

22 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON WC1B 3HH

HISTORIC ASSESSMENT

March 2019

Ref: E189 076

Location and Context

Bedford Square is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and was originally designed as a considered whole. It was laid out and constructed between 1775 and 1780 to provide fashionable town houses, on land owned by the Duke of Bedford, hence its name and is now considered to be the best and most complete Georgian square remaining in London. It comprises a central private garden surrounded by terraced townhouses, many of which are listed Grade I, though most have become converted for office use. The private Bedford Square Gardens in the middle of the square is itself Grade II* listed and is also included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest.



Location Plan (North at top)

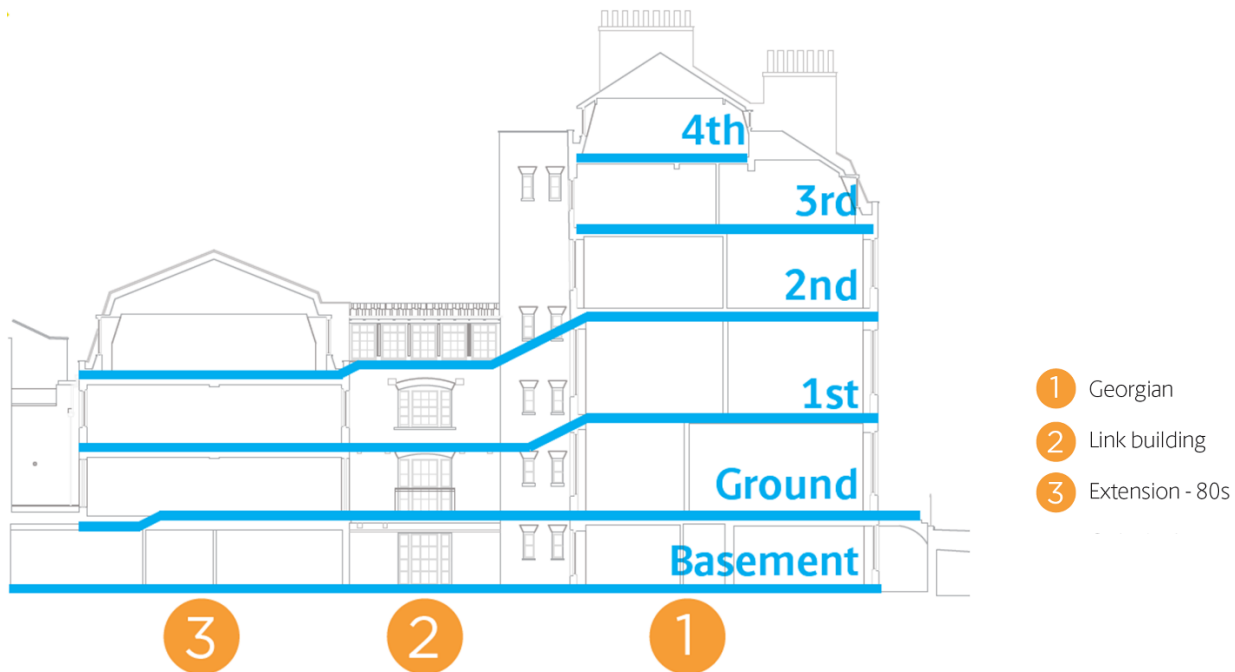
22 Bedford Square, centrally located within the left-hand portion of the symmetrical terrace of sixteen houses that forms the northern side of the square, is itself Grade 1 listed and it is currently in office use on all floors. Its adaption into offices has included the addition in the 1980s of a rear, ancillary building that 3rd Floor, Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW

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extends behind both 22 and 23 Bedford Square, in the location of the original mews houses and part of the gardens relating to each property. A link structure constituting part of the 1980s addition connects each level of the ancillary building to what would originally have been a rear projection of the townhouse containing mezzanine rooms off the staircase, which has been reconstructed to house a lift and the steps that deal with the changes of level between the two buildings.



Schematic section through the site as existing – North to South

General Construction

The main ‘townhouse’ building at 22 Bedford Square comprises six levels (lower ground to fourth floor). The building is generally of ‘traditional’ construction, in brickwork with timber windows and doorways, timber internal floor structures, and has slated mansard roof structures with leadwork dormers behind parapets.

The rear additions have a concrete framed structure, but construction is otherwise, again generally ‘traditional’, in brickwork with timber windows and doors, slated mansard roof structures and leadwork dormers behind parapets.

Externally, the original townhouse preserves much of the original fabric at each level, though reconstruction works have taken place on the upper levels and roof. Internally, whilst original fireplaces have been removed from most rooms, original features, including moulded plasterwork, staircases, door surrounds, and window shutters and panelling have been retained in rooms from Ground to Second Floor levels and to some extent on the Third Floor. Aside from the works at the rear to effect a connection with the modern extensions, the main areas of alterations would appear to have taken place at Lower Ground floor, Third and Fourth Floor levels. It should be noted that, whilst doors off the staircase, throughout the height of the building, are panelled with a level of detail appropriate to their position in the hierarchy of the floors, all have become fire resisting doors, either by upgrading of original doors with additions or insertions into their construction, or by replacement with new doors.

The 1980s constructions, whilst having internal spaces designed to be appropriate to contemporary office use, have been treated externally in an 'historic' style that imitates Georgian and later elements, to effect a correspondence with the townhouse; largely in keeping with architectural practice when extending buildings at that time.

The descriptions below consider the historic, original townhouse in detail but treat the later addition(s) more generally.



Front Elevation

Front Elevation and Approach

The front of the premises presents 3 storeys, with two attics and a lower ground floor, in darkened, yellow stock brick with evidence of tuck pointing. There are three openings at each level, that on the ground floor right hand side being the entrance. The front façade is relieved with gauged brick flat arches to the window

openings, a plain stucco band at first floor level above the ground floor windows and a moulded stucco cornice at third floor level above second floor windows; a brick parapet with a stone capping above. The timber windows are set back from the face of the wall by the depth of a brick (c 100 mm) and the sashes are each divided into 6 rectangular lights (12 total per window). The window openings have stone cills, rendered and painted reveals, and timber blind boxes, now without blinds, at the heads.

The entrance doorway is a recessed round-arched entrance with Coade stone vermiculated intermittent voussoirs and bands and a mask keystone. The entrance door and frame are in painted timber: a six panelled door, with glazed side lights, each in 3 sections. The frame has flat impost bands and a cornice-head and an iron semi-circular radial patterned fanlight. Gauged arches to recessed sashes with glazing bars.

The doorway is approached from the street by four stone steps and a stone landing and has a raised stone threshold. The stair landing and steps have wrought and/or cast iron railings leaded into the stonework, the two marking the base of the steps having urn finials. Beside the doorway there is a wrought-iron foot scraper.

The two attic storeys have slate mansard roofs with lead gutters and flashings and lead clad dormers containing painted timber casement windows. Chimneys, on the party walls, are tall brickwork slab stacks with corniced heads and terracotta pots.



Staircase to front area / Interior of typical vault

The front area lower ground floor is approached by a stone dogleg stair from the street with attached cast-iron balustrading and a cast iron gate at the head and cast-iron railings leaded into a stone upstand plinth at street level are continuous with the railings to the main entrance steps. The vaults extending below the

street pavement are constructed in brickwork and have been rendered internally with a modern waterproof render. Doors to the vaults are timber ledged and battened doors in timber frames.

Rear Elevation



Rear Façade of Townhouse / Rear elevation(s) at Lower Ground level

The rear of the main building presents 5 storeys in darkened, yellow stock brickwork with an upper parapet capped with a stone capping, plus an attic. Window openings at each level have gauged brick flat arches, with the exception of those at first floor level, which have round brick arches. The timber windows are set back from the face of the wall by the depth of a brick (c 100 mm) and the sashes are each divided into rectangular lights, with the first-floor windows also including curved lights to the upper sashes. The window openings have stone cills and rendered and painted reveals.

The brickwork of the wall bows out at first floor cill level, particularly at the right-hand side of the elevation, but appears stable. The rear wall appears to have been rebuilt at second and third floor levels, from above second floor window cill level to above the third-floor window arches, and wholly or partially rebuilt, or patched in, at the junction with the adjacent building, 23 Bedford Square. The brickwork of the wall is painted to the level of the head of the ground floor windows.

The attic storey has a slated mansard roofs with lead gutters and flashings and lead clad dormers containing painted timber sash windows.

A full height projection on the left-hand side, at the back of the staircase location, which would have originally contained small mezzanine rooms, has been completely rebuilt in yellow stock bricks, with small timber sash windows and concrete cills.



Rear area and lower façade of rear building

Ancillary Building and Link

The rear ancillary building and link constructed in the 1980s have generally used materials and detailing that are “in keeping” with the original Georgian townhouse (both internally and externally).

Elevations to Rear Area

Abbreviations in brackets reference the relevant adjacent levels of the main building. – eg (LG) = lower ground / (1) = first.

The ancillary building presents 3 masonry work storeys with an upper parapet capped with a concrete capping, plus an ‘attic’. The ground floor (LG) is rendered and the first (G) and second (1) floors are in stock brickwork, constructed with snapped headers to echo the Flemish bond of the main building. There is a plain projecting band at first (G) floor level.

Window openings at first (G) and second (1) floor levels have gauged brick flat arches. The timber windows are set back from the face of the wall by the depth of a brick (c 100 mm) and openings have concrete cills and rendered and painted reveals.

Ground (LG) floor and first (G) floor timber French doors across the elevation have each leaf glazed in three lights. French doors at first (G) floor level have curved, wrought iron Juliette balconies. Timber sashes at second (1) floor level are each divided into 6 rectangular lights (12 total).

The attic storey has a slated mansard roofs with lead gutters and flashings and lead clad dormers containing painted timber sash windows glazed in six lights.



Façade of rear building



View of the link and rear building from an upper storey of the townhouse

The link building is similarly constructed but with a sash window with sidelights at each level, in an opening with an arched brickwork head and a glazed, timber walkway at the upper level consisting of a bands of sash windows with moulded intermediate panels on a concrete capping/cill, with a slate and leadwork roof.

Internally

Generally

Hierarchy – the Georgian townhouse retains the original hierarchy of finishes at the various levels, the 'important' ground and first floors having a high level of ornate decoration, the first floor having a lesser degree of detail, and the third floor and basement being relatively plain.

Ceilings: generally flat plaster throughout original building with perimeter friezes and cornices at ground, first and second floor levels. The first-floor front room retains moulded feature panelling on the ceiling. In the extension, office areas have suspended tile ceilings and ancillary areas have flat plaster ceilings.

Walls – wall plaster in the original townhouse is generally level and flush with few of the areas of unevenness that can indicate original plaster, however, from an assessment of previous works and alterations in the building it is probable that original wall plaster may substantially remain in the ground, first and second floors and that the lower ground floor and third floor will have extensive areas of later re-plastering. The fourth floor is a more modern addition with new plaster. Wall finishes to rooms on the ground and first floors include moulded skirtings, dados and picture rails, the second floor has moulded skirtings, the third floor has plain skirtings.

Windows: Original timber sash windows remain to basement, ground, first and second floors including original panelled surrounds, shutters and shutter boxes, an external sash pulls. All windows are single glazed; glass in original sashes appears generally to be modern. A window survey should be undertaken when the building has been vacated, to assess whether any sash windows require re-balancing and whether repairs are required to any windows.

Doors: timber doors and frames throughout in lined or panelled openings; moulded timber architraves. As noted above, doors off the staircase have become fire rated, either by upgrading of original doors with additions or insertions into their construction, or by replacement with new doors.

Ironmongery – generally modern brass ironmongery throughout to doors and windows, possibly all contemporary with the 1980s rear ancillary building, originally polished and lacquered but now worn.

Lower Ground Floor

Ceilings: Flat plaster – no cornice.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm square section skirting.

Windows: timber sash windows in 12 lights, in plastered recesses with panelling below cill level.

Doorways: Room doors: timber four panelled plain doors with timber frame and lining and surround with moulded architrave. Doors to room at front of basement, and kitchen at rear, have one of the panels

Floor: Concrete – generally carpeted except kitchen, which has vinyl flooring, and plant areas.

Staircase to ground floor: original 'self-supporting' stone treads, carpeted. New blockwork wall alongside dividing stair from basement corridor. Square edge timber strings. Modern, painted, round handrail on

brackets connects with possibly original balustrade to ground floor corridor at head, which has painted wrought iron flat bar balusters and a half round wrought iron handrail capping.

Ground Floor Entrance Vestibule



Ground Floor Vestibule – Entrance door / interior door to stairwell

Ceiling: Flat plaster ceiling with deep plaster frieze at perimeter comprising moulded upper cornice, frieze with full height modillion brackets with acanthus moulding at regular intervals, and architrave.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 200mm torus moulded timber skirting and 'frieze' picture rail lining through with frieze to framing above doors.

Doorways: The vestibule is divided from the hall by a screen similar in architectural character to the front doorcase and retains the original fanlight. Side lights to each side of both doors with flat panels beneath. The upper part of the door into the front reception room is glazed in 9 square lights, below is a moulded panel.

Floor: broadloom carpet.

Ground Floor Front (Reception)

Ceiling: Flat plaster with deep plaster frieze at perimeter comprising leaf pattern cornice, frieze with raised leaf and flower motifs and architrave.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 200 mm moulded timber skirting (moulding varies), c 75 mm fluted timber dado and moulded picture rail. (Chimney piece removed and opening infilled.)

Windows: timber sash windows in 12 lights, shutter boxes and upper and lower shutters each side. Panelled recess below cill, all sides.

Doorway: Timber door from vestibule, glazed in 9 square lights, with moulded panel beneath. Timber frame in lined opening with moulded timber architraves.

Floor: modern 'timber' strip floor finish.



Ground Floor Front Reception Room – wide angle view looking towards vestibule



Ground Floor Front Reception Room – ceiling cornice detail

Ground Floor Rear

Ceiling: Flat plaster with moulded cornice at perimeter, plain frieze panel below and moulded architrave/picture rail.

Walls: Flat plaster with moulded timber skirting and fluted dado (generally matching front room). (Chimney piece removed and opening infilled.)

Windows: timber sash windows, upper sash in 12 lights / lower sash in 2 lights, in angled, panelled reveals and panelled heads and panelled recesses below cill level.

Doorway: six panel timber door and timber frame in panelled opening with moulded timber architraves.

Floor: carpet (on timber floor).



Ground Floor Rear Room



Ground Floor Rear Room – ceiling cornice / inner door jamb, dado + skirting / room door and architrave

Staircases



Staircases – Main stair, ground floor level / upper stair, third floor level

Stair: The staircase is original, of 'self-supporting' stone treads with a wrought-iron balustrade and mahogany handrail, terminating at the second floor and has an open well. The staircase balustrade is of 3 vertical bars per tread; a plain bar each side of a bar bent into a wave, all leaded into the stonework. Handrail terminates at ground floor level in a spiral on vertical wrought iron bar supports. A small subsidiary timber stair with timber plain bar balustrading and column newels continues to the third and top floors.

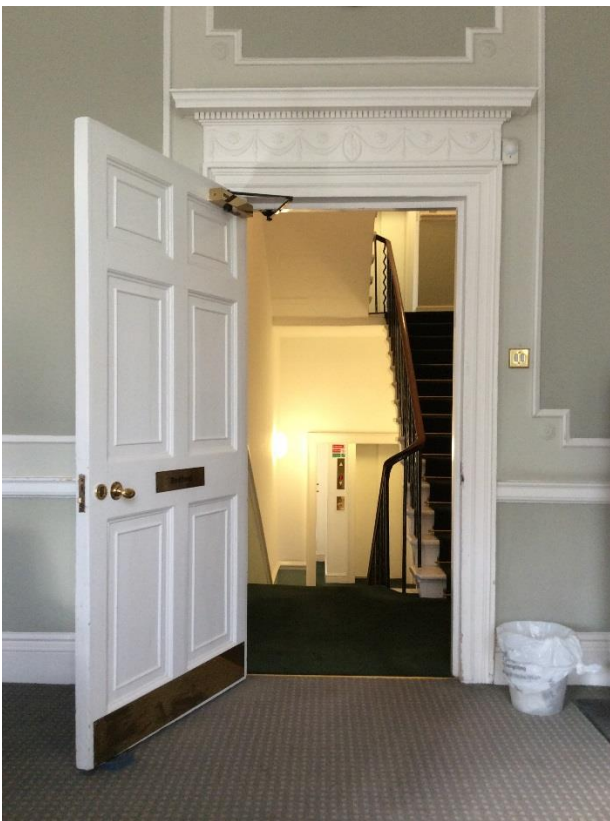
Ceiling: Flat plaster ceiling panel above base of stair, adjacent vestibule, with deep plaster frieze at perimeter comprising cornice, frieze with brackets and architrave; matching vestibule ceiling. Similar cornice frieze to ceilings at landing levels and head of staircase.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 200mm torus moulded timber skirtings and stair strings, and c 75mm astragal dado. The head of the main staircase is partitioned at second floor level with a plain wall with arched openings.

Doorways: six panel timber doors and timber frames in lined or panelled openings; moulded timber architraves.

Floor: carpet (on timber floors and stone landings). Carpet to main staircase is a central strip with brass carpet rods.

First Floor Front (Bedford Room) - Photos



First Floor Front Room (Bedford Room)

First Floor Front (Bedford Room)

Ceiling: Flat plaster with outer rectangular panel and inner shaped panel picked out in decorative plaster edging of bundles of reeds with ribbon ties. Fan plaque moulding to each corner of rectangular panel. Deep plaster frieze at perimeter comprising upper moulded cornice with dentils, frieze panel below with raised decoration of leaves and flowers, and moulded architrave.

Walls: Flat plaster with feature panels picked out in moulded strips; recess corners with decorative raised flower, c 75mm 'frieze' dado and c 200 mm moulded skirting. (Chimneypiece removed and opening infilled.)

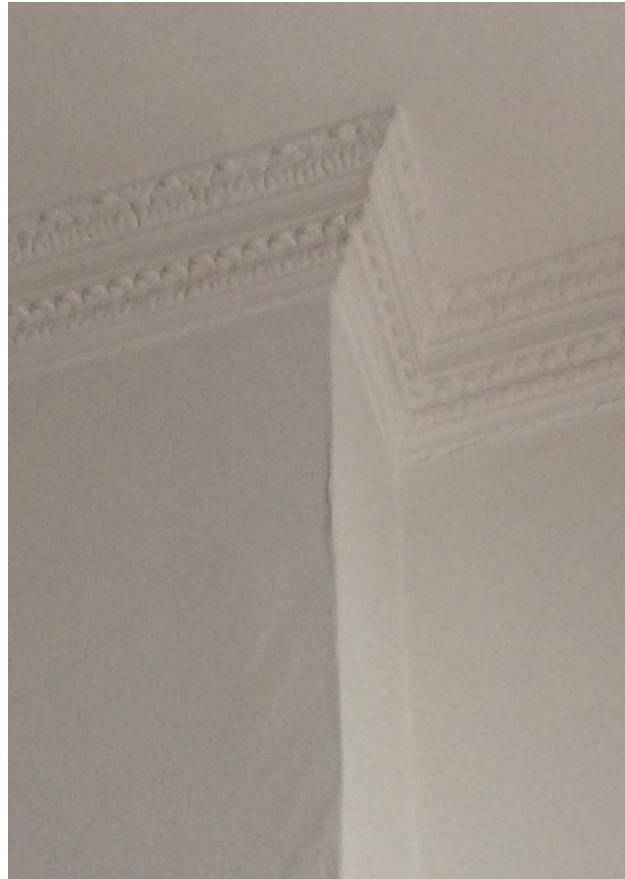
Chimneypiece: moulded, painted fire surround and mantelpiece with inner marble surround and base; 'modern' but of 'Georgian' appearance.

Windows: timber sash windows in 12 lights, shutter boxes and upper and lower shutters each side. Panelled recess below cill level, all sides.

Doorways: Room door: timber six panelled door with timber frame and lining, and heavily moulded architrave; entablature above has a cornice with dentils and a frieze with carved swags and a small central oval panel containing a figure. Communicating doorway: Two three panel doors with timber frame and lining, and heavily moulded architrave.

Floor: carpet (on timber floor).

First Floor Rear (Grosvenor Room)



First Floor Rear Room (Grosvenor Room) – head of door jamb /cornice moulding



First Floor Rear Room (Grosvenor Room) – window / general view

Ceiling: Flat plaster ceiling with deep plaster cornice at perimeter incorporating leaf motif.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 75mm 'frieze' dado and c 200 mm moulded skirting, both matching those in the front room.

Chimneypiece: moulded, painted fire surround and mantelpiece with inner marble surround and base; 'modern' but of 'Georgian' appearance – matching front room.

Windows: openings with semi-circular heads timber sash windows with 10 lights to upper sash / 6 lights to lower sash; shutter boxes and upper and lower shutters each side. Moulded surround to window heads on pilastered trim to each side of shutter boxes. Plastered recesses below cill level - dado runs around all sides as cill. The central panel of the rear wall has moved and dropped, distorting the dado cills.

Doorways: Room door: timber six panelled door with timber frame and lining, and heavily carved surround; pilaster with ribbon and leaf motif to each side of doorway and ornate entablature above. Communicating doorway: Two three panel doors with timber frame and panelled lining, and heavily moulded architrave.

Floor: carpet (on timber floor). Floor dips / falls towards the centre (stair wall) of the building.

Second Floor LH Front (Berkeley Room)



Second Floor LH Front Room (Berkeley Room)

Ceiling: Flat plaster with c 100 mm moulded cornice to perimeter.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 200 mm torus moulded skirting.

Chimneypiece: Painted cast iron surround with heavily moulded entablature / mantelpiece and inner marble fire surround. Black cast iron grate in 'boxing' (possibly originally a container for water to be heated). Firebrick reveals, painted black.

Windows: timber sash windows in 12 lights, shutter boxes and shutters each side. Panelled recess below cill level, all sides.

Doorways: Room door: timber six panelled door with timber frame and lining and moulded architrave (modern ogee moulding?). Blocked communicating doorway to adjacent front room has lining with moulded architrave (room occupants advise that the original door remains inside the encasement panel).

Floor: carpet (on timber floor). Floor falls towards adjacent side room.

Second Floor RH Front (Cavendish Room)



Second Floor RH Front Room (Cavendish Room) – wide angle view looking towards stairwell



Second Floor RH Front Room (Cavendish Room) – chimney piece / window surround

Ceiling: Flat plaster with c 100 mm moulded cornice to perimeter.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 200 mm torus moulded skirting.

Chimneypiece: a composite of Victorian marble outer surround and mantelpiece and Victorian or possibly late Georgian cast iron inner surround, modern tiles to inner reveals, modern cast iron grate front. Inner

grate and firebrick sides are missing; recess brickwork is painted black. Cast iron chimney closer is still in place but debris fallen into fireplace indicates that it does not, apparently, fully close. Floor carpet is carried into chimney recess.

Windows: timber sash windows in 12 lights, shutter boxes and shutters each side. Panelled recess below cill level, all sides.

Doorways: Room door: timber six panelled door with timber frame and lining, and moulded architrave. Blocked communicating doorways to adjacent rooms have linings with moulded architrave (room occupants advise that the original doors remain inside the encasement panels).

Floor: carpet (on timber floor). Floor falls towards adjacent side room.

Second Floor Rear (Hanover Room)



Second Floor Rear Room (Hanover Room)

Ceiling: Flat plaster with c 100 mm moulded cornice to perimeter.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 200 mm torus moulded skirting. (Chimneypiece removed and opening infilled.)

Windows: timber sash windows in 12 lights, shutter boxes and shutters each side. Panelled recess below cill level, all sides.

Doorways: Room door: timber six panelled door with timber frame and lining, and moulded architrave.

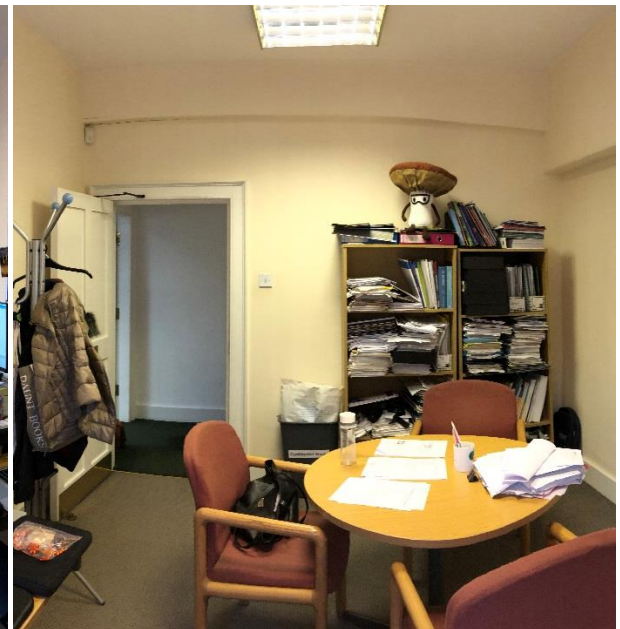
Blocked communicating doorway to adjacent front room has lining with moulded architrave (room occupants advise that the original door remains inside the encasement panel).

Floor: carpet (on timber floor).



Second Floor Rear Room (Hanover Room) – room doorway / window and panelling

Third Floor LH Front (Bloomsbury Room)



Ceiling: Flat plaster – no cornice. Sloped section of ceiling at front of room below roof mansard.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm square section skirting. Dividing wall to adjacent rear room appears to have been reconstructed at some point and has a c 100 mm square section skirting.

Windows: timber side hung casement windows within dormers with timber panel linings to cheeks.

Doorways: Room doors: timber four panelled plain doors with timber frame and lining and surround with moulded architrave.

Floor: carpet (on timber floor). Floor falls towards adjacent side room.

Third Floor RH Front (Montague Room)



Third Floor RH Front Room (Montague Room)– wide angle view

Ceiling: Flat plaster – no cornice. Sloped section of ceiling at front of room below roof mansard.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm square section skirting. Dividing wall to adjacent rear room appears to have been reconstructed at some point and has a c 100 mm square section skirting. (Chimney piece removed and opening infilled.)

Windows: timber side hung casement windows within dormers with timber panel linings to cheeks.

Doorways: Room doors: timber four panelled plain doors with timber frame and lining and surround with moulded architrave.

Floor: carpet (on timber floor). Floor falls towards adjacent side room.

Third Floor Rear (Portman Room)



Third Floor Rear Room (Portman Room) – wide angle view looking towards staircase wall

Ceiling: Flat plaster – no cornice.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm square section skirting. Dividing wall to adjacent front room appears to have been reconstructed at some point and has a c 100 mm square section skirting. (Chimney piece removed and opening infilled.)

Windows: timber sash windows in 6 lights (modern), in plastered recesses.

Doorways: Room doors: timber four panelled plain doors with timber frame and lining and surround with moulded architrave.

Floor: carpet (on timber floor). Floor falls towards front of building.

Fourth Floor (Trafalgar Room)



Fourth Floor – wide angle view

Generally: This upper floor of the building is of a later date than the main townhouse.

Ceiling: Flat plaster – no cornice. Sloped sections of ceiling at front and rear of room below roof mansards, beneath exposed timber purlins.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm square section skirting.

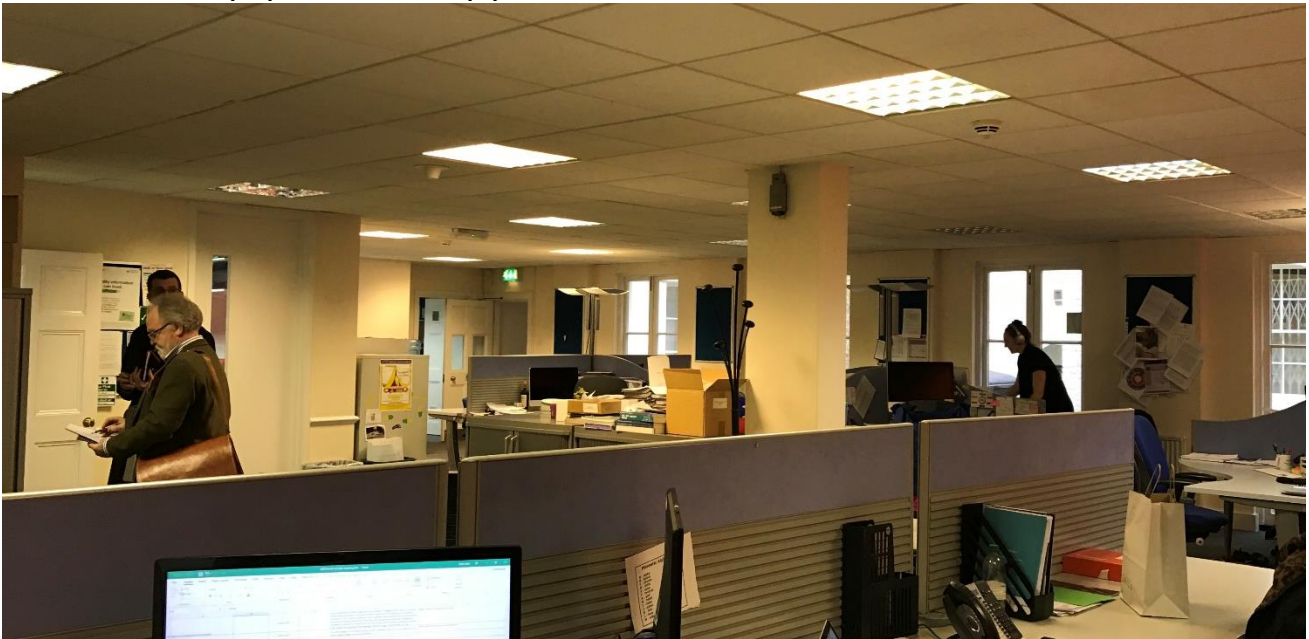
Windows: Front: timber side hung casement windows within dormers with plastered cheeks / rear: timber sash windows in 6 lights (modern), in dormers with plastered cheeks.

Doorways: timber four panelled plain doors with timber framing, with moulded architrave. Two small square doors in timber frames, sitting on the skirting of the front wall, give access to the lower roof over the front part of the floor below.

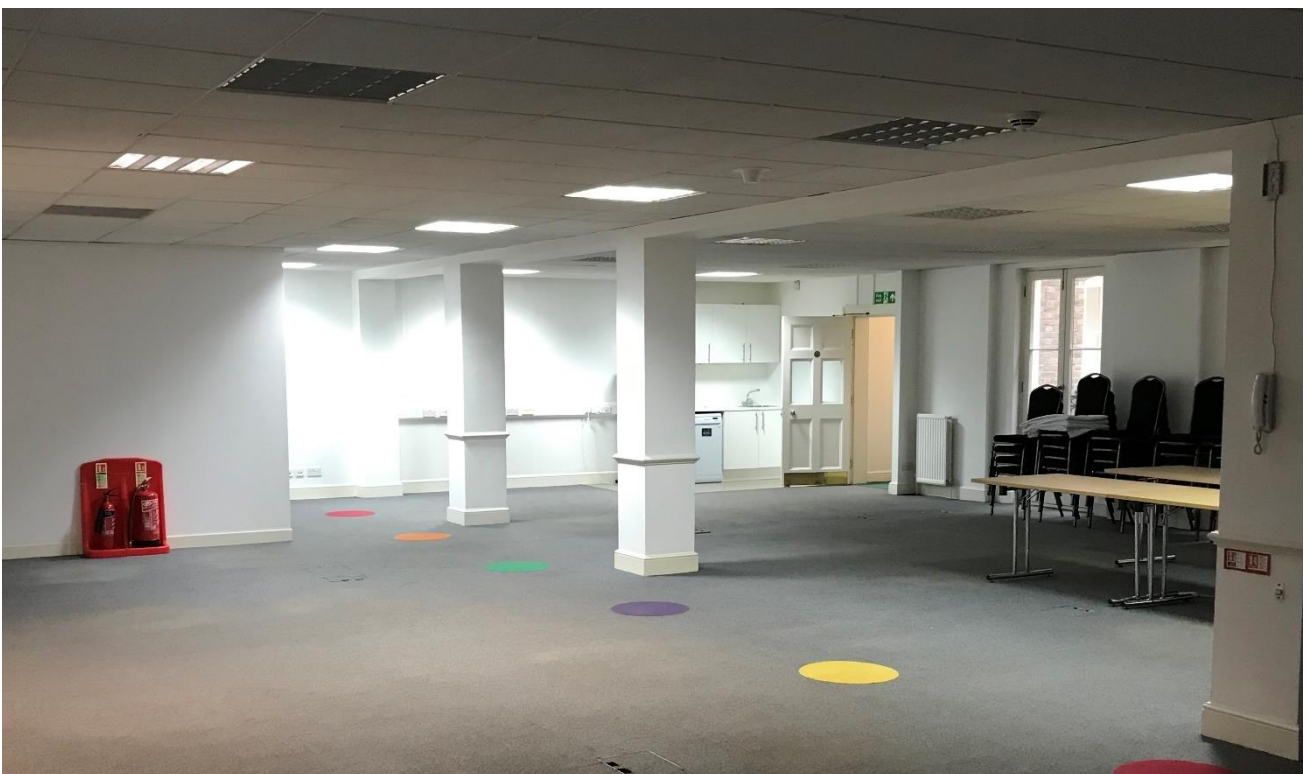
Floor: carpet (on timber floor).

ANCILLARY BUILDING

Extension Ground (LG) Floor and First (G) Floor



Office Extension - Ground (Lower Ground) Floor



Office Extension - First (Ground) Floor

Ceiling: tegular suspended ceiling panels in an exposed grid; integral luminaires.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm square section skirting. Dado to some walls and to columns.

Windows: French doors, each leaf glazed in 3 lights.

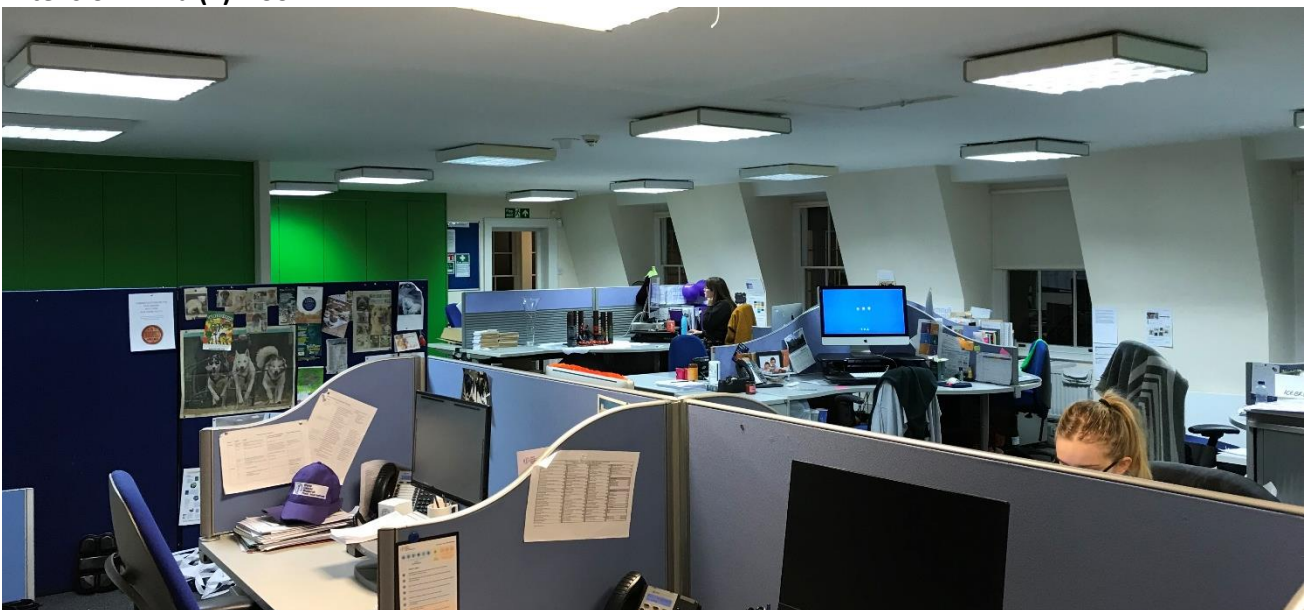
Doorways: timber four panelled doors with timber framing, with moulded architrave.
Floor: carpet tiles on concrete floor. Floor boxes connected by ducts set into floor.

Extension Second (1) Floor



Ceiling: tegular suspended ceiling panels in an exposed grid; integral luminaires.
Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm square section skirting. Dado to some walls and to columns.
Windows: timber sash windows, each sash glazed in 6 lights (12 total).
Doorways: timber four panelled doors with timber framing, with moulded architrave.
Floor: carpet tiles on concrete floor. Floor boxes connected by ducts set into floor.

Extension Third (2) Floor



Ceiling: Flat plaster – no cornice. Sloped sections of ceiling at front and rear of room below roof mansards.
Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm square section skirting.
Windows: sash windows in 6 lights, in dormers with plastered reveals / cheeks.

Doorways: timber four panelled doors with timber framing, with moulded architrave.

Floor: carpet tiles on concrete floor. Floor boxes connected by ducts set into floor.

Link Areas

Ceilings: Flat plaster – moulded cornices at appropriate levels to reflect hierarchy of floors within townhouse.

Walls: Flat plaster with timber skirting - c 150 mm torus skirtings at appropriate levels to reflect hierarchy of floors within townhouse.

Windows: Timber sash windows with sidelights.

Doorways: timber panelled doors with timber framing, with moulded architrave.

Floor: carpet tiles on concrete floor.

Lift: the lift is small, inserted as part of the 1980s extension, and non-compliant with respect to wheelchair use. It serves the lower ground to third floor (so the fourth floor has no lift access) and serves the stair landings of the townhouse where, at upper levels, additional steps are introduced to accommodate differences in levels between the original building and the link, such that the lift also becomes difficult for ambulant disabled use.

Toilets: generally fully tiled with plasterboard ceilings, vinyl flooring and modern sanitaryware.

Extension Staircase Areas



Stair: 'self-supporting' stone (or concrete) treads with a wrought-iron balustrade and mahogany handrail.

Windows: Timber sash windows with sidelights.

Ceiling: Flat plaster – moulded cornice to landings.

Walls: Flat plaster with c 150 mm torus skirting.

Doorways: timber panelled doors with timber framing, with moulded architrave.

Floor: carpet tiles on concrete floor.

Lift: the lift is c 1 m wide x 1300 mm deep – not fully compliant with respect to wheelchair use but with the capacity to accommodate a wheelchair. It serves all floors of the rear building including the ground level of the mews at the rear.

Toilets: generally tiled fully or half height with plasterboard ceilings, vinyl flooring and modern sanitaryware.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Disabled Access

Due to the age of the original building access for disabled persons from the street is necessarily restricted. In particular, the stepped entrance would be problematic for some ambulant disabled and all wheelchair bound persons to negotiate.

Disabled access is possible to the rear building via the door opening on to Gower Mews and the rear lift from this level which serves all floors.

Means of Escape

A reciprocal arrangement for escape in the event of fire appear to exist, or to have existed, with adjacent properties. A doorway from the fourth floor office opens into the staircase of 23 Bedford Square. A hatch in the ceiling of the fourth floor office appears to give access to the leadwork flat section of the lower roof over the front part of the third floor from which metal fire escape steps give access over the party wall to the roof of 21 Bedford Square (though this was not investigated at the time of survey). Investigation is required with The Bedford Estate as to whether these arrangements are still in place.

APPENDIX 1: OFFICIAL LISTING DESCRIPTION



NUMBERS 12-27 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS

Heritage Category: Listed Building. Grade: I.

List Entry Number: 1244546. Date first listed: 24-Oct-1951. Date of most recent amendment: 11-Jan-1999.

Statutory Address: NUMBERS 12-27 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 12-27, BEDFORD SQUARE.



National Grid Reference: TQ 29791 81708.

Details

CAMDEN

TQ2981NE BEDFORD SQUARE 798-1/99/77 (North side) 24/10/51 Nos.12-27 (Consecutive) and attached railings (Formerly Listed as: BEDFORD SQUARE Nos.1-54 (Consecutive))

Symmetrical terrace of 16 houses forming the north side of a square. 1776-1781. Mostly built by W Scott and R Grews; probably designed by either Thomas Leverton or Robert Palmer; for the Bedford Estate. Yellow

stock brick with evidence on most of the houses of tuck pointing. Plain stucco band at 1st floor level. The 2 centre houses, Nos 18 & 19, are stuccoed. Slate mansard roofs with dormers and tall slab chimney-stacks.

EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, attics and lower ground floors. 3 windows each. Recessed round-arched entrances with Coade stone vermiculated intermittent voussoirs and bands; mask keystones. Enriched impost bands and cornice-heads to doors. Side lights to panelled doors, some 2-leaf. Fanlights, mostly radial patterned. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars. The following have blind boxes: Nos 16-19, No.20 to 1st floor only, Nos 21 and 25. The following have cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows: Nos 12-15, 18-21, 23-25. No.12 has a good early C19 cast-iron balcony with round-arched trellis and tented canopy. Cornice and parapets, Nos 12 & 27 having balustraded parapets.

INTERIORS not inspected but noted to contain original stone stairs with cast and wrought-iron balusters of various scroll designs, decoration and features; special features as mentioned: No.12: 5 window return to Gower Street, some blind, plus single storey extension. The doorway is stucco, not Coade stone. No.13: Leverton's own house, occupied in 1782 but he did not settle here until 1795. Stucco doorway, not Coade stone. Rear elevation with canted bay to lower 3 floors and cast-iron balconies. INTERIOR: stair replaced by a timber version late C19. 2 fine plaster ceilings. No.14: rear elevation with full height canted bay. Plasterwork friezes and ceilings. Some curved doors. No.17: plaster ceiling. Nos 18 & 19: rusticated ground floor; 5 Ionic pilasters rise through the 1st and 2nd storeys to support a frieze with roundels above each pilaster, and pediment with delicate swag and roundel enrichment on the tympanum. At 2nd floor level a continuous enriched band running behind the pilasters.

INTERIORS with curved staircases; No.18 with original cellar including a storage cupboard. Attached to and facing the rear of No.19, a finely proportioned contemporary 2 storey and lower ground floor stuccoed building. 3 windows. Round-arched ground floor openings; windows set in architraved Coade stone surrounds with guilloche impost bands and female head keystones. 1st floor palm leaf string course. A rare survival of this kind of building attached to the rear wall of the coach-houses. No.21: screens and a plaster ceiling. Attached to and facing the rear, a well detailed contemporary 2 storey brick building. 3 windows. Arcaded ground floor with stucco impost bands. Entrance with radial patterned fanlight. Gauged brick flat arches to all sashes. Brick mutule cornice which continues around the pediment containing a blind oeil-de-boeuf. A rare urban survival of an ancillary building of the period. No.23: panelled doors and a plaster ceiling. No.24: rear elevation with canted bay to lower 3 floors. Plaster ceilings and panels. No.25: rear elevation with full height bow and full height half-canted closet. Wood carving and plaster ceilings, one originally with painted panels. No.26: plasterwork and closet room behind the stairs. No.27: original lower ground floor door with interesting metalwork. Some houses with original lead rainwater heads and pipes.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas with urn or torch-flambe finials. No.17 with a wrought-iron lamp bracket and snuffer. Most houses with good wrought-iron foot scrapers.

HISTORICAL NOTE: the houses in Bedford Square form a most important and complete example of C18 town planning. Built as a speculation, it is not clear who designed all the houses. Leverton was a country house architect and may have been involved with only the grander houses; he lived at No.13. Palmer was the Bedford Estate surveyor and may be responsible for the vagaries of the square. The majority of the plots leased by the estate were taken by Robert Grews, a carpenter, and William Scott, a brickmaker. No.22 was the residence of Sir J Forbes Robertson, actor (plaque). (Byrne A: Bedford Square, An architectural study: London: -1990).

Listing NGR: TQ2979181708.

Legal

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

End of official listing.