

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

37 GRAYS INN ROAD LONDON WC1

1. Introduction

- Background
- Proposal

2. Context

- Locality
- Buildings

3. Design

- Usage
- Form and Scale
- Layout
- Materiality
- Landscaping

4. Access

- Entrance & Circulation
- Unit Internal Layouts
- Transport

Image 1 – Aerial view of the site and surrounding area

Google Maps



Imagery ©2019 Google, Map data ©2019 Google 10 m

1. Introduction

Background

The site is on the west side to the northern end of Gray's Inn Road – a main thoroughfare connecting Kings Cross to the City. There are five storeys (including the ground floor and basement) and the site occupies measures approximately 140 sqm gross external area. The property has an historic classically styled front façade. It is bounded in on both longer/party-wall sides and has a staggered rear elevation. The surrounding area is a vast mixture of different sized and styled building types – the building within this application being at the smallest end of the scale. It is neither Listed however is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Proposal

The proposal is to retaining the existing façade and demolish the rear of the existing building thereby allowing for new residential units within the upper floors. At the same time, a new mansard roof will be constructed to become usable space with the addition of 3no. windows similar to the neighbouring properties in the same terrace to the front elevation (39-45 Gray's Inn Road). The front elevation and addition of windows to the rear elevation are to be made, appropriate to the original age and style using traditional design and materials. The opportunity has also been taken to install a new traditional timber shopfront with stall riser. The ground and basement floor active use is to be retained with a new flexible use for Classes A1, A2 and A3 use following internal alterations and adding a roof light for natural light to the rear of the unit.

Further details are to be found in the proceeding document alongside the drawings submitted as part of the application.



Location Plan showing site in red

2. Context

Locality

The area sits between Clerkenwell, Pentonville and St Pancras – the main urban feature being the collection of large railway termini and the various associated amenities that act to pull and polarise the surrounding arteries. Grays Inn Road forms the main north-south route (with smaller side streets made up of low-rise but high density stock) and does not form a destination in itself. The transitory nature of the road is at odds with the static nature of the architecture, which has not attracted a considerable amount of investment. Whilst the small scope of this application does not seek to address any fundamental issues in the locale, it is hoped instead that some simple improvements to clean, repair, redecorate, de-clutter, match and rationalise the smaller properties would contribute to the quality of the area nonetheless.

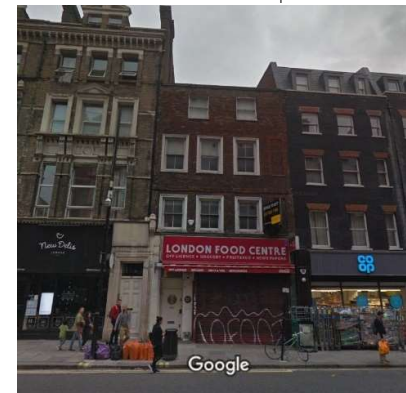
Buildings

Grays Inn Road has some shared materiality with traditional small scale Victorian terraces, a fairly continuous building-pavement line and a tendency for small to medium sized buildings in a traditional style. The application site is pictured on the right. Please refer to the submitted Heritage Report for further information relating to the building.



Above: Street views looking north then south respectively.

Below: Front elevation photo.



Floor	Existing (GIA)	Proposed (GIA)	Change (GIA)
Basement	73sqm	78.5sqm	-73sqm Commercial +78.5sqm Flexi Use =+5.5sqm total
Ground	122.8sqm	118sqm	-80sqm Commercial -42.8 Retail +118 Flexi Use =-4.8sqm total
First	49.9sqm	76.2sqm	-49.9sqm office +76.2sqm resi =+26.3sqm total
Second	50sqm	65sqm	-50sqm office +65sqm resi =+15sqm total
Third	50sqm	66.9sqm	-50sqm office +66.9sqm resi =+16.9sqm total
Fourth	0sqm	55.2sqm	+55.2sqm resi =+55.2sqm total
Staircase and Lift		75sqm	
TOTAL	335.7sqm	533sqm	-149.9sqm office -153sqm Commercial -40sqm retail +196.5sqm flexi use +263.3sqm resi +123.7sqm total

3. Design

Usage

The existing building is made up of commercial floor space throughout. The proposed scheme contains a commercial unit (Class A1, A2, A3) at ground floor and basement and residential (Class C3) on the upper floors - a two bedroom at first floor, a two bedroom three person flat at second and third floors and one bed room flat at fourth. The resulting changes in floor areas from this and the roof and rear extensions/lightwells are outlined in the adjoining table.

Form and Scale

The design of the new flats has been considered against the footprint of the current property, other than a small extension to the rear. The limited floor areas have further dictated the size and layout of the proposed units.

Whilst the front elevation remains significantly unaltered, a new mansard will be constructed to accommodate a new one bedroom flat. The proposed mansard will be of traditional form / construction to match those which exist already next door at 39-45 Gray's Inn Road. The modern metal shopfront will be replaced with a traditional timber shopfront and include the use of stall risers and a transom which is more in keeping with the property and surrounding buildings. Each of the new windows on the upper floors has been designed in scale and proportion to the rest of the façade. Other than this there are no changes to the form of the frontage.

In terms of overall height and massing, the proposals follow and respect the scale of the surrounding buildings, which are for the most part of a slightly larger scale and height. The proposal will therefore remain subservient.

Layout

Internally the scheme consists of one flexible commercial (Classes A1, A2, A3) unit at ground floor and basement; a two bedroom at first floor, a two bedroom three person flat at second and third floors and one bed room flat at fourth. These have been designed to meet the accommodation sizes in accordance with Policy 3.8 of the London Plan. They are largely open-plan, with simple easily navigable layouts. Generous kitchen and storage spaces have been indicated such that the main rooms are freed up for practical use. Openable windows have also been incorporated at the rear, to provide plenty of natural light and fresh air. The units will also be provided with mechanical ventilation to provide fresh air without the need for opening windows on the front elevation, having consideration for the potential pollutant pair particles fronting Gray's Inn Road.

Materiality

The scheme is expressed in a traditional palette of materials, reflecting those that already exist nearby. This includes brickwork, rendered masonry walls, sash windows, pitched slate roofs. This will ensure that there is a strong link to the established built environment, both of the existing building and within the surrounding conservation area. The resulting scheme aims to be of a high quality, with robust traditional details to help preserves and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Further details of the specification/materiality of particular elements are shown opposite.

Proposed Front Elevation



Rear Elevation

The rear has some more noticeable alterations to facilitate the scheme. The existing oddly formed pitched roof has been replaced with a more traditional mansard in keeping with the rest of the property. This too has new dormer windows. The first floor has been extended out, and the upper floors extended to match the adjoining built elevation / property line and allows for improved internal residential layouts. To the rear of the ground floor, a small roof light has been provided to replace the existing lantern light. The new roof light will provide natural light to the rear of the proposed retail unit.



Brickwork

Where possible the existing bricks will be reused to rebuild the rear. If additional bricks are required these will be reclaimed to match as existing.



Roof Tiles

Natural slates to be provide to the new dormer with traditional coping stones to the parapet.



Doors and Windows

Timber framed sash windows to match the front and and rear.

4. Access

Entrance and Circulation

The approach from the pavement is the same in both the existing and proposed schemes, except the replacement of the new shop front with a more traditional appearance.

The approach to the ground floor entrance will be well lit so that occupants and visitors feel secure and are able to see and negotiate entry easily. The lighting shall be on a timer and/or motion sensor and an entry phone system will ensure secure access.

The new shopfront door is 1000mm wide and the residential door is 800mm wide. There is a staircase beyond these with a new lift for the upper residential parts providing future residential with level access and complying with Part M of the building regulations.

Internal Layouts

The new flats have simple layouts allowing clear movement between rooms. This includes 800mm wide door openings throughout, open plan living/kitchen, bathrooms and en-suites directly adjacent to bedrooms and large easy to operate windows. Corridors are a minimum of 1000mm wide and rooms have manoeuvring space to allow for wheelchair turning circles.

New internal construction in demountable studwork partitions is to be of a type that can be altered relatively easily, should new openings be required. Furthermore, within the bathrooms, the partitions will be lined with an additional ply sheets to allow for the fixing of handles/grab rails should this provision become necessary in the future. The proposal would therefore assist in creating 'wheelchair adaptable' units.

Other fixtures and fittings such as electrical switches and sockets will be installed at heights recommended within the Approved Documents, between 450 and 1200mm above the finished floor level.

Transport

The application site is very well connected, by public transport specifically.

There are bus stops within about 25m in either direction with a number of regular routes providing transportation to local areas and further connections.

Chancery Lane tube is approximately 250m to the west, with lines in several directions.

The nearest TFL bicycle docking station is about 25m North and there are existing racks around the same distance away.