MATTHEWS & SON LLP

Chartered Surveyors

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

for

Internal alterations and refurbishment from basement to third floor levels inclusive External alterations to front basement well area Installation of comfort cooling, with plant in below pavement vault at basement level

at

87 GOWER STREET LONDON WC1E 6AF

In support of applications for planning permission listed building consent

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1. Introduction

This design and access statement has been prepared by Matthews & Son LLP on behalf of the Institute of Measurement and Control, who are the freehold owners and occupiers of 87 Gower Street.

The design and access statement has been prepared to accompany applications for planning permission and listed building consent for various works at 87 Gower Street;

- internal alterations and refurbishment
- alterations to the front basement light well
- installation of comfort cooling with external plant

87 Gower Street provides office accommodation over basement, ground and three upper floors. The building has a net lettable area of approximately 250 m² (2,690 square feet) and a gross area of approximately 361 m² (3,890 square feet). The scheme does not involve any extension to the gross area.

The purpose of this design and access statement is to outline the design principles for the proposed works in the context of the architectural and historical significance of the property, whilst demonstrating that areas of historical importance will be preserved and enhanced.

The design and access statement has been prepared following expert input from Historic Building Advisory Service who have prepared a heritage report, and the submission of a pre-planning application to the London Borough of Camden. The proposals submitted seek to comply with advice received from both bodies.

2. Description

87 Gower Street lies at the end of a terrace of similar properties, on the west side of Gower Street at the junction with Torrington Place, within Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The building is grade II listed, and was first listed on 28 March 1969. The listing entry refers to a terrace of six houses (87 to 97) dating from circa 1789, with darkened stock brick elevations and with slate mansard roofs and dormers.

Internally, walls and ceilings are plastered and decorated extensively with painted woodchip lining paper. Cornices are fitted to parts of the ground, first and second floor levels, with plaster ceiling roses in the front rooms on the ground and first floors. There are ornate fireplaces with marble surrounds in the front and rear rooms fitted on the ground and first floors.

Joinery is of painted timber - the majority of internal doors are flush faced modern doors of half hour fire resisting construction. Windows are mainly double hung sliding sash style - secondary glazing is fitted internally to all the windows at the rear (except the 2nd floor), and to the front in the basement and on the 3rd floor.

Mosaic tiles are laid on the floor in the entrance hall. Other floors are covered with carpets in the office areas, with vinyl sheeting in the toilets and kitchen.

Lighting is of mixed age and specification, largely having fluorescent strip lamps. There is a heating system with a gas powered boiler serving radiators which are predominantly below window cills.

Service installations extend to smoke detection and fire alarm systems, access control and intruder alarm, telephony and IT.

The property is in fair condition internally, with some localised disrepair that requires attention. Much of the interior requires redecorating. Period features that remain require some restoration. The current layouts do not suit the changing needs of the Institute of Measurement and Control. The building and its service installations require upgrading to modern standards.

3. Planning history

Relevant planning history from London Borough of Camden, and relevant policies and guidance, is set out in the advice issued in response to a pre- planning application enquiry. This comprises;

> TP 82981/26778 – The use for a limited period of land at the rear of No 87 Gower Street, St Pancras, for the parking of cars, and the formation of a new crossover to Chenies Mews – **Granted - 08/04/1961**
>
> TP 92981/22305 – The erection of a garage and store building at the rear of No 87 Gower Street, St Pancras, and the formation of a new access top Torrington Place, St Pancras – **Granted – 08/05/1959**
>
> 3261 – 1. The change of use of the two upper floors at 87 Gower Street, Camden, from offices to residential use. 2. The change of use of the ground and first floors of 89 Gower Street, Camden, from residential to office use – **Granted – 15/06/1967**
>
> 24972 – Land at the rear of 87 Gower Street, WC1 – Continued use for car parking purposes – **Granted – 05/12/1980.**

The pre-application planning submission was issued in April 2017, and a response received from London Borough of Camden in November 2017. A copy of the response from London Borough of Camden dated 10th November 2017 accompanies the applications.

As a result of the pre-application advice, variations have been made to the scheme prior to this submission. In summary the variations made are set out below, cross referenced to the relevant item numbers contained in the pre-application advice;

Ground floor 6.4 – existing internal lobby arrangement will be retained, and the door between the front and rear rooms will be retained.

Ground floor 6.5 – existing glazed lobby screen will be retained.

Basement 6.7 – the opening to be formed in the lateral wall between the front and rear rooms will be created with nibs to the sides, and downstand to the head.

Basement 6.7 – The enclosure to the stairwell will be retained.

Second – Third floors 6.1 - The opening to be formed in the lateral wall between the front and rear rooms at third floor level will be created with nibs to the sides, and downstand to the head. The lateral wall between the front and rear rooms at second floor level will be retained as existing.

Second – Third floors 6.2 – The door to the rear office from the stairwell will be retained.

External Alterations – Front Lightwell 6.6 – the existing basement door will be retained.

External Alterations – Rear Lightwell 6.8 to 6.10 – the rear glass extension does not form part of this submission.

4. Design statement

4.1 Internal proposals

Internal partitions

Partitions to be removed are mainly lightweight;

- front room in basement
- rear addition on ground floor
- front room on second floor
- front room on the third floor

Alterations to the existing layout also include forming openings in the lateral walls between the front and rear main rooms at;

- third floor level
- basement level

In accordance with the pre-application response from London Borough of Camden, openings will be formed with downstands below the ceilings, and nibs to the sides.

Where it is practical so to do, historic doors and joinery fitted to partitions and lateral walls will be salvaged for re-use.

New timber stud partitions will be constructed at ground, second and third floor levels to provide additional toilet accommodation.

The boiler room in the basement will be converted to office use. Render applied to parts of that room will be extended over bare brickwork to achieve a uniform finish. The existing window that has been boarded over will be restored for re-use.

Internal Doors

Historic doors at the ground floor and basement entrances and exits will be retained. There are a few other internal doors that are panelled and of historic interest that will also be retained.

The majority of internal doors are modern, flush, faced doors that will be replaced with panelled doors of fire resisting standard. Like the existing flush doors, these will have smoke seals, closers, and the like fitted.

Existing door frames, linings and moulded architraves will be retained. Where new doors are to be fitted in new partitions, matching linings and architraves will be used.

Following further consideration, the glass door and screen in the ground floor entrance hall will be retained.

Skirtings, picture rails, dado rails and staircase handrails and balustrading

Existing elements will be retained. Where openings are to be formed in walls, the existing skirtings will carefully be removed and adapted for re-fixing around the openings. New skirtings to new partitions will be of moulded profile, to match adjacent retained skirtings.

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Windows

Existing windows will be repaired, eased and adjusted to leave sashes operating freely. Existing secondary glazing will similarly be repaired, eased and adjusted.

Window shutters are painted shut - these will be freed where it is feasible so to do without damaging historic timberwork.

Service risers

The building has a number of services risers. These will be retained. Where services need to be installed, opening up will carefully be undertaken so as not to disturb skirtings and cornices where these are fitted to the existing risers. If it is necessary to increase the size of the risers, matching cornices and skirtings with bespoke purpose made mouldings to match the existing profiles will be extended at the head and the base respectively.

Heating and Cooling

The existing gas fired boiler, together with all heating pipework and radiators, will be removed throughout the building.

A new electrically powered comfort cooling/heating system will be installed.

Internal units in the offices will be wall mounted at high level in the basement and second and third floors. Internal units in the offices at ground and first floor level will be located below window cills, and housed within purpose-built timber casings.

Distribution pipework will be routed at high level in the basement, second and third floor level, below the ceilings and boxed in to avoid undue disturbance of the building fabric – where cornices are present, bespoke matching cornices will be fixed to the front of the pipework boxing. No mechanical fixings will be made into existing cornices.

Horizontal pipework below floorboards will wherever possible be routed in the existing notches in the floor joists for the redundant heating pipework. Floorboards will be lifted carefully and will be identified so they can be reinstated in their existing positions.

Vertical pipework distribution will be housed within existing riser boxings, increased in size where necessary to accommodate the new services. Where risers need to be increased in size bespoke matching cornices and skirtings will be fitted at the head and base of the boxings.

To minimise visual impact, the external condensers serving the cooling/ heating systems will be housed in the existing below pavement vault to the front of the building. That vault has an open barred gate that will be retained.

Great care will be taken to avoid causing damage to the fabric of the building during the installation of the comfort cooling system. Where pipework has to be routed through walls and ceilings, holes will be carefully drilled and minimised in size.
Electrical panel heaters will be installed to the staircase to replace existing heating radiators and the unsightly pipework thereto, with under tile heating in the toilets.

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Toilets

Toilet accommodation will be upgraded to meet the demands of modern office users. Additional toilets will be provided on the upper floors, with more facilities on the ground floor. The existing very small toilet in the basement will be removed.

Toilets will be finished with fully tiled walls and floor surfaces. New modern sanitaryware will be installed to replace the 20th century fittings. As now, hot water will be provided by local electrical water heaters.

Existing water supply and waste pipework, and soil stacks, will be retained and adapted for reuse.

The existing ventilation extract ductwork serving the upper floor toilets, and the ground floor level toilets, will be retained and re-used to avoid additional penetrations to the exterior fabric of the building.

The corner fire surround and grate in the ground floor male toilet area will be retained in situ.

Kitchen

Where the existing small basement toilet is removed, a modern kitchenette facility will be installed. Existing water supply and waste pipework will be adapted for reuse.

Electrical services

The electrical system is dated and require some upgrade. The existing system will be tested and repaired, with parts replaced when necessary.

To reduce disturbance to the building fabric, socket outlets and light switches will be maintained in their existing positions. New socket outlets and light switches will mainly be fitted into new hollow stud partitioning. Cabling will be routed in existing risers, and chasing of walls will be minimised.

Where access is required to the under floor voids, floor boards will be carefully lifted and will be identified so they can be reinstated in their existing positions.

Light fittings will largely be replaced with new modern light fittings to improve illumination and reduce energy consumption. The intention is to retain and adapt the existing wiring and connection points to avoid intrusions to the building fabric.

A variety of light fittings will be used, as currently exists. Hanging chandeliers and wall mounted light fittings will be fitted, with luminaires suspended from the ceilings in office areas. Dome lights will be using the staircases and lobbies. Lights in the toilets will be wall mounted. Existing emergency light fittings will be retained and reused.

The existing fire alarm and smoke detector systems, access control and intruder alarm, telephony and IT systems, will be altered and adapted to reduce unsightly surface mounted cabling where possible to do whilst minimizing damage to the existing building fabric.

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Fireplaces

Existing fireplaces, surrounds, grates, etc, will all be retained and refurbished.

Floor coverings

Existing carpet coverings in the offices and staircases will be replaced with new carpet. Vinyl sheet coverings in toilets and kitchen will be replaced with new ceramic tiles. The mosaic floor finish in the ground floor entrance hall will be retained.

Decorations

The interior of the building will be redecorated.

Walls and ceilings are largely finished with painted woodchip lining paper. Where it is practical so to do, the woodchip paper will be carefully removed and plasterwork made good prior to repainting to avoid damage to lath and plaster finishes. Where repairs are necessary to solid plaster or lath and plaster, such will be undertaken using traditional materials.

Excessive paint present on cornices and ceiling roses, skirtings and the like, will be carefully removed where it is practical so to do without damaging plaster and timber surfaces behind.

Modern additions in the ground floor entrance hall – mirrors and radiator casing – will be removed. Surface mounted cabling will be tidied to reduce their visual impact. Cupboards that are of historic interest will be retained and redecorated.

4.2 External

External condensers

It will be necessary to install external condensing units to serve the cooling/heating systems in the office areas. The condensers will be located in the below pavement vault to the front of the building so they will not be readily visible. The existing coal holes to the vaults, and the barred gate to the vault housing the condensers, will be retained.

An acoustic report has been prepared which confirms that an acoustic housing will need to be provided to the larger condenser to ensure that noise levels will not exceed the permissible levels set out in London Borough of Camden planning policy. A copy of the report, and details of the acoustic housing, accompanies the application.

Front well area

A timber panelled door set in a panelled surround will be fitted to the front of the basement, at the end of the light well. The historic building impact report confirms that a door and screen was originally fitted in this location. Details of the door design are set out on drawings submitted with the application. Retaining walls around the light well will be repaired and redecorated.

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5. Access

Existing access to the building from both Gower Street and Torrington Place is stepped. Internally, access to the basement and upper floors, and rear of the ground floor, is only available via stairs.

It will not be possible to improve access to the building externally or internally without detrimentally affecting the appearance of the building and damaging the fabric.

Where practical so to do, facilities for non-– fully mobile persons will be incorporated into the scheme. For example, "ambulant" disabled toilets on the ground floor.

6. Landscaping

No changes to the existing landscaping will be made.

7. Historic Building Impact Report

A historic building impact report has been prepared by Historic Building Advisory Service and accompanies the application. In terms of the proposed works referenced in that document please note the following changes that have been made to the scheme;

6.1.2 the existing solid basement door to the front to be retained, not replaced.

6.1.3 the glazed enclosure in the rear basement light well does not form part of this scheme.

6.1.5 the extent of wall removal within the basement is much reduced.

6.1.8 the existing hallway between the front and rear ground floor rooms will be retained.

6.1.10 no opening will be formed between the front and rear rooms at second floor level.

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8. Conclusions

The proposed works will not adversely affect the original fabric of the building.

Removal of lightweight partitions will help return parts of the building to earlier configurations.

Replacing modern doors with panelled doors will be more in keeping with the original architectural features.

Elements of historic interest – doors, skirtings, cornices and ceiling roses, fireplace surrounds - will be retained and restored.

Adding comfort cooling will be undertaken sympathetically. Existing heating pipework routes and risers will be used where possible. External plant is sited to reduce visual impact.

Overall, the proposals are beneficial to the building whilst maintaining elements of historic significance.

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