



Design & Access Statement

to accompany the Planning & Listed Building Application for

Proposed Alterations & Extension to

34 Great James Street, Bloomsbury, London, WC1N 3HB



INTRODUCTION

Etchingam Morris Architecture Ltd were commissioned by Mr R Crowley, owner of No 34 Great James Street to consider an appropriate and sympathetic way to adapt and re-model the Grade II* Listed Building to return the building to use as a single dwelling.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Number 34 Great James Street is a four storey, over basement townhouse situated in a terrace of fourteen similar dwellings on the west side of Great James Street. These face an almost identical row on the opposite side of the street. The terrace is grade II* listed (List Entry Number 1113203) constructed between 1720 and 1724

The property is located within sub area 10 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in the borough of Camden. The Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and covers an area of approximately 160 hectares extending from Euston Road in the north to High Holborn and Lincoln's Inn Fields in the south and from Tottenham Court Road in the west to King's Cross Road in the east.

The Great James Street and Bedford Row sub area was developed during the Georgian and Regency periods under various ownerships, although part of the street pattern was laid out earlier by Nicholas Barbon. The area has a clear street hierarchy structured on a grid layout

The townhouses, which date from the C18th and C19th, are either of three or four storeys over basements with cast-iron railings fronting the street. The frontages follow classical architectural principles of the period, with three windows per floor establishing a repeated rhythm of window and door openings along each terrace. Common details are wooden architraved door cases, timber panelled doors, fanlights, flat roofed porches or small porticos above. The materials are Flemish bonded London stock brick with some contrasting red brick detailing such as segmental red-brick arches. Some stucco is evident at ground floor level. Most frontages are topped by parapets, with some examples of mansard attics and dormer windows.



Image no.1 shows sub area 10 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, with the red line indicating the boundary of the sub area. Listed Buildings are shown in black and buildings of positive impact shown hatched

The curtilage of 34 Great James Street is shown by the dashed red line.



**1. Bloomsbury Conservation Area, sub area 10
Great James Street/Bedford Row**

2. 34 Great James Street

34 GREAT JAMES STREET

No 34 lies at the southern end of the west side of Great James Street and forms part of a terrace of four storey townhouses with basements. The property is fronted by painted steel railings of a traditional design incorporating a gate, which frame a lightwell providing access to the lower ground floor.

The main core of the building has a narrow frontage, deep plan form. As such, there are two rooms to each floor with a larger front room overlooking the street and a smaller room to the rear of the property with the staircase running alongside. Beyond this, a rear closet wing projection approximately half the width of the main house provides a third smaller room to each floor.

The building most recently served as a mixed use property which had been separated into offices on the ground and lower ground levels and individual flats on the first, second and third floors with a shared common access corridor.

To the rear of the property at ground floor level, a 1960s, full width and full plot depth, flat roofed extension with rooflights has been constructed over basement vaults, which served as a suite of counselling rooms.

The Historic England listing (List Entry Number 1113203) reads as follows:

*“TQ3081NE GREAT JAMES STREET 798-1/101/662 (West side) 24/10/57 Nos.26-37 AND 39-40 (Consecutive) and attached railings (Formerly Listed as: GREAT JAMES STREET Nos.26-37, 38, 39 & 40 (Consecutive)) GV II**

14 terraced houses. 1720-24. For J Metcalfe. Brown brick, upper storeys with some refacing in multi-coloured, yellow (Nos 28, 34 & 40) and brown stock brick (1st floor and above of No.30). 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Nos 27-38 and 40, good wood architraved doorcases with enriched, carved brackets carrying hoods with panelled soffits, most with patterned fanlights and panelled doors. No.27, C20 hood with shaped brackets; No.39, architraved doorcase with pilasters, plain cornice, radial fanlight and panelled door. Red segmental arches and dressings to flush framed windows, No.35 upper storeys with glazing bars. Some frames reeded with roundels. Parapets. Some original lead rainwater heads with lion masks. INTERIORS: mostly having fine panelling. Staircases mostly with twisted balusters, column newels and carved brackets to treads. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn or torch flambe finials to areas.”

PLANNING HISTORY

- 1958 - The use of the front basement room of No. 34 Great James Street, Holborn, for office purposes **19265**
- 1962 - The use of the two rear basement rooms at 34 Great James Street as offices **214/27375**
- 1968 - The erection of a rear addition, at upper first floor level, to form toilet accommodation at 34 Great James Street, Camden. **5835**
- 1972 - The construction of a rear addition, at upper first floor level to form toilet accommodation at 34 Great James Street, W.C.1. **HB477**
- 2013 - Change of use from offices at ground and basement level, and flats on upper floors to a single family dwelling including single storey rear extension with courtyard area covered with glass on ground floor, and replacement of all front elevation windows. **2013/0597/P**
- 2013 - Internal and external alterations associated with the change of use from offices at ground and basement level, and flats on upper floors to a single family dwelling including single storey rear extension with courtyard area covered with glass on ground floor, and replacement of all front elevation windows and associated internal works. **2013/0616/L**

- 2013 - Change of use from offices (Class B1) at basement and ground floor level and 3x1 bed flats (Class C3) at first to third floor level, to a single dwelling house (Class C3), including replacement ground floor rear extension with first floor external terrace and associated works. **2013/4419/P & 2013/4498/L**
- 2013 - Details of internal works in relation to conditions 5a, b, c, d, e, g, & h, of listed building consent 2013/4498/L, 26/9/13, for change of use Office (B1) to residential (C3). **2013/7483/P**
- 2018 - Discharge of condition 5b (joinery and plasterwork) pursuant to listed building consent dated 26 September 2013 ref: 2013/4498/L **2018/1359/L**
- 2018 - Discharge of condition 5c (windows) pursuant to listed building consent dated 26 September 2013 ref: 2013/4498/L **2018/1360/L**
- 2018 - Discharge of condition 5e (floor finish and threshold) pursuant to listed building consent dated 26 September 2013 ref: 2013/4498/L. **2018/1363/L**
- 2018 - Discharge of condition 5f (fire places) pursuant to listed building consent dated 26 September 2013 ref: 2013/4498/L. **2018/1366/L**
- 2018 - Discharge of condition 5h (panelling) pursuant to listed building consent dated 26 September 2013 ref: 2013/4498/L. **2018/1367/L**
- 2018 - Discharge of condition 5a (doors) pursuant to listed building consent dated 26 September 2013 ref: 2013/4498/L. **2018/1357/L**
- 2018 - Details of any works associated with alterations or upgrading to satisfy Building Regulations or Fire Certification required by condition 5G of listed building consent (ref: 2013/4498/L) granted on 26.09.2013 for: internal and external works associated with change of use from offices (Class B1) at basement and ground floor level and 3x1 bed flats (Class C3) at first to third floor level, to a single dwelling house (Class C3), including replacement ground floor rear extension with first floor external terrace and associated works. **2018/1588/L**

DESIGN PROPOSALS

The principle of the reinstatement of this important listed building as a residential dwelling has been established and implemented by the 2013 consents and the subsequent agreeing of condition details. Our client is largely content with the principles and details approved but wishes to make further improvements and variations. The proposed scheme aims to restore the historic character of the property, reinstating and restoring the original architectural features where possible and renovating the existing building fabric alongside a modest single storey rear extension to the closet wing.

Of greatest significance and value to the listed building is the proposed removal of the 1960s rear ground floor office extension to allow the reinstatement of a garden.

Lower Ground Floor

At lower ground floor, the front room is to be reconfigured to form a Sitting Room with a Kitchen along the south wall. A new door opening is to be formed into the rear room which will serve as a Bedroom with an en-suite Bathroom in the rear closet wing beyond.

The modern stud wall to the hallway side of the staircase is to be removed and replaced with a flat metal handrail bolted to square section support standards above the stair and a new wide-boarded timber wall and door to the cupboard below.

The rear courtyard is to be opened up through the removal of the modern walls forming the two WCs. A glazed lightwell is to be formed with full height, slim section steel screens. The existing structural wall supporting the roof vault is to remain with a new opening formed. This will lead to an extended vault forming a covered access to a new Sauna in the vault beneath the closet wing as approved in 2013.

The central wall between the basement vaults (rLG.07 and rLG.08) is to be concrete underpinned in sections allowing the floor level to be reduced in rLG.07, rLG.08, rLG.09 and rLG.10. These spaces will be reconfigured to form a Mechanical plant room, Laundry Room and Store alongside a Sauna, again in line with the 2013 consent.

Given the potential for increased hydrostatic pressure and tensile/flexural stresses in the substrates of the existing and adjoining buildings, a Delta MS20 drained cavity membrane system is to be applied to vault roofs, walls and floors, incorporating a drainage channel in the new floor structure with a gravity outlet to the existing underground drain. Battens are to be fixed internally using Delta plugs and wall/roof surfaces lined with Glasroc board for plaster finish. In the Sauna the lining is to be hardibacker board with a Beton-cire micro cement finish.

Ground Floor

At ground floor level, the front room forms a Dining Room which leads through to a modest Kitchen at the rear. The closet wing houses a Scullery with access to the new WC.

The lightwell steps are to be refurbished and the existing wired glass canopy is to be removed and replaced with an etched and laminated glass canopy.

The modern lightweight partition between the Dining Room and Kitchen is to be removed with a new timber painted glazed screen with solid bottom panels fitted into the opening and set on the original wall line to allow original cornice lines to be reinstated.

The existing 1960s flat roofed rear extension is to be demolished and stripped back to expose the perimeter masonry walls. The floor screed is to be broken out with the concrete floor slab to be retained. A new modified screed is to be laid to a central low point along east/west axis with a waterproofing membrane applied to slab area and perimeter upstand. A central slot drainage channel with membrane flange will be used to collect run off from the new courtyard terrace which will be paved using blue/black stable bricks on sand bedding with a perimeter shingle margin. A flat metal handrail fixed to square support standards will be provided to the edge of the lightwell with a leaded flat roof formed over the extended vault above the access to the Sauna.

The existing modern side facing window to no.33 is to be infilled and a modest single storey WC extension is to be formed to the rear of the closet wing which will be accessed through the Scullery rG.03 via a reopened infilled opening. A parapet wall with York stone coping will conceal a lead flat roof. This WC extension sits wholly within the footprint of the existing 1960s extension being removed.

First Floor

At first floor, the front room serves as a Drawing Room with a Library to the rear. A WC is housed in the rear closet wing.

The Drawing Room chimney breast wall has been widened at some stage with timber studwork, the fireplace re-sited on the new width and the original fireplace opening infilled. This is now to be reinstated to its original position given that no panelling exists to the wall. Jib doors are to be formed on both sides of the chimney, set back from the breast wall sufficiently to allow the cornice profile to clear the window architrave moulding.

Opening up works to the main crosswall between the Drawing Room and Library confirmed a structural framework in place for a double door width opening which had been partially infilled with modern horizontal boarding. This opening is to be reinstated with linings/architraves extended. A similar example exists at no.39 Great James Street.

To the rear elevation of the stair core, the existing C20th door opening and adjacent external wall panel are to be modified in order to allow the installation of a new sliding sash window. The window will be centralised on the stairwell to reinstate the original configuration.

Second Floor

At second floor the modern open studwork partition between r2.03 and r2.04 is to be removed to reinstate a full width Master Bedroom at the front of the property. The rear room will serve as a large en suite with a WC located in the closet wing.

Third Floor

At third floor, the front room has been subdivided and was previously used as a Living Room and Kitchen. The open studwork wall is to be reinstated, given that cornice lines exist, with the doorway relocated towards the front elevation. Within the former Kitchen, a stud screen wall 2250mm high is to be formed separating a proposed En Suite and Store while maintaining the existing cornice line.

In the rear closet en-suite, a new panelled wall line is to be formed concealing the existing masonry stack arrangement.

General Works

A significant part of the overall project is the careful and appropriate restoration of the building fabric which has suffered from neglect through the latter part of C20 and in areas, has had inappropriate repair, removal and alterations. A summary of these works are as follows:

Joinery

Existing original skirtings, dado rails, architraves, and linings are to be retained and restored unless otherwise stated on Internal Room Elevations. Where significant damage / modern intervention has happened, replace with solid timber profile in line with Internal Room Elevation drawings and drawing ST711-72 "Typical details". Where small areas require work, use flexible filler to effect a suitable repair.

Decorative Cornices

All existing decorative cornices are to be retained unless otherwise stated on Internal Room Elevations and where necessary, in-situ repairs are to be carried out by a specialist conservator. Where new cornices are required, profiles are to be solid timber as per drawing ST711-72 "Typical details"

Windows

The sliding sash windows seen throughout the property are not original and have been set back from the building face with chamfered reveals concealing the sash boxes. Authentic replica sliding sash windows and casements with arched heads are to be installed with no horns and window bars following the pattern of other historic examples along the street. The new windows will be relocated towards the outer face of the window reveal with the sash boxes expressed externally. All windows will be single glazed.

Timber floor boards

In all rooms, timber floorboards are to remain visible as the finished flooring. On ground floor, existing boards are to be carefully lifted where necessary where excessive damage or modern short-length infill boards have been used. The boards are to be lightly wet scrubbed, NOT sanded, so as to retain the patina of age, fixed with traditional rose-headed nails and finished with a natural wax. Any modern boards are to be replaced with square edged boards of equivalent width / species as the originals.

On first, second and third floors where timber floorboards are not currently present and floors have been boarded over with hardboard, reclaimed timber floorboards of equivalent width, thickness and species as the originals are to be sourced and treated to match the existing.

On lower ground floor, approximately 50mm of existing screed is to be removed back to the existing floor slab and timber battens are to be laid. Reclaimed timber floorboards of equivalent width, thickness and species as the originals are to be sourced and treated to match the existing.

Fireplaces

Fireplaces are all to be restored in line with the following drawings:

ST711-95 Lower Ground Floor Fireplaces
ST711-96 Ground Floor Fireplaces
ST711-97 First Floor Fireplaces
ST711-98 Second Floor Fireplaces
ST711-99 Third Floor Fireplaces

Rear Closet wing reconstruction

Above first floor level, in accordance with the Structural Engineers report, floor and external wall structures are to be rebuilt given extent of structure failure. Walls are to be rebuilt plumb, using reclaimed London stock brick with cementitious render to match existing construction retained below. This work was approved in 2013 and has been implemented.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Effect on Existing Property

The proposals are for the repair, renovation and restoration of 34 Great James Street to return the building configuration to its original use as a single dwelling. At ground floor the removal of the inappropriate 1960s flat roofed extension and reinstatement of the roof garden help to declutter the rear elevation and restore the proportions of the rear elevation. Careful reinstatement and restoration of original architectural features help to safeguard and significantly enhance the heritage value of the listed building.

At ground floor the integrity of the existing Listed Building is also retained due to the proposed WC extension being single storey, keeping both its visual impact and scale modest.

Effect on Amenity of Neighbours

The extension cannot be seen from either of the neighbouring properties as it sits below the height of the boundary walls to each side. The removal of the side facing window to the boundary with number 33 will be of positive impact to the neighbours, removing any potential overlooking.

Effect on Character and Appearance of Area

The effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is positive, with reinstatement of window bars and expressed sash boxes continuing the language of the original historic building as can be seen elsewhere along the street.

USE

34 Great James Street was most recently used as Offices (Class B1) at Ground Floor and Lower Ground Floor with three 1 Bed Flats (Class C3) at first, second and third floors. The property has received consent to be reinstated as a single dwelling house (C3)

LAYOUT

As described within 'The Design Process' section of this document, the purpose of the proposed reconfiguration works are to reinstate the property as a single dwelling house.

The integrity of the original building is to be maintained by sensitive and appropriate alterations.

SCALE

Due to the proposed extension being single storey and set down from the boundary walls, its visual impact and scale is modest. The extension has been kept low and subservient to the host building and follows a similar design language to the host building

ACCESS

Vehicular and pedestrian access both remain unaffected by these proposals and given that the works are to an existing building, the requirements of The Building Regulations not to worsen any existing means of access or facility for people with disabilities are adequately met.

SUMMARY

The proposed scheme significantly improves the amenity of the listed building and allows it to function properly as a modern family home. The proposals are to be carried out without any material adverse effect on the amenity of the neighbours and will enhance the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area by conserving, repairing and restoring original historic interior features.

The proposals are considered to offer a further, significant enhancement of the setting of the listed building beyond that established by the 2013 approved.