

Listed Building Consent – Historic Background information



Newman House, 111 Gower Street, London, WC1E 6AR

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

1. In order to fully understand the development of the building archival research was carried out, including sourcing material from Camden Local Studies and consulting the planning history of the property. A site visit informed advice provided to the design team regarding the proposed works and a visual inspection confirmed the building has been altered through successive phases of internal and external works.
2. The history of the wider area is described in some detail within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Camden Council, 2011) and is not repeated here but a brief history of Gower Street is provided.

Descriptions of the Building

3. Newman House forms part of a terrace and the listing description is set out below;

"Terrace of 6 houses, the Catholic Chaplaincy No.111 incorporates Nos 107-113 (odd). c1790, altered. Nos 99-103: darkened stock brick with slate mansard roofs and dormers. 3 storeys, attics and basements, No.103, 4 storeys. Round-arched doorways with flanking Doric columns carrying entablature heads; fanlights and panelled doors. Ground floor with shallow arcaded recesses linked by impost bands. No.101 with elliptical arch. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows. 1st floor sill bands. Parapets. No.105: refaced later C19. Darkened brick with stucco ground floor and dressings. Slate mansard roof with pedimented dormers. 3 storeys, attic and basement. 3 windows. Square-headed, recessed doorway. Recessed sash windows with pediments to 1st floor and centre window 2nd floor. Flanking 2nd floor windows with moulded stucco panels above. Bracketed cornice with balustraded parapet over and stucco panel below. Nos 107-113: stucco with rusticated ground floors. Slate mansard roofs with dormers. 3 storeys, attics and basements. 3 windows to each former house. Square-headed, entrances to No.107. Nos 109 and 113 blocked. No.111, round-arched doorway with panelled pilaster-jamb, cornice-head, fanlight and panelled door. Plain 1st floor sill band. Square-headed, recessed sash windows. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas; No.101 with wrought-iron lampstandard. (Survey of London: Vol. XXI, Tottenham Court Road and Neighbourhood, St Pancras III: London: -1949: 80)."

4. In addition it is described in the Survey Of London 1949;

*'The houses are of the same size as those to the south, each of the upper storeys being three windows wide. There are, however, variations in their elevations. On the west side Nos. 99, 101 and 103, have an arcaded front to the ground floor, with three arches each. Their doorways are flanked by small Doric columns which are oval on plan. No. 105 has been rebuilt or re-faced. Nos. 107, 109, 111 and 113 have all been rendered in cement and otherwise altered, the doorways to the first and last being bricked up. The other entrances have small panelled pilasters to the doorcases. No. 115 retains its brick front and has balconies to the three first-floor windows and No. 101 its tall lamp standard.'*³

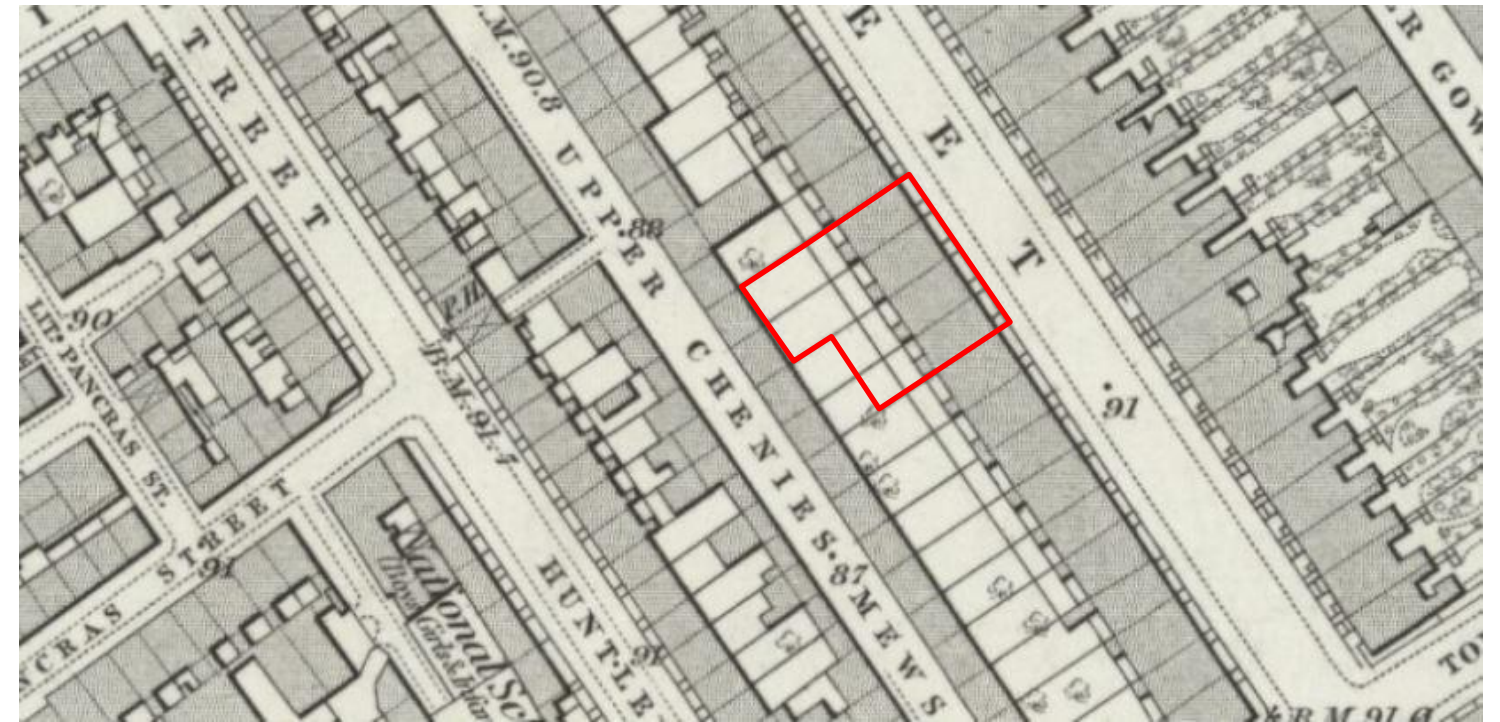


Figure 5: 1870 OS Map



Figure 6: 1895 OS Map

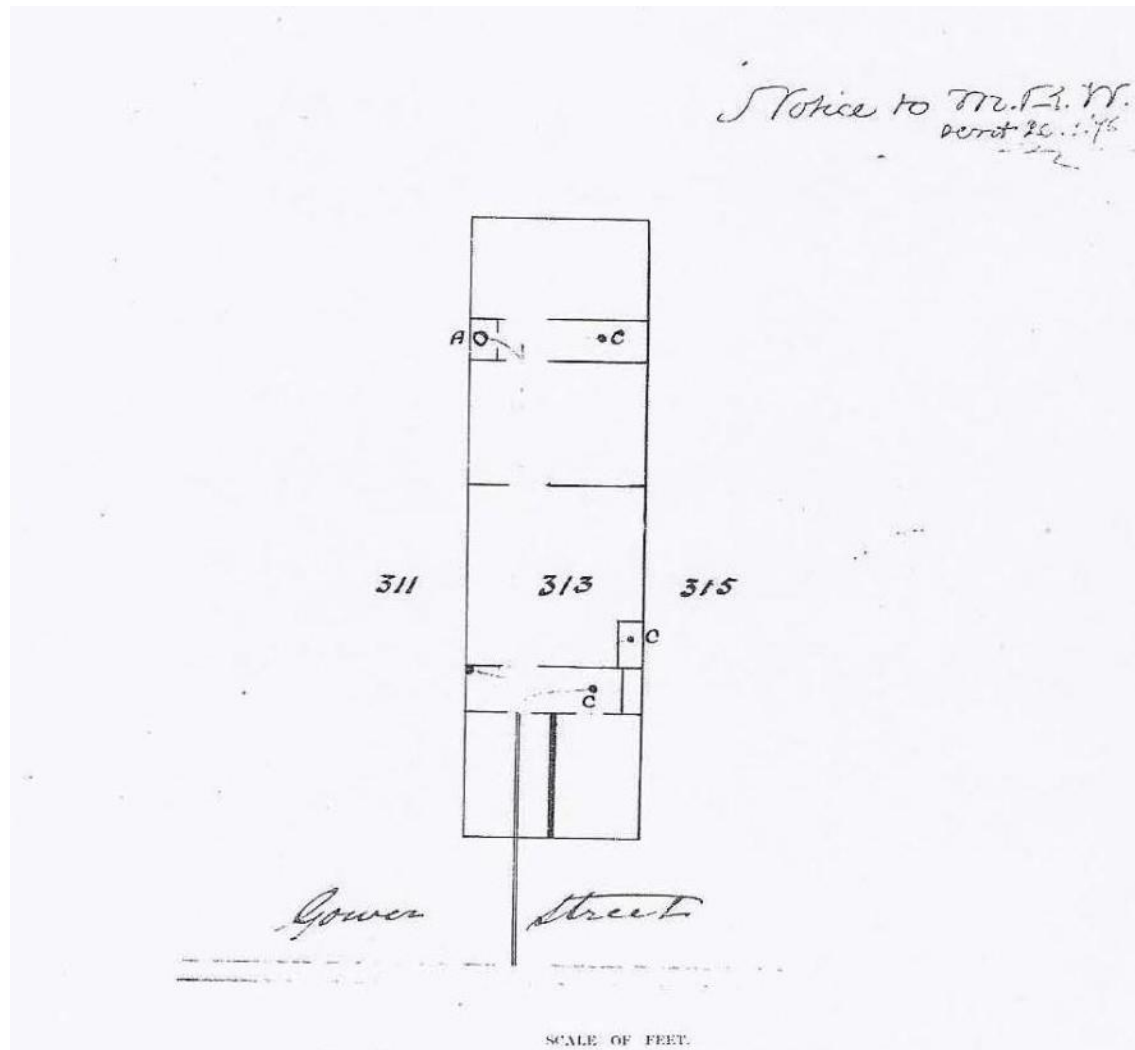


Figure 7: 1867 Drainage Plan (assumed basement)

Cartographic and Plan Evidence

- 107-113 Gower Street were developed on land owned by the Southampton Estate and were leased in February 1790 by Lord Southampton to Alexander Hendy, or to others including carpenters who seem to have been Hendy's nominees. In this they formed part of the development of 99 to 117 Gower Street (west side) and 100 to 116 Gower Street (east side), which were all built on a six-acre field belonging to the Southampton estate.³
- In ca. 1870, 107-113 Gower Street comprised terraced houses with rectangular footprints, with entrances on the left (south) side of the front facade of each building. At the back, an offshoot/closet wing projected from the south end of each rear elevation.⁴ (Figure 5).
- A drainage plan of 113 Gower Street, dated 1876, seems to show the basement of the property and suggests the space was divided into two rooms, running the width of the building; a front and rear lightwell/area; under pavement vaults; and a small room to the rear.⁵ (Figure 7)
- The footprints of the buildings seems to have been unchanged by 1895. The OS map of that year suggests their front doors were reached from the street via steps.⁶ (Figure 6)

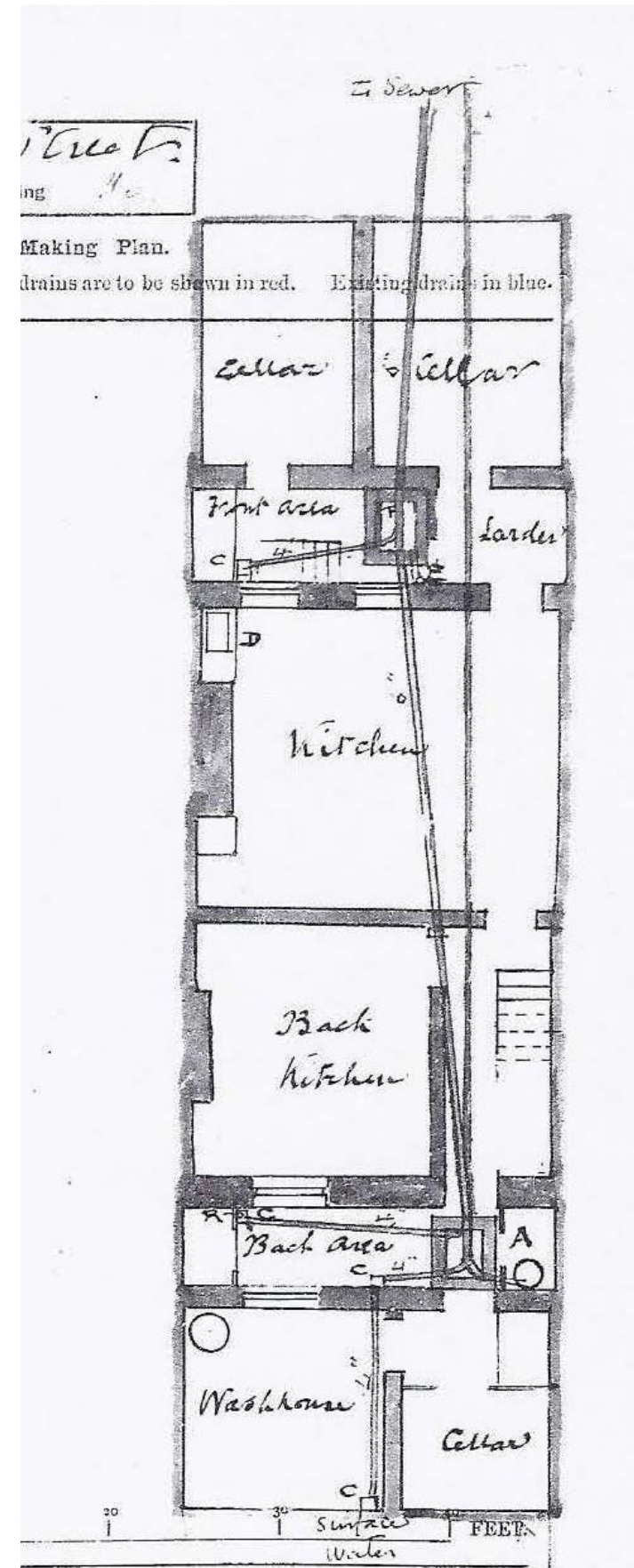


Figure 8: 1897 Drainage Plan
(113 Gower Street)

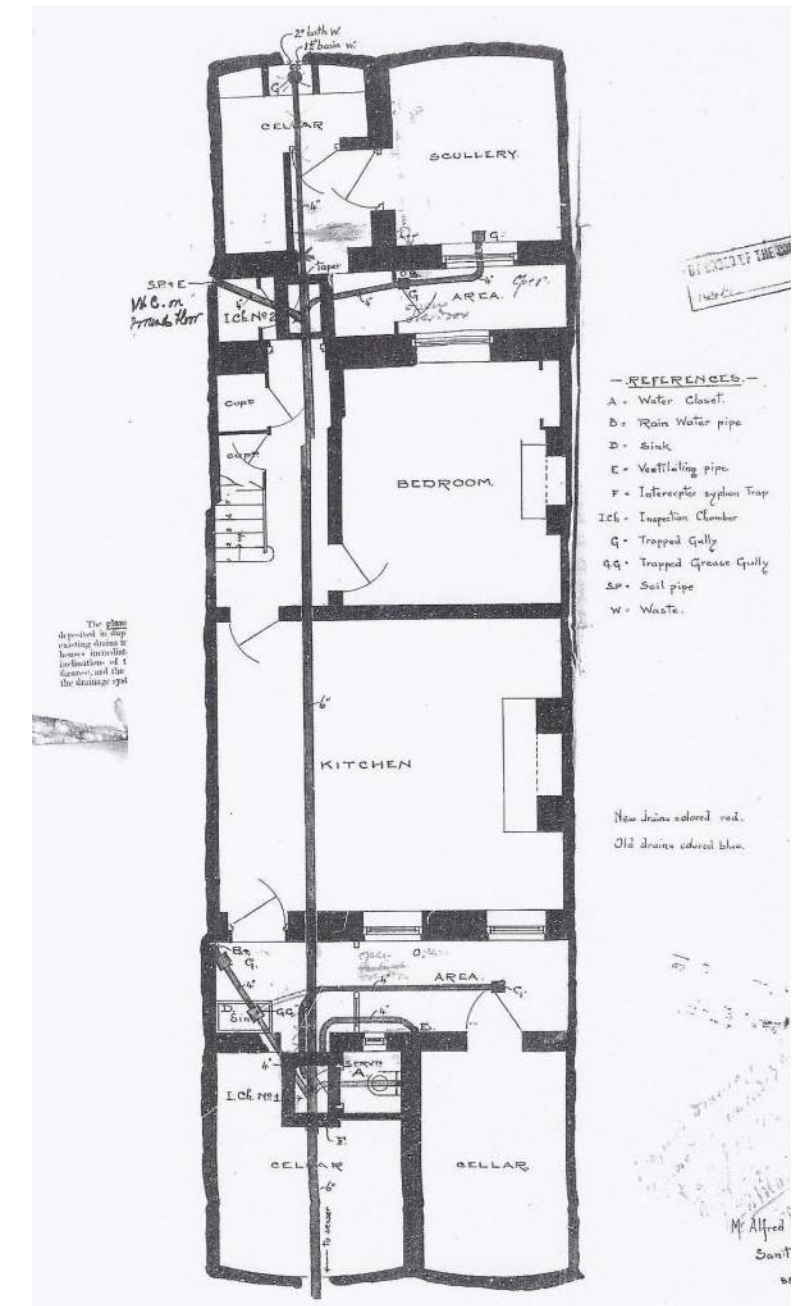


Figure 9: 1904 (109 Gower Street)

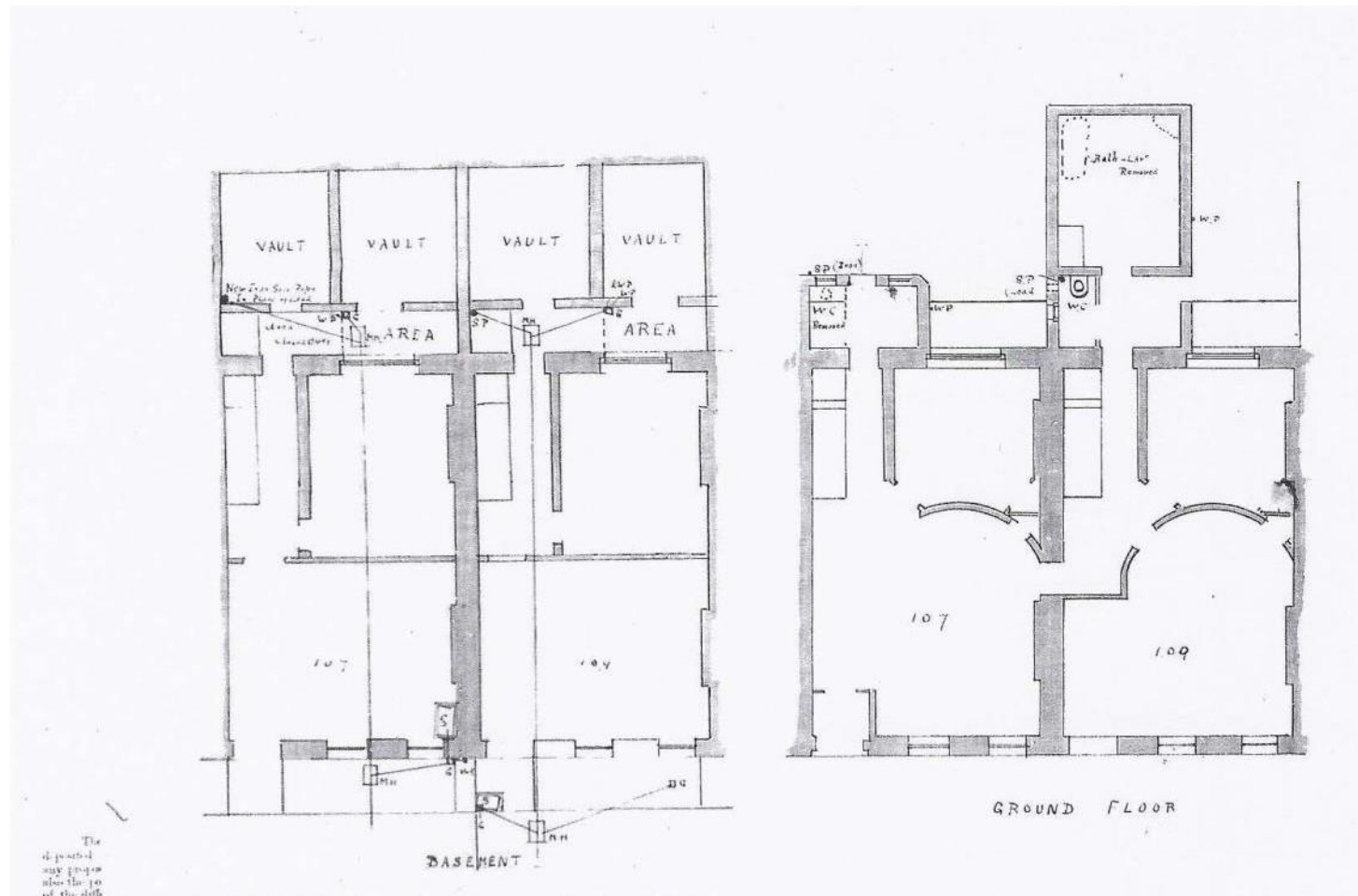


Figure 10: 1904 Drainage Plan (107-109)

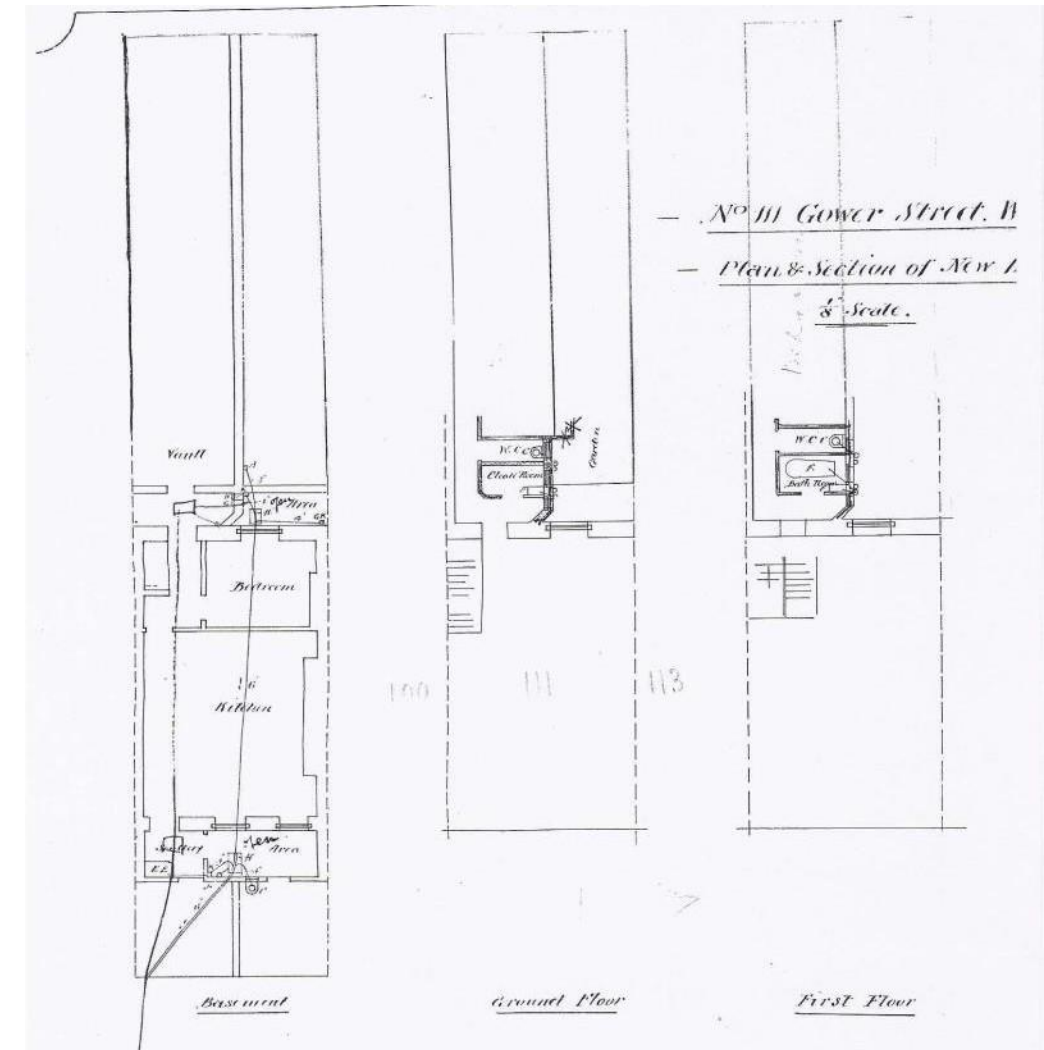


Figure 11: 1907 Drainage Plan (111)

9. The basement of no. 113 is again depicted on a drainage plan of 1897 (**Figure 8**), and the basement of no. 109 is depicted on a drainage plan of ca. 1904 (**Figure 9**). In both cases, the plans depict the under pavement vaults (labelled as cellars). In addition the plans show a lightwell; kitchen; a bedroom (no. 109) and back kitchen (no. 111), flanked by a staircase; a further open light well; and two adjoining rooms, scullery and cellar (no. 109) and wash house and cellar (no. 113) respectively.⁷ A simpler plan of 1904 of the basement of no. 107 suggests this also had a similar layout.⁸
10. In 1904, nos. 107 and 109 were described as 'Private Hotel & Boarding House'. A drainage plan suggests they were not connected at basement level (**Figure 10**) At ground floor level, where the houses were connected with an opening in the dividing wall, the properties are shown with similar layouts: a room overlooking Gower Street with a curved rear wall (partial in the case of no. 107; semi-circular in the case of no. 109) was followed behind by a smaller room in the north-west corner of the house, a rectangular structure, perhaps the staircase, in the south-west corner of the house, and a passageway through to the rear closet wing. The closet wing at no. 109 is shown as larger.⁹
11. Drainage plans of no. 111 in 1907 suggest the house was still an independent property at that time (**Figure 11**). The basement is depicted similarly to those of nos. 113 and 109 in 1897 and ca. 1904 respectively, with the rooms including a kitchen and bedroom. The ground, first and second floors of no. 111 are only depicted in outline, with the exception of the position of the



Figure 12: 1914 OS Map

staircase and layout of the closet wing. The plan is not detailed, but it suggests there may have been a ground- and first-floor rear extension at no. 111 proposed at or built by this time.¹⁰ However, this is not shown on the OS map revised in 1914, which again suggests the footprints of the buildings were largely unchanged.¹¹ (**Figure 12**)

12. By 1922, 107-111 Gower Street seems to have become Mills Hotel, also described as a 'University Hotel', accommodating 'as a rule' 80 people. A glazed ironwork canopy with lettering was planned, but refused, that year for the doorway of no. 111.¹² An iron and glazed canopy was subsequently approved for the doorway of no. 107 in 1924.¹³
13. An addition to the rear of no. 111 was planned ca. 1925. Plans suggest there was already a long rear extension at ground and first floor level, incorporating bedrooms, bathrooms and a housemaids room, and that the new proposals were for a second floor above this, providing further bedrooms, a bathroom and WC.¹⁴ (**Figure 13**)
14. By 1929, 113 as well as 107-111 Gower Street appears to have formed part of Mills University Hotel. According to EBH Chappell, a directory of 1929 records that the hotel also occupied 103, 123, 114 and 116 Gower Street.¹⁵
15. Nos. 107-111 are depicted on drainage plans of 1932 (**Figure 14 & 15**). These indicate mixed use of the basements, with labelled room including a billiards room, kitchen, stores and maids B.R.s, presumably bedrooms. At ground floor, the main area of each house is shown with a similar layout, with a larger front room (as well as, in the case of 113, a narrow bedroom), a smaller rear room (mostly marked as B.R.s), and a staircase in the south-west corner of each building. The properties are depicted as linked at this level. Upstairs, the first, second and third floors of the main part of each building are depicted almost exclusively as bedrooms and staircases. The plan of the roofspace is not labelled.¹⁶ At the rear, 107 is shown with a small three storey closet wing; 109 a longer three storey wing with a pantry; and 111 and 113 significantly longer rear wings, providing bedrooms and a 'cottage'. The wing behind 111 is three storeys high while that behind no. 113 is primarily two storeys high.¹⁷
16. Plans dating from 1937 show a number of proposed alterations. At basement level, these included 'New stairs' in no. 107 and a 'New staircase' in no. 109, new flooring in at least some areas and alterations probably relating to the relocation of the kitchen. At first floor level, the alterations included the replacement of numerous features including a new fire surround in the front room of no. 109, new windows (perhaps replacing the front doors) at nos. 107 and 113, and, in at least the front room of no. 113, new wood flooring and the removal of cornices. It is unclear whether further differences from the 1932 plans were proposals or had been carried out; these included numerous changes of room use, particularly at the basement and ground floors, such as the creation of a ground floor chapel; the subdivision of rooms on the upper floors to create additional bedrooms; and the creation of central corridors on each floor, running through the four properties.¹⁸
17. Nos 107-113 Gower Street were damaged during the war; the bomb damage map shows them as having suffered blast damage, minor in nature.¹⁹ The OS map surveyed in 1951 shows nos. 107-113 combined as a Girls' Residential Club. The map suggests the main entrance may have been via no. 111.²⁰
18. In 1966, the property was purchased by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Westminster, becoming a student hostel and a home for the Roman Catholic chaplains to the University who acted as wardens.²¹



Plate 2 and 3: 1926 Photographs of the front elevations of 107-113 Gower Street and interior



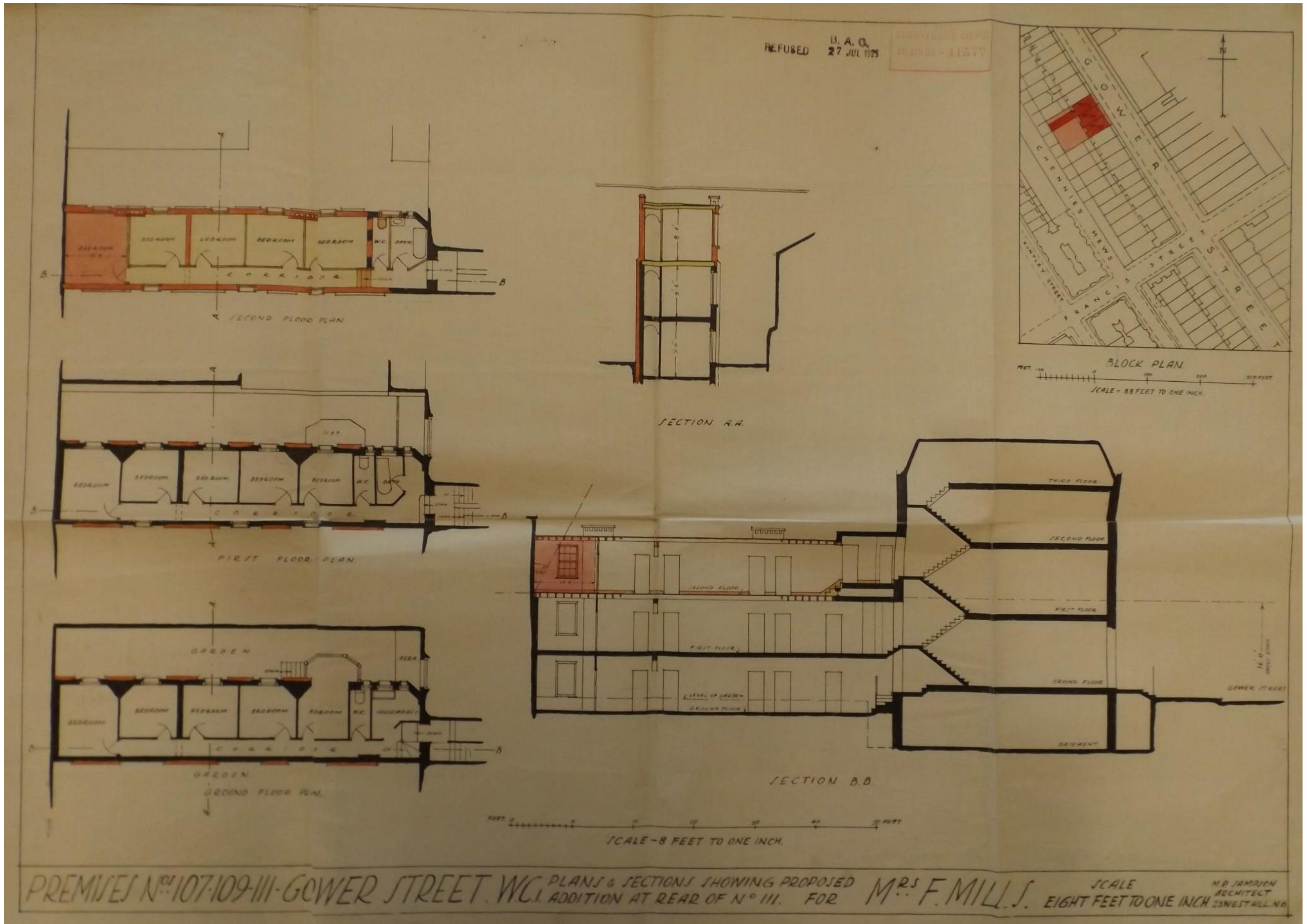


Figure 13: 1925 Elevations and Section of second floor addition to 19th century wing of No.111 Gower Street

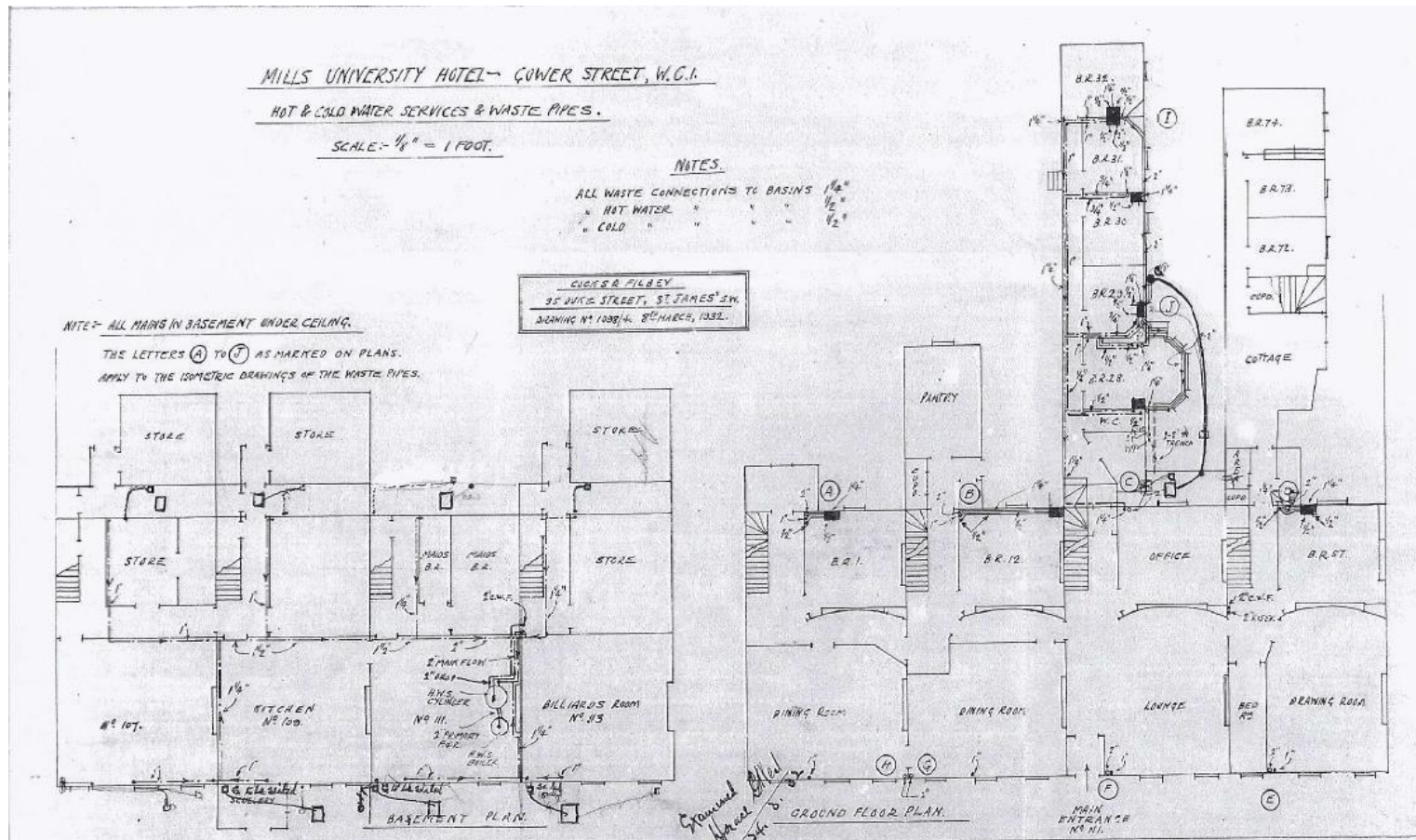


Figure 14: 1932 Drainage Plans of Mills University Hotel (107-113 Gower Street): Basement and 1st



Figure 16: LCC Bomb Damage Map

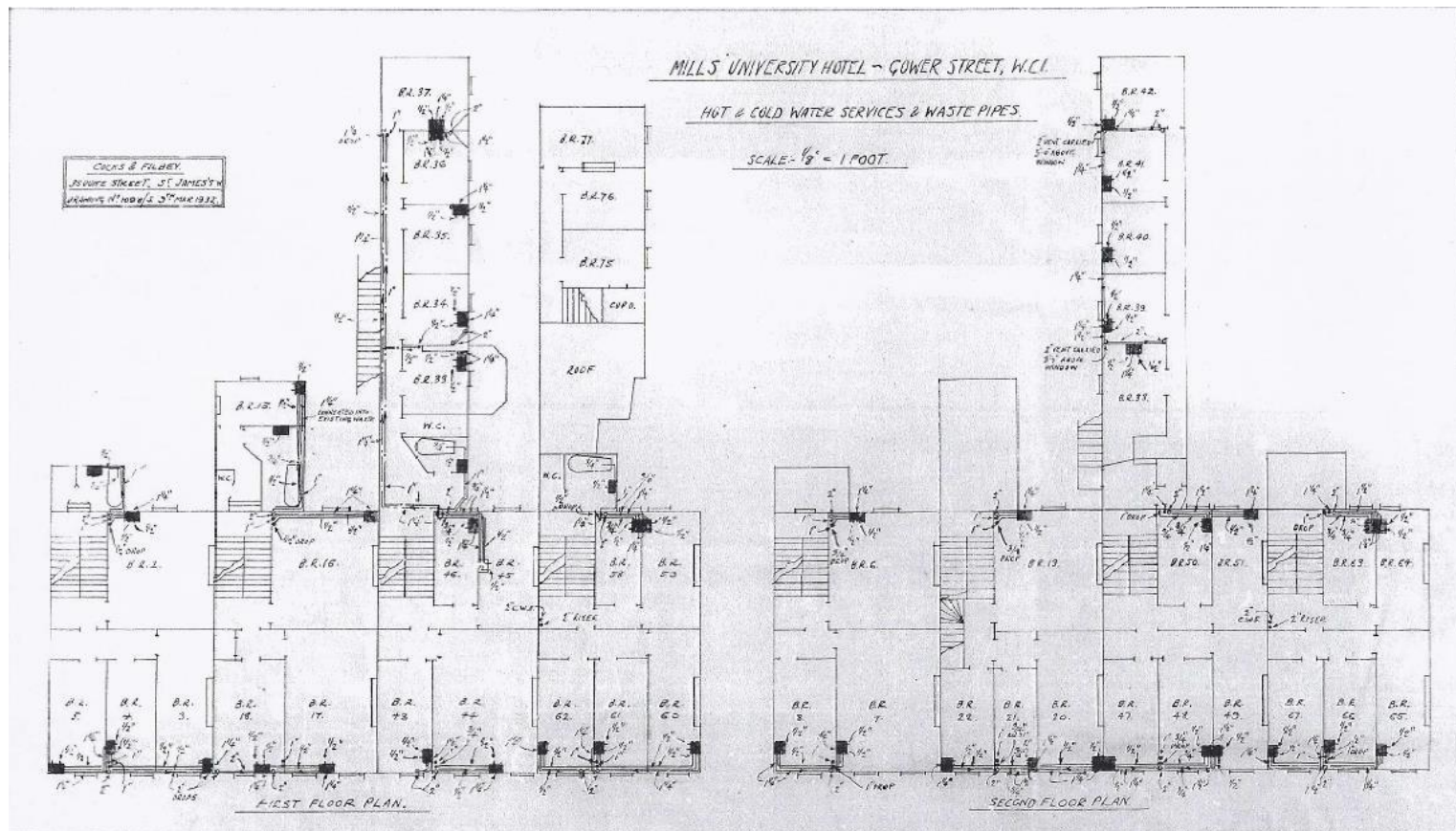


Figure 15: 1932 Drainage Plans of Mills University Hotel (107-113 Gower Street): 1st and 2nd

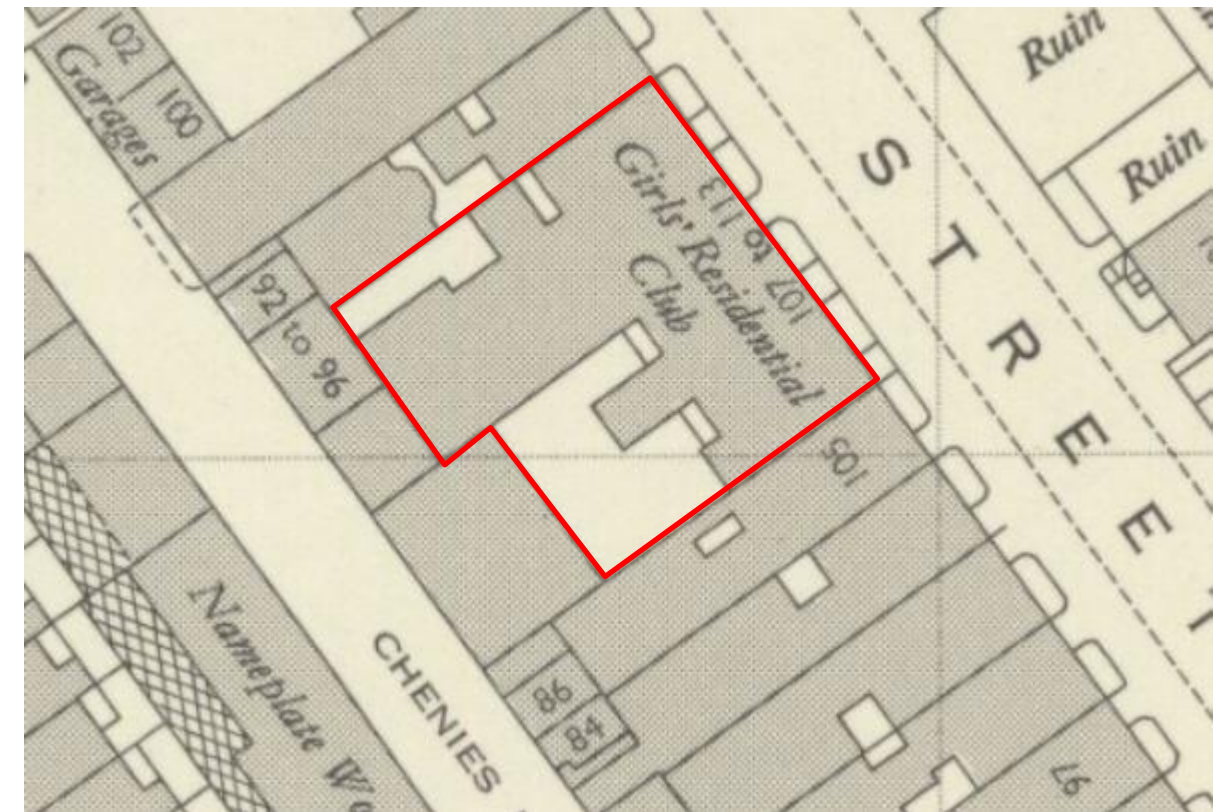


Figure 17: 1951 OS Map

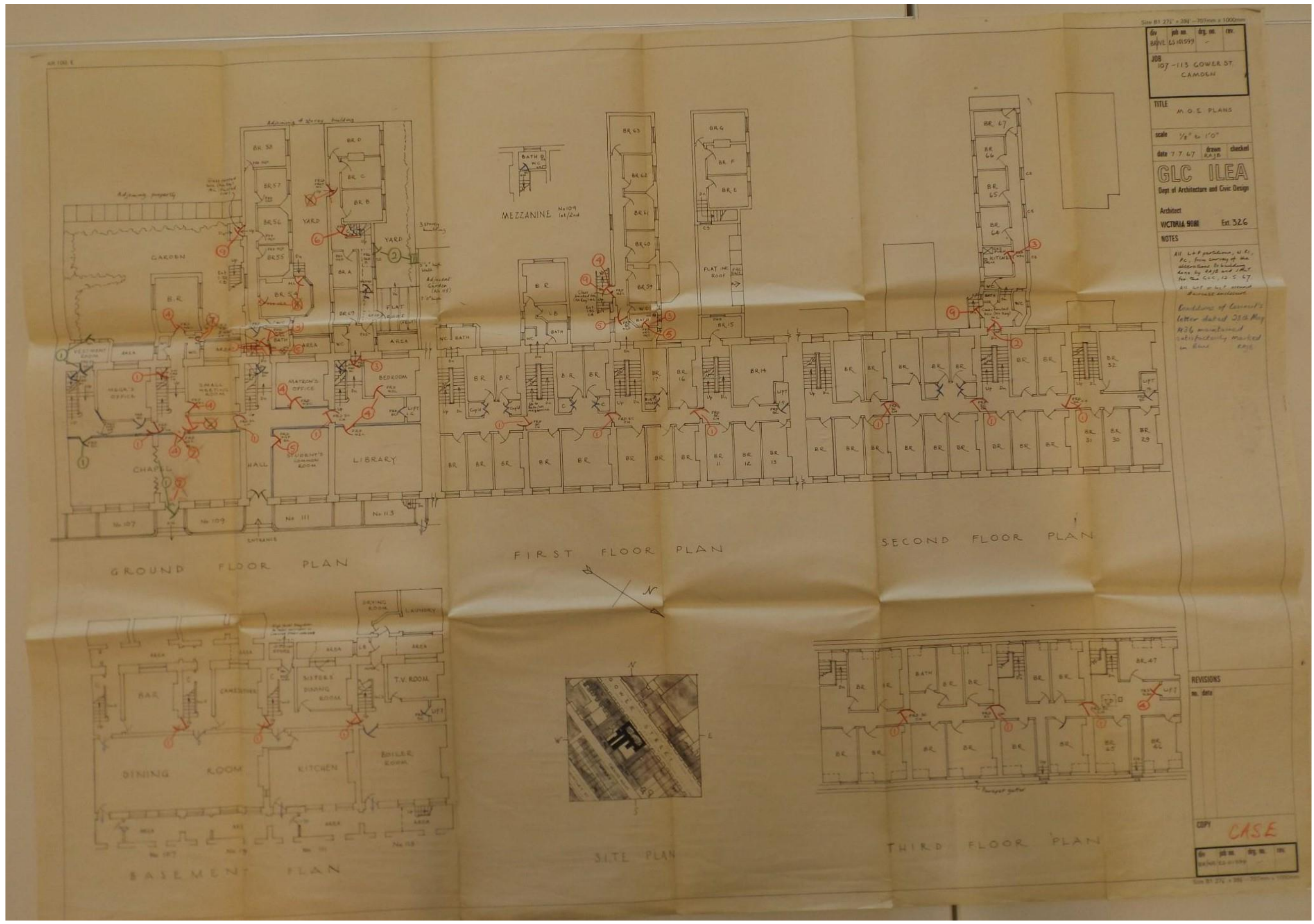


Figure 18: 1967 Proposed alterations

Application Number	Site Address	Development Description	Status	Date Registered	Decision
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5915	107/113 Gower Street, Camden.	The erection of a rear addition at 107/113 Gower Street, Camden.	FINAL DECISION	11-09-1968	Conditional
6600	Nos. 107/113, Gower Street, Camden.	The erection of a rear extension to form two bedrooms at Nos. 107/113, Gower Street, Camden.	FINAL DECISION	03-02-1969	Conditional
CA/1340	At Nos. 107-113 Gower Street, Camden.	At Nos. 107-113 Gower Street, Camden. A non-illuminated single sided mosaic panel showing five people seated around a table. Overall length 8'0", Depth 3'0", Overall height 10'6".	FINAL DECISION	18-08-1969	Refusal
HB.64	107-113 Gower Street, Camden.	Erection of a non-illuminated decorative mosaic panel at 107-113 Gower Street, Camden.	FINAL DECISION	27-08-1969	Listed Permission
CA1340/A	At 107-113 Gower Street, Camden.	At 107-113 Gower Street, Camden. A non-illuminated single sided mosaic panel showing five people seated round a table. Overall length 6'0" (1.87m), depth 1'10" (0.58m), overall	FINAL DECISION	07-01-1970	Refusal
HB114	No.107-113 Gower Street, W.C.1.	A non-illuminated mosaic panel above the main entrance door at No.107-113 Gower Street, W.C.1.	FINAL DECISION	23-01-1970	Refusal
8821	107/113 Gower Street, Camden,	Erection of pre-fabricated lecture room 12 foot high on part of garden at rear of 107/113 Gower Street, Camden, for limited period of five years.	FINAL DECISION	22-04-1970	Limited Period
HB150	107/113 Gower Street, W.C.1.	Erection of pre-fabricated lecture room 12 foot high on part of garden at rear of 107/113 Gower Street, W.C.1. for a limited period of five years.	FINAL DECISION	22-05-1970	Conditional

Application Number	Site Address	Development Description	Status	Date Registered	Decision
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22847	107-113 Gower Street, WC1	The retention for a further limited period of a single storey lecture room 12 ft. high, located on part of the land at the rear.	FINAL DECISION	07-06-1976	Limited Period
30006	107/113 Gower Street, WC1	The retention for a further limited period of a single storey rear extension, located on part of the land at the rear, used as a lecture/prayer room.	FINAL DECISION	14-02-1980	Limited Period
34955	107-111 Gower Street, WC1	The erection of a Hall (St.Dominics Hall) at the rear of 107-111 Gower Street WC1.	FINAL DECISION	29-09-1982	Conditional
8670050	111 Gower Street WC1	Conversion of three existing bedrooms and a tank room in roof space to form nine study bedrooms for student use; entailing alterations to rear portion of existing roof to form a new mansard with dormer windows. ^*(Plans submitted).	FINAL DECISION	10-02-1986	Withdrawn after Reg'n (not used on PACIS)
8600241	111 Gower Street WC1	Conversion of three existing bedrooms and a tank room in roof space to form nine study bedrooms for student use; entailing alterations to rear portion of existing roof to form a new mansard with dormer windows. ^*(Plans submitted).	FINAL DECISION	10-02-1986	Withdrawn after Reg'n (not used on PACIS)
8670439	111 Gower Street WC1	Alterations at roof level including new slates window frames and partial demolition of parapet walls as shown on one un-numbered drawing.	FINAL DECISION	15-12-1986	Refuse List.Build. or Cons Area Consent

19. Plans of 1967 show the front (east) rooms in the basement and first floor of nos. 107 and 109 as combined, creating a larger dining room and chapel respectively. In addition to further changes of room use, the other key change to the layout shown on the plans seems to be the alteration of the wing to the rear of no. 113, apparently reducing the number of bedrooms at first-floor level. ²² A drawing from 1968 seems to propose further alterations to the rear of no. 113, depicting a rear offshoot adjoining the main building as far up as the third floor.²³
20. A drainage plan from 1970 probably relates to the proposed erection of a pre-fabricated lecture room at the rear of nos 107-109 (see planning history below), while drainage plans from 1983 depict a proposed new meeting hall to replace a temporary meeting hall again at the rear of 107-109.²⁴ This is the current chapel that is now currently too small for the needs of the building.
21. A full list of planning applications is included on page 14 but prior to the introduction of the modern planning system records from 1968 onwards not covered by plans held at the London Metropolitan Archives are included overleaf and provide more detail on changes to the building since this time.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

22. This section appraises the heritage values of the listed building and its contribution to the conservation area. It also sets out the level of surviving fabric within the listed building. It also takes account of the surrounding listed buildings as far as they are relevant to an assessment of potential effects on setting arising from the proposed works.

Newman House, 107-113 Gower Street (listed grade II)

Heritage Values

23. Newman House is of architectural and historical interest as part of a terrace of late 18th century town houses, formed in a typical polite Georgian architectural style. Architectural interest is illustrated by the composition of the individual houses, which are still discernible from both the front and rear of the building, and internally. The building envelope (front, roof and rear elevation) conform to the rest of the terrace in terms of a hierarchy of detailing, traditional dormer windows and slated mansard roof with regular fenestration across the whole building. To the rear the architectural interest is less, with the addition of a number of later extensions having filled the plots of the original buildings. Only two narrow areas of former garden survive across the plot.
24. Changes to the front elevation have eroded the architectural interest of the building in comparison to the individual town houses in the rest of the terrace. Most notably the replacement of multi-light sash windows to 1 over 1 sashes and the rendering of the entire front elevation, leaving no sense of the rubbed brick arches over the former front doors or the flat brick arches over the windows. To the rear, the modern Chapel building sits outside of the footprint of the listed building (specifically behind no.107-109) but is internally linked to it. This chapel does not form part of the special interest of the building. It has a series of raised roof lights and sits abutting the closet wings of the properties, which have been rebuilt in places and partly rendered. It's location leaves small areas of lightwell no longer accessible or usable for anything but plant and providing dank spaces to look out onto at basement and ground floor level.
25. To the rear the architectural interest of the listed building has been eroded by the rendering of some of the closet wings and in some cases the extension of the closet wings upwards. In addition No.111 and No.113 have large rear extensions, added in the early 20th century and now highly altered, such that they detract from the setting of the listed terrace.

26. Internally there is no evidence of the original ground floor curved front room walls but the plan form of two rooms, staircase and hallway is still largely evident in most places. Some removal of original walls has taken place to accommodate the changing use of the building and the most obvious change is in the features, that have been altered to a significant degree such that any original late 18th or early 19th century features are scant and piecemeal. Those original features that survive are highlighted on the 'as existing' plans (Abbott & Associates Drawings).
27. Historical interest is derived from the group value of this building in the wider terrace and street scape. The building, once four separate houses and now one interlinked property, still illustrates the development of Gower Street and the key principles of the architectural styles of the period. It

has historical interest due to its conversion from four to one building and the subsequent users of the building as a hotel, girls residential club and Catholic Chaplaincy. Historical interest is also illustrated in the plan form and hierarchy of spaces within the building indicated by the low floor to ceiling heights at basement and upper floors in contrast to the grand ground and first floor rooms. This hierarchy has been eroded by later internal alterations and a general removal of interior decorative features but is still legible.

28. The building does not possess specific archaeological or artistic heritage values.

Contribution of Setting

29. The heritage significance of the listed building is experienced from its immediate vicinity as part of a group of former town houses on Gower Street. It has group value with its neighbours, albeit lets them down in terms of front elevation treatment. Front railings and areas contribute to the setting of the building and the surrounding listed buildings positively contribute to an understanding of the historical and architectural origins of the building.
30. From the rear, the listed building can only be experienced when standing in the rear narrow yards of No.111 and No.113, from where only a select area of the rear elevation of each property can be appreciated. Views from the surrounding buildings include the original rear elevations but also the later extensions, especially the 1980s chapel building and the 1920s two storey narrow wing to the rear of No.111 with a modern asphalt roof, as well as the extension to No.113. The arrangement of closet wings, fenestration, pipework and extensions erodes the experience of heritage significance from the rear.
31. From the wider area the rear elevation of No.113 is visible to a limited degree from Chenies Mews, where a two storey brick mews building and a single storey modern building allow visibility towards the back of the terrace. Along Chenies Mews the majority of the buildings have been rebuilt in the 20th century, with varying degrees of success in terms of architectural style. Those unlisted buildings, backing onto the application site directly, do not enhance the setting of the listed building and their brick rear elevations detract from views out of Newman House.
32. Views toward the application site from the south are partly filtered by a mature tree in the garden of No.87 Gower Street and a high brick wall, such that the building is not visible from street level.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area

33. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area is a very large designated area, encompassing the majority of the late 18th century townscape of Bloomsbury. Located in the very north-west corner of the application site sits within Sub Area 5: Bedford Square/Gower Street, as identified and described within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011). The appraisal identifies the intact nature of the terrace along the western side of Gower Street, in contrast to the mostly redeveloped eastern side, which falls within Sub Area 3: University of London/British Museum.
34. A summary of the reason this conservation was designated is provided within the appraisal;

Bloomsbury is widely considered to be an internationally significant example of town planning. The original street layouts, which employed the concept of formal landscaped squares and an interrelated grid of streets to create an attractive residential environment, remain a dominant characteristic of the area. Despite Bloomsbury's size and varying ownerships, its expansion northwards from roughly 1660 to 1840 has led to a notable consistency in the street pattern, spatial character and predominant building forms. Today, the area's underlying townscape combined with the influence of the major institutional uses that established in the district and expanded over time is evident across the large parts of the Conservation Area. Some patterns of use have changed over time, for example, offices and hotels came to occupy former family dwelling houses as families moved out of central London to the suburbs during the later 19th and 20th centuries. However, other original uses have survived and help to maintain the area's distinctive and culturally rich character (the most notable include hospitals, university and academic uses, cultural institutions such as museums, legal uses, and on a smaller scale, specialist retailers including booksellers and furniture shops).

35. It is clear that the application site contributes to the heritage significance of the conservation area, due to its history, architectural composition and surviving features. Its contribution is weaker than many of its neighbours on the same side of the building due to the alterations to the building but it nevertheless contributes to the character of the area.
36. Part of an experience of the historical, architectural, artistic and archaeological interest of the area is through views of buildings, streets and open spaces. The appraisal notes;

Although the area is strongly influenced by a formal pattern of streets and spaces it was not planned to create distinctive formal vistas to architectural set pieces such as churches, other than the view to the Foundling Hospital (demolished 1926). The relatively flat topography also means that views are not created by changing levels. The visual characteristics of the Conservation Area therefore derive from the experience of moving between streets, squares and other spaces, and the contrast created between enclosure and open spaces. Owing to the role of trees within the Conservation Area within streets and squares, there is a notable difference in the visual characteristics in summer and winter. Also of importance in appreciating the character of the area are the views of the plainer backs of terraces where these remain intact, creating an interesting contrast with the polite and formal frontages.

37. The adjacent buildings to the application site, both to the north and south of it, are listed grade II and form group value with Newman House. They conform to the prevailing character of the area and have a greater level of survival of historic character and architectural features as evident from the external envelopes. Most importantly they are individual town houses, as originally designed.

