impact - plan form to be retained and alterations to be carried out within an already altered area of the basement, therefore preserving significance.

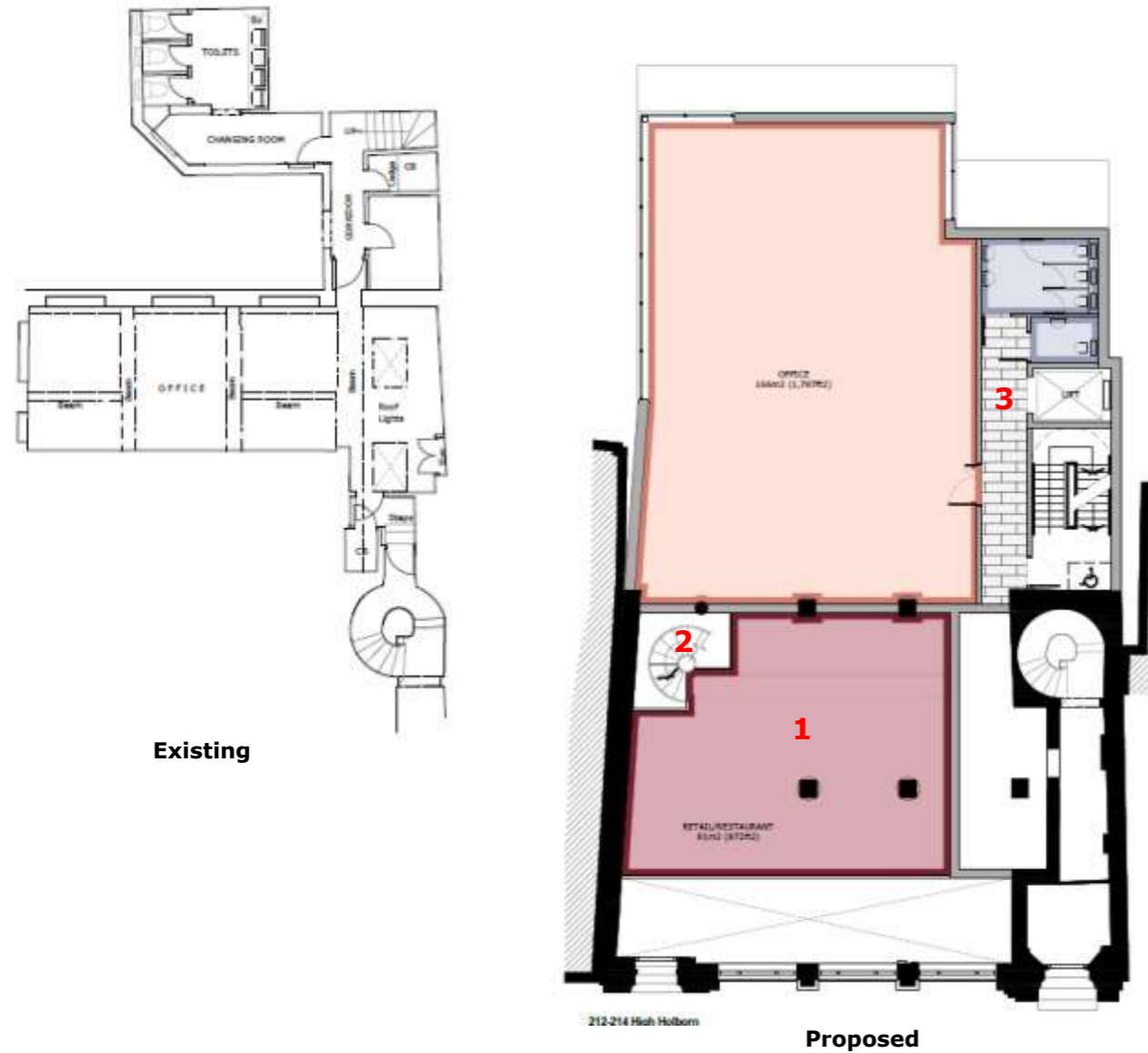
Ground Floor



Figure 23: Existing ground floor (left) and proposed ground floor (right).

Work Proposed	Effect	Impact
1	Removal of existing partitioning and creation of side and rear partitions to separate front and rear of ground floor.	Alteration to plan form and of subdivision of ground floor. Neutral Impact - the existing ground floor plan form is a modern arrangement that has been altered throughout the 20th century, as such there is no risk of removing historic fabric. The proposals will result in a more defined division between front and rear, though the front half of the ground floor will have a more open plan arrangement than that which currently exists
2	Insertion of spiral staircase to south-east corner of proposed retail/restaurant area.	Insertion of new fabric and alterations to circulation. Neutral Impact - Alteration occurring within an already heavily altered area of the building that has lost most elements of interest. The proposal will therefore preserve the significance of the listed building.
3	Creation of lobby area, toilet block, meeting rooms and new lift and stairwell.	Minor changes to plan form and fabric. Neutral Impact - altered plan form and arrangement that will be inserted into an already altered area of the ground floor. The high quality materials and finishes will ensure that the significance of the listed building is preserved.
4	Creation of opening in wall between entrance lobby and existing office space and infilling of existing opening.	Minor change to plan form and circulation. Neutral Impact - The wall between the lobby and ground floor is shown to be a 20th century alteration (shown in Figure 9) and has been breached in the past. The proposed changes to this wall will result in a neutral change that will preserve the significance of the listed building.

Ground Floor Mezzanine



First Floor



Figure 24: Existing mezzanine (left) and proposed mezzanine (right).

Figure 25: Existing first floor (left), proposed first floor (right).

Work Proposed	Effect	Impact
1 Extending existing mezzanine floor.	Alteration to plan form and proportions	Minor Negative Impact - This element of the proposals will be occurring within an already altered area of the listed building, the existing mezzanine being a 20th century alteration. The extension of the mezzanine floor will reduce the proportions of the ground floor, though as the ground floor has been substantially altered and its heritage value diminished, the perceived harm in this instance will be outweighed by positive impacts throughout the building.
2 Insertion of spiral staircase to south-east corner of proposed retail/restaurant area.	Change of circulation and insertion of modern fabric	Neutral Impact - Alteration occurring within an already heavily altered area of the building that has lost most elements of interest. The proposal will therefore preserve the significance of the listed building.
3 Removal of existing office space and toilet block and creation of new office space, toilet block and lift lobby.	Alteration to plan form	Neutral Impact - Alterations to be carried out within an already altered area of the basement, therefore preserving significance.

Work Proposed	Effect	Impact
1 Removal of existing lift and toilet block	Alteration to plan form and removal of modern fabric	Positive Impact - The first floor will remain relatively unchanged save for the removal of modern fabric that forms the unsympathetic toilet and lift block. This element of the proposals will result in a return to a plan form that better respects the original arrangement and will enhance the architectural interest and significance of the building.
2 Creation of access to proposed rear extension made via widening breach in rear elevation.	Small loss of fabric.	Neutral Impact - In order to access the rear extension from the first floor the existing opening (that leads to the existing extension's roof) will be widened. There will be a small loss of historic fabric though as the wall has already been breached

Second Floor

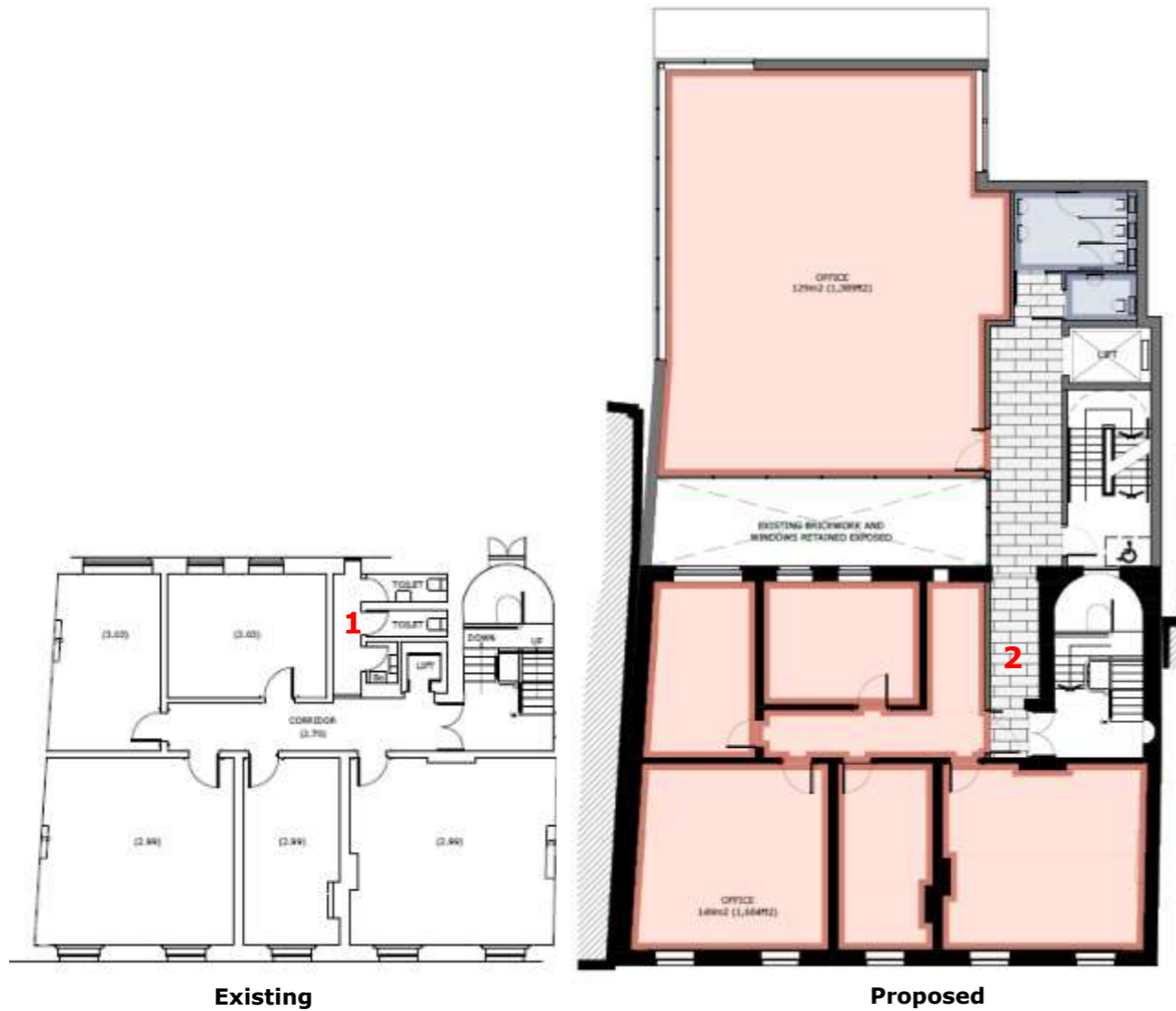


Figure 26: Existing second floor (left) and proposed second floor (right).

Third Floor

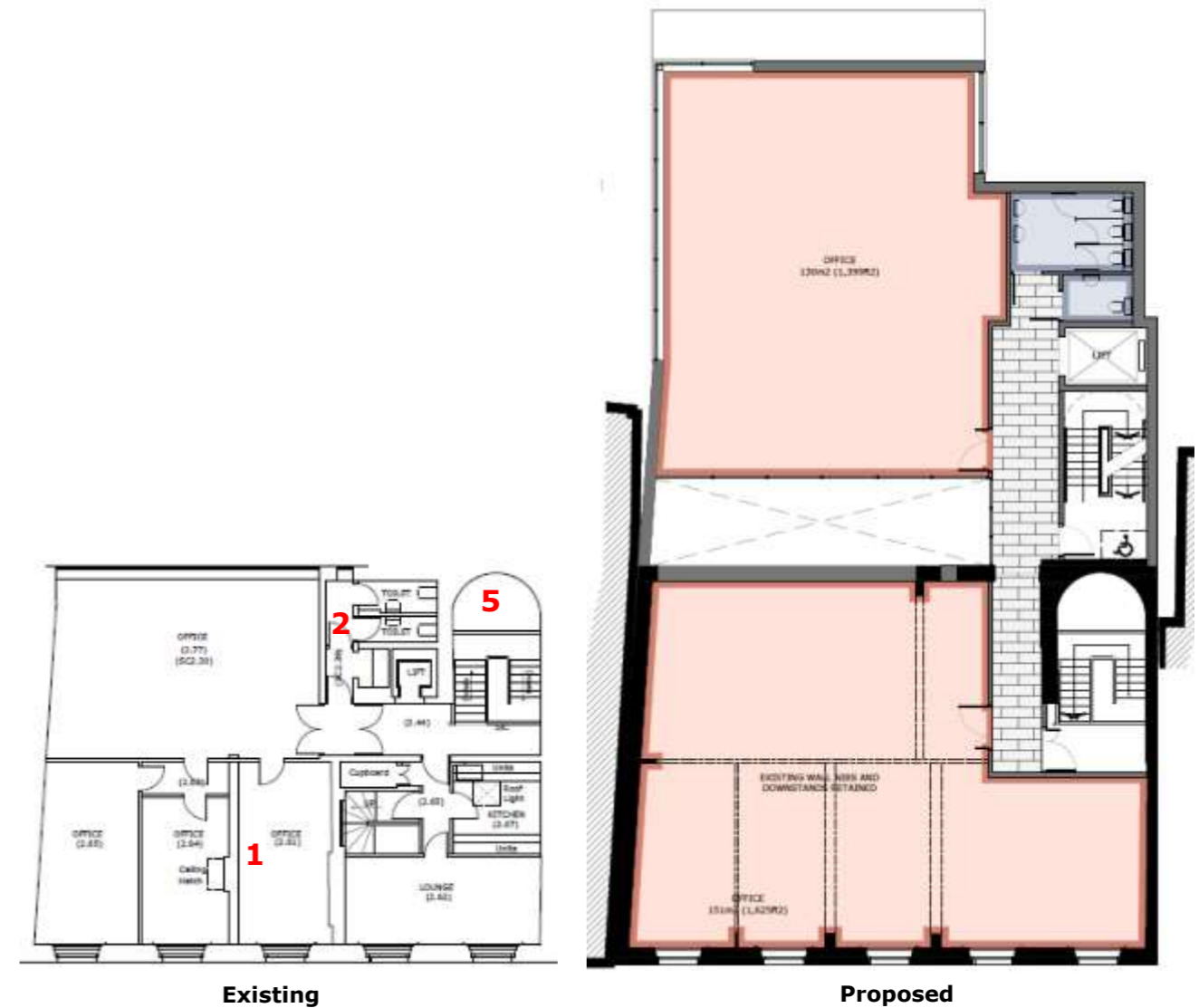


Figure 27: Existing third floor (left) and proposed third floor (right).

Work Proposed	Effect	Impact
1 Removal of existing lift and toilet block.	Removal of modern fabric	Positive Impact - The second floor will remain relatively unchanged save for the removal of modern fabric that forms the unsympathetic toilet and lift block. This element of the proposals will result in a return to a plan form that better respects the original arrangement and will enhance the architectural interest and significance of the building.
2 Creation of access to proposed rear extension (breach in rear wall and new plan form parallel to stairwell).	Localised change to plan form and small loss of historic fabric.	Neutral Impact - Access to the proposed rear extension at second floor level will be made via a new 'lobby' area adjacent to the stairwell and a breach in the rear elevation. As the proposed 'lobby' area will be within the former lift/WC block, there will be no loss of original plan form or fabric and the significance of the building will be preserved. The rear elevation at this height has been subject to a number of modern changes and holds little interest other than in forming part of the original structure. The proposed changes will therefore result in a small loss of fabric, though the significance of the building will be preserved.

Work Proposed	Effect	Impact
1 Removal of partitioning and elements associated with the existing apartment.	Alteration to plan form and removal of some historic fabric	Neutral - The third floor has been heavily altered with unsympathetic additions and subdivisions. The Wall nibs and downstands in the original areas of the second floor to denoted original plan form.
2 Removal of existing lift and toilet block.	Removal of modern fabric	Positive Impact - Removal of modern, unsympathetic elements and a return to a more authentic plan form will enhance the heritage value of the listed building at third floor level.
3 Creation of access to proposed rear extension (breach in rear wall and new plan form parallel to stairwell).	Localised change to plan form.	Neutral Impact - Access to the proposed rear extension at second floor level will be made via a new 'lobby' area adjacent to the stairwell and a breach in the rear elevation. As the proposed 'lobby' area will be within the former lift/WC block, there will be no loss of original plan form or fabric and the significance of the building will be preserved. The rear elevation at this height has been subject to a number of modern changes and holds little interest other than in forming part of the original structure. The proposed changes will therefore result in a small loss of fabric, though the significance of the building will be preserved.

4	Removal of rear elevation at third floor level.	Removal of modern fabric.	Positive Impact - The rear elevation at third floor level is a unattractive, modern addition. Its removal will enhance the significance of the building.
5	Removal of modern skylight above stairwell.	Removal of modern fabric.	Positive Impact - The removal of the unsympathetic skylight will enhance the appearance of interior at third floor level.

Fourth/Fifth Floor

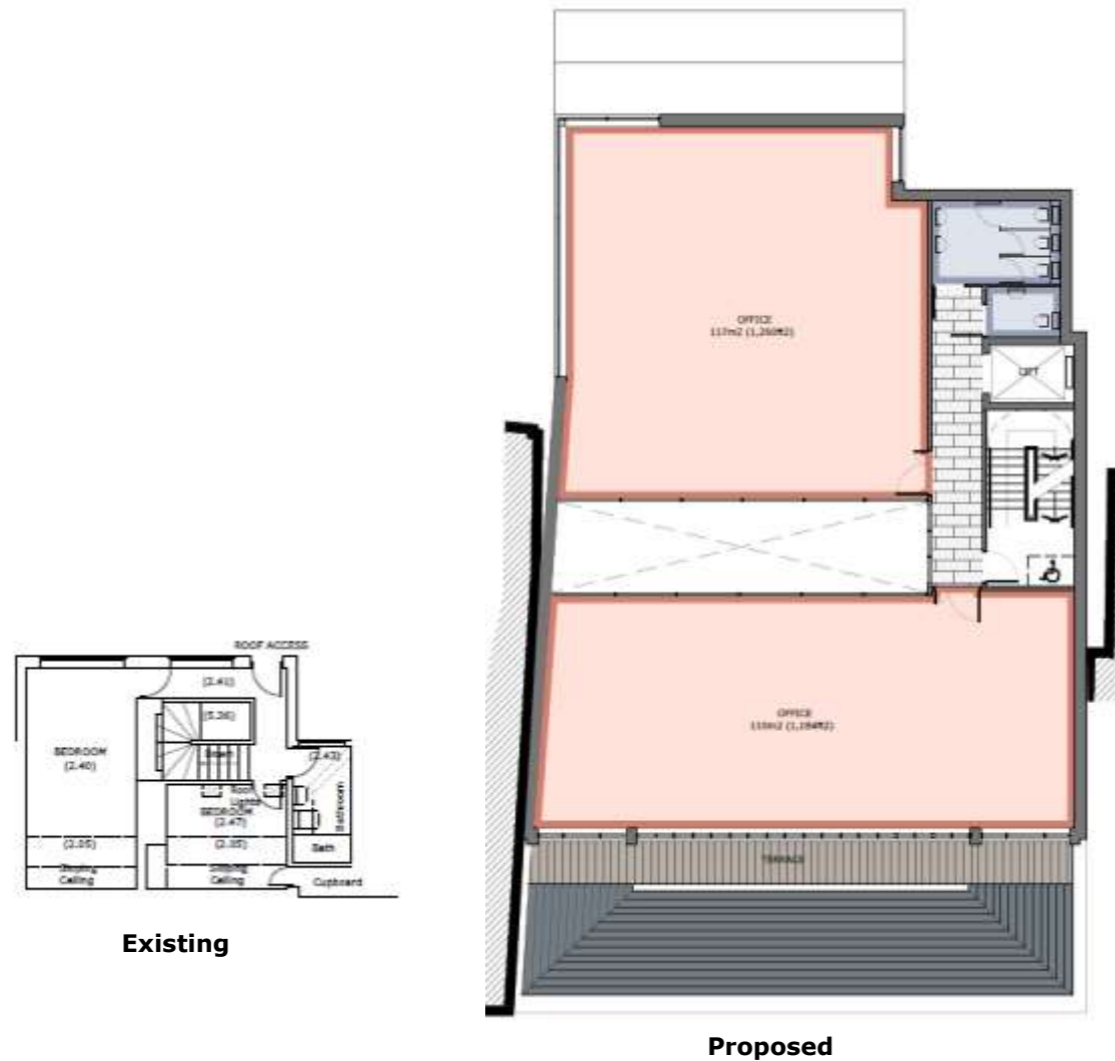


Figure 28: Existing fourth/fifth floor (left) and proposed fourth/fifth floor (right).

Work Proposed	Effect	Impact	
1	Removal of modern roof extensions that currently houses residential accommodation.	Removal of modern fabric and alteration to roof.	Positive - The removal of the low quality, unsympathetic roof extension and its replacement with a high quality scheme will enhance the listed building’s heritage values. The front pitch of the roof has remained in good condition and is an integral feature of the façade. As such it will be retained in its current

Effects on the Character and Appearance of Conservation Area

- 79. The addition of a rear and roof extension will result in a visual change within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The extension will replace the existing structures to the rear and part of the existing roof, much of which has been unsympathetically altered and will be carried out in a style that is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 80. In order to preserve and enhance the contribution Nos. 212 - 214 High Holborn makes to the conservation area, the proposals have taken account of the local townscape. Sensitive views looking south towards the application site from Southampton Place have the backdrop of the large building at Nos. 15 - 19 Newton Street (Figure 20). This provides a taller context and one that is more able to absorb change without effecting the significance of the conservation area. This will therefore allow the proposed extension to comfortably transition into the existing built environment, leaving the front elevation and roof legible, preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area and sensitive views within the local townscape.
- 81. The neighbouring structures to No. 212 - 214 on High Holborn also provide a taller context. The proposed extension’s height will remain below these structures and will be subservient within the townscape. Setting the extension well back from the front elevation, behind the existing ridge, will allow it to read more as part of the modern development to the rear than as part of the listed building and its front elevation and roof, preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area and the contribution that No. 212 - 214 makes to it.



Figure 29: View towards the roof of No. 212 - 214 High Holborn, seen from Southampton Place. Nos. 15 -19 Newton Street highlighted in red.

- 82. Other than in views south down Southampton Road, the proposed extension will only be visible when viewed in close proximity along High Holborn. This is due to it being obscured by neighbouring structures when viewed from further west or east along High Holborn, and that the curve of the road means no long range views of the roof or extension can be made from High Holborn.

Summary of the Proposed Works

83. The majority of the proposals detailed previously will result in a positive change to the significance of the building though some parts, in order to accommodate expected modern working standards, will be negatively affected. However, what perceived harm there is to localised parts of the building will be outweighed by numerous benefits. Proposals that have potential to negatively impact on the building's significance have been carefully considered - areas of the building already affected by previous alterations and therefore more able to absorb change will accommodate these elements of the scheme.
84. Positive aspects of the proposals include -
- Refurbishment of the highly significant front elevation, including the front pitch of the roof and chimneys;
 - Retention and restoration of principal spiral staircase and infilling of unsympathetic opening to reinstate architectural interest of one of the integral features of the listed building;
 - Retention of grand proportions and detailing of the first floor;
 - Retention of window openings on rear elevation at first and second floor levels so that original arrangement of fenestration remains legible and significance is preserved;
 - Removal of unsympathetic lift and toilets block installations on first and second floors;
 - Removal of ATMs to front elevation and reinstatement of original appearance;
 - Reinstatement of a viable use that will ensure the maintenance and care of the building in the future.

Policy Compliance

85. This statement is considered to have provided the decision-makers with a proportionate level of assessment of the assets affected, in accordance with paragraph 128 of the NPPF. It is demonstrated that the proposals will enhance the significance of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
86. It is demonstrated that the proposals will result in minimal harm to the architectural or historic interest of the listed building. What harm is caused will be less than substantial and in accordance with Paragraph 134 of the NPPF, that harm is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme - delivering much needed office space and securing a long term viable use for the currently vacant floors of the building.
87. With regard to Camden's local policies, the proposals accord with the Core Strategy: Policy CS14 insofar as they will be completed to a very high standard, using high quality materials and respect the local context and character. Policy DP25 of Camden's development policies is also of relevance and proposals accord with this policy insofar as they: i) do not result in any harm to the setting of heritage assets; and, ii) ensure that the special interest of the listed building is not harm.
88. It is considered that the proposed changes which be beneficial to No. 212 - 214 High Holborn and result in a positive change which helps to better reveal the property's significance. The existing quality and finish of much of the interior is of a poor standard and of no particular heritage value today. The proposals will preserve those areas of the building that contribute to its heritage value and

will also preserve the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The alterations at roof level will only be apparent in select views with the locality and where they are visible, steps have taken to ensure that the extension blends into and sits comfortably within its context and is not overbearing on the host building.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

89. This report has undertaken an assessment of the significance of the site at No. 212 - 214 High Holborn and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This has been followed by an appraisal of the effects of the proposals on the significance of the heritage assets, with consideration given to local and national policy and guidance.
90. No. 212 - 214 is grade II listed bank that dates to the 1850s. The building has undergone substantial alterations in places but also retains its original plan form and decorative fabric in others. The immediate context of the building has also undergone substantial redevelopment in recent years, with modern neighbouring structures having an overbearing impact on the application site. The basement and ground floors are still in use as a bank though the first, second, third and fourth floors are currently vacant. Alterations in some of these areas, particularly on the third and fourth floors and at roof level, have harmed the significance of both the listed building and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
91. The proposed development will allow for a viable re-use of the building and will bring about positive changes that preserve the significance of the building overall, alongside the benefit that continued use of a building brings. Areas where the original plan form and decorative fabric survive will either be left as they are, or where alterations are proposed, elements such as wall nibs and downstands will be retained so as to leave the former arrangement legible. The rear extension has been designed to blend into the existing built environment and whilst forming a new, high quality addition to the listed building, will preserve the appearance of the front elevation and its contribution to the local townscape and character and appearance of the conservation area.
92. The proposals have been assessed against the policy and guidance set out within the NPPF, Camden's Local Development Framework and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal document. This assessment concludes that the proposals accord with the policy and guidance and offer sympathetic and informed changes that will improve the listed building and conservation area.

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