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**Nos 43-48 Great Russell Street**

**List Entry Summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: Nos 43-48 Great Russell Street

List entry Number: 1130381

**Location**

Nos 43-48 Great Russell Street

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

District Type: London Borough

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 09-Dec-1977

Date of most recent amendment: 13-Oct-2017

**Legacy System Information**

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 477851

**Asset Groupings**

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

**List entry Description**

**Summary of Building**

Nos 43-48 Great Russell Street, a row of six houses with shops at ground-floor level. Nos 44-47 are thought to date from about 1720; the outer buildings were constructed circa 1855-1864 by William Finch Hill, probably with E L Paraire, at which time Nos 44-47 were refronted.

**Reasons for Designation**

Nos 43-48 Great Russell Street, a row of six houses with shops at ground-floor level dating from about 1720 (Nos 44-47), with mid-C19 refronting and outer buildings (Nos 43 and 48) by William Finch Hill, probably with E L Paraire, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

\* As an early-C18 terrace, refronted in the mid-C19 with the addition of two end pavilions, showing lively French Renaissance influence; \* For the survival of significant early-C18 internal fabric and features.

Historic interest:

\* As a historically layered group, illustrative of the development of this part of Bloomsbury.

Group value:

\* As part of W Finch Hill's 1855-1864 project immediately to the east of the British Museum, with the Museum Tavern, Nos 37, 38 and 39 Museum Street, Nos 40-41 Museum Street, Nos 42-47 Museum Street (a refronting of a row dating to about 1700), and The Plough (No 27 Museum Street) all being listed at Grade II; the British Museum is listed at Grade I.

**History**

Great Russell Street was first laid out as an important residential street in the second half of the C17; Nos 74-77, built in the 1660s, survive behind later stucco frontages. In 1720 the street was referred to by John Strype in his 'Survey of London' as ‘a handsome, large and well built street’. Fabric within Nos 44-47 Great Russell Street suggests that these houses may have been in place at that time. The houses were refronted at some time between 1857 and 1864, at which time the end pavilions, Nos 43 and 48, with shop fronts, were added. The architect was William Finch Hill, who also rebuilt the Museum Tavern, in 1855; in Museum Street Finch Hill rebuilt Nos 37-41 in 1861 (this row includes the Plough Inn) and Nos 27-34 in 1863-4. At Nos 42-47 Museum Street houses of circa 1700 were re-fronted.

Finch Hill was best known for designing music halls; these included Weston’s Music Hall, Holborn (1857), The Britannia, Hoxton (1858) and the Royal Cambridge, Shoreditch (1864) all of which have now been demolished. In partnership with Edward Lewis Paraire from 1856-1870, Finch Hill also built a number of public houses, including the Hat and Feathers in Clerkenwell and The Crown in Monmouth Street, Covent Garden, both listed at Grade II. Paraire was probably also involved in this Bloomsbury scheme. Both Finch Hill and Paraire were well-versed in French Renaissance architecture; this is apparent in the design of the Museum Tavern and the rest of the Great Russell Street and Museum Street development, which is of largely uniform design, the buildings sharing distinctive features including the decorative rope-band surrounding the first-floor windows, and the oculus motif above. The frontages of Nos 44-47 Great Russell Street are plainer, reflecting the fact that they respect the configuration of the earlier buildings behind.

A Greater London Council blue plaque at No 46 commemorates the residence in the 1870s of the artist and illustrator Randolph Caldecott (1846-86).

The ground-floor premises are all now in commercial use, with residential and office space above.

**Details**

Six terraced houses with shops at ground-floor level. Nos 44-47 are thought to date from about 1720; the outer buildings were constructed about 1855-1864 by William Finch Hill, probably with E L Paraire, at which time Nos 44-47 were refronted.

MATERIALS: stuccoed brick. The single-pane sash windows at first-floor level and above are C20.

PLAN: Nos 43-48 are on the south side of Great Russell Street. Nos 44-47 form a row of uniform width, with rear closet wings now linked with former service areas to the rear, which are much altered. Nos 43 and 48 form corner pavilions: No 43 has a rectangular plan extending southwards along Coptic Street; No 48, which has a wider frontage on Great Russell Street, has a rectangular plan on a west/east axis.

EXTERIOR: the overall style of the corner buildings is modified French Renaissance; the treatment of the central terrace shows a more sober Italianate influence. Each building is three windows wide to Great Russell Street, No 43 having a seven-window return to Coptic Street, and No 48 having a splayed one-window corner and a single-window return to Museum Street. The buildings are of four storeys, with the corner pavilions being slightly higher; the storeys of the terrace and pavilions are not aligned.

In Nos 44-47, the rusticated ground-floor has square-headed openings with keystones; the doorways have plain rectangular fanlights, and C20 doors. The windows are recessed, without architraves. At first-floor level is a cornice; above, the first and second floor windows are separated by rusticated pilaster strips, with wider strips between the houses. The first-floor window architraves have console-bracketed pediments and fielded aprons; on the second floor the windows have fielded panels above, and on the third-floor have cornice heads with fielded panels between the windows. There is a dentil cornice, with lion masks marking the junctions between the houses, surmounted by a balustraded parapet.

No 43 has rusticated pilaster strips to the angles; at first-floor level and above these are vermicilated. On the Great Russell Street elevation, the shop front has an arcaded treatment with fluted pilasters, the centre arch being the window with decorative a wrought-iron grille to the riser, the left-hand arch forming a fanlight to the part-glazed house door and the right-hand arch a fanlight to the shop entrance; which is protected by an elaborately decorative wrought-iron grille. In the spandrels are roundels with stained glass. On the Coptic Street elevation the ground-floor is entirely rusticated. The round-arched openings have faceted keystones; there is a single doorway, with a second apparently converted to a window. At first-floor level is a mutule cornice. Above, the rusticated pilaster strips are vermicilated. The round-arched first-floor windows have architraves enriched with a decorative rope-moulding with anthemion to the base; above are blind oculi with husk swags. At second-floor level the windows have segmental heads, a cill linking the architraves. Above a bracketed cornice the attic windows have architraves with anthemion to the keys. In No 48, the Great Russell Street elevation has an arcaded treatment, with a central doorway flanked by windows. There is vermicilated rustication to the wide piers and voussoirs, and the keystones have masks. The corner has another, square-headed, entrance, flanked by pilasters above which are plaques with dolphins and anchors in relief; a third pilaster marks the end of the building on Museum Street. On Museum Street, a more recent shopfront has been inserted between the pilasters. Above ground-floor level, the building follows the same pattern as No 43, though with pilaster strips of vermicilated rustication between the windows. There is plain rustication to the corner, with vermicilated keystones.

INTERIOR: of the earlier houses (Nos 44-47) the interiors of Nos 45-47 only were inspected. These make it clear that the houses behind the frontages date from the early C18, and probably around 1720. Each house is entered to the west, with a dog-leg stair to the south-west and two rooms to each floor, and closets to the rear. Of the houses inspected, survival is best within No 46, which retains a number of historic features. The stair remains intact above the ground-floor, with an open string to the landing above first-floor level, and a closed string above that. The lower part of the stair has moulded brackets; the balusters have a twisted element above the base, but the column above is plain rather than twisted, as would be the case in the more usual configuration. Above first-floor level the turned balusters are vase-shaped. There is full-height recessed panelling to the stair, and to the first-floor. The neo-classical window architraves to the first-floor front room belong to the C19 re-fronting. The panelling, shelving and chimneypiece in the ground-floor shop are understood to be C20. Six and four-panelled doors found within the house are probably later-C18 or early-C19. The house contains a number of C19 fireplaces, with a cast-iron range in the cellar. No 45 has the same stair as No 46, and some panelling remaining to the stair and second-floor areas. The ground-floor shop does not retain historic features. No 47 has received very extensive restoration, including the restoration or replacement of much of the stair, on the original model. Some original panelling is thought to remain to the upper stair and first-floor. The houses have C19 roofs, though reached by C18 stair compartments, that to the converted roof space of No 45 being a replacement.

The later, corner buildings (Nos 43 and 48) were not inspected internally, other than the ground-floor shop of No 48, which does not retain significant historic features.

**Selected Sources**

Books and journals
Cherry, B, Pevsner, N, The Buildings of England: London 4, North, (1998 revised 2001), 322-3

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**Map**

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