

Gray's Inn, North Gateway
Theobald's Road
London
WC1

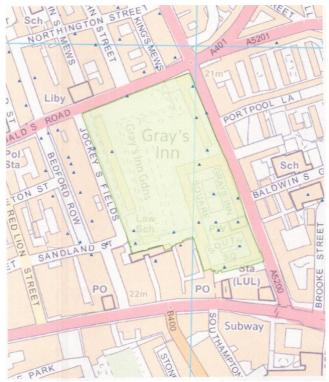
**Assessment of Special Interest and Significance** 

#### **Gray's Inn, North Gateway**

#### **Assessment of Special Interest and Significance**

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The four Inns of Chancery, forming a belt of legal precincts west of the City of London, are amongst the capital's oldest institutions. Each is of exceptional historic, architectural and cultural importance. Together Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, Staple Inn and The Temple have helped to establish London as a world centre for legal expertise.
- 1.2 Gray's Inn lies to the north of High Holborn and west of Gray's Inn Road. The Society of Gray's Inn first occupied the site in the 14<sup>th</sup> century having acquired the manor house of Purpoole from the de Grey family. Development continued through the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries but the Inn suffered substantial bomb damage during World War II. Fortunately sensitive repair and rebuilding by Sir Edward Maufe recaptured its character and sense of place so much so that Sir Nikolaus Pevsner writing in <a href="The Buildings of England">The Buildings of England</a> noted that "The many contrasts between heights and sizes of open spaces should be specially studied: narrow paved spaces, wide turfed spaces, and finally the long expanse of the gardens. It is English visual planning at its best."



Gray's Inn, Listed Buildings and Structures

- 1.3 Today there are four principle areas to the Inn: Gray's Inn Square, South Square, The Walks, (Gardens) and Field Court. Within the Inn there are 34 buildings and structures on the Statutory List, of which 8 are included at Grade II\*, placing them within the most important 8% of the nation's historic buildings. The entire Inn is included on Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens at Grade II\* and lies within an Archaeological Priority Area. As with all of Holborn, Gray's Inn stands within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 1.4 The Walks, or Gray's Inn Gardens, were first laid out in 1597 by St Francis Bacon, bencher of Gray's Inn, by building walls around an open field to the west of what is Gray's Inn Square. The area became a fashionable place of resort with the fine, iron gates leading onto Field Court added in 1723. (Now included on the Statutory List at Grade II). In 1755 the layout of the Walks was simplified, probably by Capability Brown, including replacing the walls at the northern end by earth slopes. Importantly, the open aspect towards Highgate village from the raised terrace along the northern edge was retained.
- 1.5 Bacon's basic layout remains readable today. The northern boundary of the Inn remains open, although no longer offering views towards Highgate, marked by a stone capped, sleeper wall and cast iron railings along the south side of Theobald's Road. The wall and railings are included on the Statutory List at Grade II.
- 1.6 Raymond Buildings occupy part of what was the western terrace to The Walks. Erected in 1825 to the designs of George Wigg, Raymond Buildings is a terrace of six sets of chambers running north/south and standing on four storeys with attics and basements. Pesvner describes the terrace as "exceedingly plain" but nevertheless, it is included on the Statutory List at Grade II.
- 1.7 Raymond Buildings face an unnamed road running along the western boundary of the Inn. The boundary is marked by a high brick wall on the other side of which runs Jockey Fields. At its northern end, the wall turns to face Theobald's Road and includes a vehicular gateway into the Inn. The complete structure, west and north of Raymond Buildings is included on the Statutory List at Grade II.

#### 2.0 The North Gateway

2.1 The North Gateway stands just north west of Raymond Buildings. Rendered gate piers with studded wooden gates stand in the centre of high rendered walls defining a carriage entrance into the Inn from Theobald's Road. Each pier has a small pedimented cap set back flush with the inner face of the pier to increase the clear gap between the pair. The clear gap between the piers is 3.3 metres. Either side of the carriage gate is a pedestrian entrance although that on the west side is now "blind". Each pedestrian "entrance" is surmounted by a consol bracketed pediment. (Presumably the western entrance was closed when a new porter's lodge was constructed behind the wall to replace that lost to war damage).

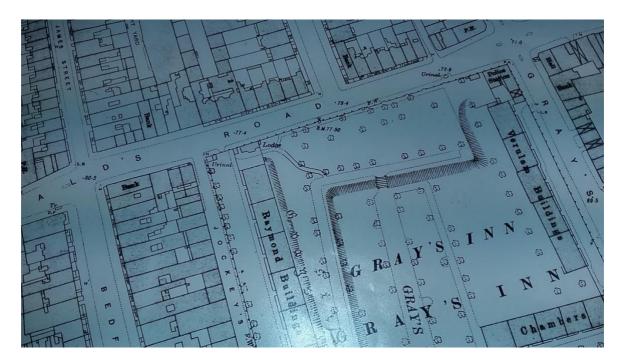


Gateway from Theobald's Road



Gateway from within the Inn

- 2.2 The entire structure is included on the Statutory List at Grade II.
- 2.3 The history of the structure is not entirely clear. The list entry dates the walls and gate piers to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century along with the low, sleeper wall running along the south side of Theobald's Road enclosing The Walks. (The list entry dates the Theobald's Road railings to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century). However, it is reasonable to assume that the gates and walls stand on the northern boundary of the site which the Inn acquired from the de Grey family in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. (Purpoole Manor House).
- 2.4 The Ordnance Survey map of 1914 shows the gateway with a lodge immediately to its east, on the boundary with Theobald's Road, to the north of Number 1, Raymond Buildings. The map does not mark pedestrian entrances either side of the carriage gate.



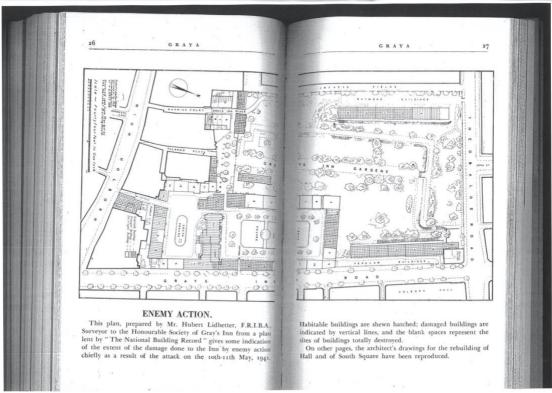
1914 Ordnance Survey Map

- 2.5 On the night of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1941, a parachute bomb landed on Theobald's Road immediately in front of the Inn. Photographs taken the following day show Number 1 Raymond Buildings, the lodge and the wall forming the boundary with Theobald's Road severely damaged by the blast. (There was also extensive damage to buildings on the north side of Theobald's Road).
- 2.6 The bomb damage map of Gray's Inn prepared by the Surveyor to the Inn, from the National Building Record, shows Number 1, Raymond Buildings severely damaged and the lodge totally destroyed. (Like the 1914 Ordnance

Survey map, the drawing does not show pedestrian entrances either side of the carriageway).



Jan 1941 Bomb Damage



Bomb Damage Plan

2.7 Photos taken on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1941 show the lodge cleared away along with the wall to Theobald's Road. Although not entirely clear, the photograph appears to show only the western gate pier still standing.



March 1941 Bomb Damage

2.8 The Ordnance Survey Map of 1951 shows the lodge, gate piers and gates entirely cleared away.



1951 Ordnance Survey Map

2.9 Post-war repairs included rebuilding Number 1 Raymond Buildings but not the lodge that stood to its north. The boundary wall with Theobald's Road was not rebuilt but replaced with cast-iron railings to match those running east along

Theobald's Road, enclosing the Walks. A new lodge was built on the west side of the carriage gate.

2.10 Sample opening up and cleaning of the walls and gate piers confirms that the render is a strong, cement-based mix rather than lime-based stucco. The pier and wall cores are brick but again the bedding mortar is a strong, cement-based mix rather than lime-based. The pier caps appear to be cast cement rather than stone and have been moved from a traditional, central position.





Pier Core

Wall Core

2.11 Although the photographic and Ordnance Survey based evidence is not wholly conclusive, it points to a strong likelihood that the North Gate and walls were rebuilt after war damage. The extent of damage evident in the photographs makes it very unlikely that the gateway could have escaped unscathed. In addition, there is no evidence of settlement or disturbance caused by bomb damage and none of localised repair or stabilisation. The entire structure appears to be in sound condition with all surfaces straight and even. Partial opening up has confirmed that the render coating is not 19<sup>th</sup> century stucco.

#### 3.0 **Special Interest**

3.1 On 14<sup>th</sup> May 1974 the North Gateway and adjoining walls were added to the Secretary of State's Statutory List of Buildings of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest at Grade II. The list description reads as follows:

"Raymond Buildings Gateway and Walls THEOBALD'S ROAD. Gateway and Walls with railings. Early C19 gate to Theobald's Road with stucco gate piers and studded wooden gates to carriage entrance. Stucco stone capped wall with footway entrance to east, the north elevation with console bracketed pediment. Similar blind entrance to the west."

The complete List Entry is attached as Appendix A.

- 3.2 At that time, (1974), the List Entry was intended solely to identify the historic asset, not to set out the principle reasons for designation as is the current practice. Nevertheless, the special interest of the Gateway can be said to rest on two principle attributes:
  - Historic interest: as marking the boundary of the land acquired by the society of Gray's Inn from the de Grey family from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
     Whilst the form and fabric of the boundary have changed over centuries, the line and ownership has not.
  - Architectural interest: as a 19<sup>th</sup> century-built form of enclosure to an important, private estate. The studded wooden gates and embellished pedestrian entrances either side of the carriage way are characteristic of the period. Although there have been significant changes to fabric over time, the general appearance and character continue to illustrate 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural form.
- 3.3 For these reasons, the special interest of the Gateway is such that its inclusion on the Statutory List is fully justified. In addition to its intrinsic interest, the Gateway has "Group value" with the other structures of the Inn particularly the wall and railings along the south side of Theobald's Road and Raymond Buildings, (both of which are listed in their own right).

#### 4.0 Significance

- 4.1 "Significance" is a concept first explored by the International Council on Monuments and sites, (ICOMOS), in the 1960s to understand, explain and manage the importance of World Heritage Sites, some of which were not outstanding examples of architecture. ICOMOS introduced the concept of "cultural heritage" which could be expressed as one or a number of the following "values":
  - Aesthetic value
  - Historic value
  - Scientific value
  - Social value
- 4.2 In April 2008 English heritage published <u>Conservation Principles</u> which developed the "values based" approach as a way of capturing and explaining a wider understanding of why an historic building or place was important or significant and to whom. Identifying and describing significance has now been adopted by the UK's historic environment sector as best practice in explaining why an historic building or place is important. Of particular note, the Secretary of State's <u>National Planning Policy Framework</u>, (NPPF), first issued in March 2012, revised in July 2018 and again in February 2019, consistently uses the concept of significance as the principle way assessing the appropriateness of proposals for change within the historic environment. <u>Significance</u> is now a "material consideration" to be given substantial weight by decision makers in exercising the "planning balance".
- 4.3 English Heritage, now Historic England, suggested that significance might be understood through one or all of the following "values":
  - "Evidential value": relating to the potential of a place to yield primary evidence about past human activity
  - "Historical value": Relating to the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present
  - "Aesthetic value": relating to the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place

- "Communal value": relating to the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, and whose collective experience or memory it holds.
- 4.4 The significance of the Gateway rests upon the following principal attributes:
  - First, as part of the historic boundary of Gray's Inn, a site owned and occupied by the Society for some 700 years.
  - Second, as signalling the private nature of a large estate within the city in the ownership of a major, historic institution.
  - Third, as a 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural form of enclosure.
  - Fourth, as illustrating the development of the Inn and the memories it holds for its members, over the 700 years that it has occupied the site.
- 4.5 Where a building or structure is regarded as significant for the value or values that it holds, the level of significance is often described as exceptional, high, medium, modest, neutral or negative. These terms are not defined in the NPPF nor in Historic England Guidance, particularly <u>Statements of Heritage</u> <u>Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets.</u> Their application is a matter of judgement based upon an informed values-based assessment.
- 4.6 If tested against the values-based approach advocated by Historic England, the North Gateway would be assessed as having <u>high</u> Historical and Evidential value, together with <u>medium</u> Aesthetic and Communal value.

#### 5.0 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area

5.1 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 but there have been numerous subsequent extensions. The current Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy was adopted in April 2011. Due to the complexity and size of the Conservation Area, some 160 hectares, the Appraisal defines 14 sub areas. Sub area 9, Lincoln's Inn/Inns of Court/High Holborn, includes Gray's Inn.

5.2 The Appraisal summarises the character of Gray's Inn as follows:

Para 5.152

"The whole area has a private, internalised feel, hidden from the main surrounding streets except at key locations where there are glimpsed views into the larger gardens. Historically, the north side of Gray's Inn Gardens was left undeveloped to provide views to Highgate. Today, the gardens are screened from Theobald's Road by tall cast-iron railings, planting, mature trees and lawns which slope down from street level. The sense of privacy of the Inns of Court is reinforced by continuous enclosed street frontages with gateways or arches. Indeed, it is the interrelationship between the varying sizes and types of spaces and the high quality of the environment which contributes to the distinct character of the sub area."

- 5.3 Appendix 2 of the Appraisal lists those buildings within sub area 9 which are listed, positive contributors or detractors along with elements of streetscape interest, shopfronts and views. The North Gateway is included as a listed building together with "Glimpsed views from surrounding streets through archways and entrances to Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn."
- 5.4 Gray's Inn as a whole makes a substantial, positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The North Gateway is of special architectural and historic interest and an intrinsic part of that contribution.

#### 6.0 Proposals

6.1 The existing clear gap between the gate piers is 3.23 metres. This means that larger vehicles servicing the Inn can only pass through by approaching at an angle of 90° and in order to do so, first mounting the pavement on the north side of Theobald's Road in front of the library.

As a consequence, the gates and piers are regularly damaged by vehicles and the pier caps have been moved back from their traditional position.





Damaged Gate

Off centre Pier Cap

6.2 Listed Building consent has been sought to increase the width of the opening by 1.5 metres. This would be achieved by increasing the width of the gate from 2 to 3 panels and re-siting the piers to suit. The new gates and piers would exactly replicate the materiality, detailing and character of the existing fabric. The pier caps would be placed symmetrically as they should be.

#### 7.0 **Policy and Guidance**

#### **National Legislation**

- 7.1 When considering proposals for development which would affect a listed building, primary legislation in Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities in considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a listed building or its setting to "have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting".
- 7.2 Similarly, when considering proposals for development within a Conservation Area, Section 72(1) of the Act requires local planning authorities to pay

"special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

#### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.3 The National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF), sets out the Government's planning policies and how they are to be applied. It begins with the primary objective that "The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development" Sustainable development is defined as having three dimensions:
  - \*an environmental role
  - \*an economic role
  - \*a social role

The environmental role is defined as "contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment" Achieving sustainable development, as defined in this way, lies at the heart of Government planning policy and is the golden thread that runs through the NPPF.

- 7.4 Section 16 of the NPPF sets out Government Policy for "Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment. The following paragraphs are of particular relevance:
  - \*Para 193--great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
  - \*Para 189—describe the significance of the asset.
  - \*Para 192—sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
  - \*Paras 194-196—where harm would be caused to the significance of designated heritage assets.
  - \*Para 200 look for opportunities for new development in Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.

#### **Conservation Principles**

- 7.5 In April 2008, English Heritage, now Historic England, published Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance for the sustainable Management of the Historic Environment. It explains that "Considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places, as well as generating the need to protect their established heritage values".
- 7.6 Six broad principles for management of the historic environment are set out. Principle 4 is that "significant places should be managed to sustain their values" This is explained as follows:
  - \*"Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change".
  - \*"Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values".

#### **Decision Making**

- 7.7 In July 2015 Historic England, previously English Heritage, published its Good Practice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment. Para 6 mirrors the "staged approach" to decision making which would be set out in Planning Note 3 and includes the advice to "Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance".
- 7.8 Para 52 advises that "sustainable development can involve seeking positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment".

#### **Setting Guidance**

- 7.9 In December 2017 Historic England, previously English Heritage, published its Good Practice in Planning. Note 3: The Setting of Historic Assets. The Note advocates a "Staged Approach to proportionate Decision-Taking as follows: Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their setting are affected.
  - Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the asset.

- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development on the significance of the assets.
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid harm.
- Step 5: Make and document the decision.

#### Development Plan

7.10 Camden's conservation policies are set out in its adopted Local Plan 2017. Chapter 7, Design and Heritage, includes the following policies:

#### • Policy DI Design

"The Council will seek to secure high quality in development." Amongst other criteria, the policy references the need to respect context and character, the expectation of achieving excellence in architecture and design and a welcome for high quality contemporary design which responds to character.

#### Policy D2 Heritage

"The Council will preserve and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets."

Amongst other criteria, the policy references a requirement that development within Conservation Areas preserves or where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area.

#### 8.0 <u>Impact of the Proposals</u>

8.1 The English Heritage, now Historic England, guidance, <u>Conservation Principles</u>, makes the point that "Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change" (para4.1). Also, that "Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, whilst recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations" (para 4.2).

- 8.2 These emerging proposals reflect that approach by suggesting a positive strategy to the effective servicing of the Inn, and access by emergency vehicles, in a manner which would meet its reasonable operational requirements without causing harm to the attributes of characteristics which make it special. In the widest sense it would help to meet the requirement set out in the NPPF at para 193 that "great weight should be given to the asset's conservation"; in this case, the Inn as an important, historic institution. The following points are of particular note.
- 8.3 There would be no loss of 19<sup>th</sup> century historic fabric.
  - Photographic evidence confirms that the area to the north of Raymond Buildings, including the terrace itself, suffered severe bomb damage in January 1941. The extent of damage was such that it is very unlikely that the Gateway could have escaped unscathed. It is clear that the pier caps were dislodged and photographs taken in March 1941, after the area was cleared, appear to suggest that only the western pier was left standing.
  - Selective areas of opening up have confirmed that along with the bedding mortar of the brick cores, the render covering on the piers and walls is a hard, cement-based mix rather than 19<sup>th</sup> century stucco.
  - All of the available evidence points to a near certainty that the gate piers and adjoining walls were rebuilt in replica after sustaining severe bomb damage.
  - The wooden gates are recently erected replicas. Wet rot, beetle attack and vehicle damage resulted in the need to replace those which had previously existed.
- 8.4 The materiality and detailing of the new Gateway would closely follow that which exists today. There would be a recognisable increase in the width of the opening and new gates but the general appearance and character of the structure would be retained.
- 8.5 The architecturally embellished pedestrian entrances either side of the carriage way would not be affected by the proposals. (The Western

"entrance" is already blocked and no longer in use, but its pedimented and architraved framing would continue to match that to the east).

- 8.6 There would be some change to the Gateway, principally the proportions of the carriage opening and the loss of post-war fabric, but none which would cause harm to its special architectural and historic interest of the reasons why it is included on the Statutory List. The structure would continue to be readable and understood as a 19<sup>th</sup> century form of architectural enclosure to an important, private estate.
- 8.7 Neither would the proposals cause any harm to the ability to understand or appreciate the significance of the Gateway. It would continue to mark the ancient boundary of the Inn, (historical and evidential value), be recognisable as a 19<sup>th</sup> century-built form, (aesthetic value) and continue its contribution to the development and general character of the Inn, (communal value).
- 8.8 No harm would be caused to the setting, views or significance of any other historic asset, particularly Raymond Buildings and the north boundary wall and railings to the Inn.
- 8.9 For the same reasons, the Gateway would continue to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

#### 9.0 Summary and Conclusions

"Constructive conservation" is the phrase used by Historic England to describe managing change within the historic environment in a manner which sustains and reinforces the qualities which make it special. Implementing these proposals would fully accord with that approach by providing for the effective servicing of Gray's Inn without causing harm to the special architectural or historic interest of the North Gateway. There would be some change, notably to the proportions of the carriage opening and the replacement in replica of post-war fabric, but none which would cause harm to the structure's significance or the ability to appreciate the attributes which make it special. The Gateway would continue to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, particularly the townscape along Theobald's Road, and to the views and setting of other close by historic assets.

- 9.2 For these reasons, the proposals would accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF), particularly the guidance set out at:
  - Paragraph 193 (great weight should be given to the asset's conservation)
  - Paragraph 189 (describe the significance of the asset)
  - Paragraph 192 (sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation).
- 9.3 The proposals would also accord with those policies set out in the Council's adopted Local Plan which aim to safeguard and enhance Camden's historic environment.
- 9.4 The proposals would meet the statutory obligations set out in Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 9.5 For all of these reasons, the proposals offer an appropriate, conservation led approach to securing the future of this listed structure in a manner which would allow its intrinsic qualities, contribution to the setting and views of other historic assets and contribution to the Conservation Area to be sustained and reinforced.

Paddy Pugh November 2019

#### Appendix A

# GATEWAY AND WALLS TO NORTH AND WEST OF RAYMOND BUILDINGS RAYMOND BUILDINGS GATEWAY AND WALLS

#### Overview

Heritage Category:

**Listed Building** 

Grade:

Ш

List Entry Number:

1322152

Date first listed:

14-May-1974

**Statutory Address:** 

GATEWAY AND WALLS TO NORTH AND WEST OF RAYMOND BUILDINGS, GRAY'S INN

**Statutory Address:** 

RAYMOND BUILDINGS GATEWAY AND WALLS, THEOBALD'S ROAD



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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1322152.pdf(opens in a new window)

This copy shows the entry on 14-Nov-2019 at 14:03:28.

#### Location

**Statutory Address:** 

GATEWAY AND WALLS TO NORTH AND WEST OF RAYMOND BUILDINGS, GRAY'S INN

**Statutory Address:** 

RAYMOND BUILDINGS GATEWAY AND WALLS, THEOBALD'S ROAD The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

**Greater London Authority** 

**District:** 

Camden (London Borough)

National Grid Reference:

TQ 30850 81844

#### **Details**

**CAMDEN** 

TQ3081NE GRAY'S INN 798-1/101/626 (North side) 14/05/74 Gateway and walls to north and west of Raymond Buildings

**GV II** 

Includes: Raymond Buildings Gateway and Walls THEOBALD'S ROAD. Gateway & walls with railings. Early C19 gate to Theobald's Road with stucco gate piers and studded wooden gates to carriage entrance. Stucco stone capped wall with footway entrance to east, the north elevation with console bracketed pediment. Similar blind entrance to the west.

**CAMDEN** 

TQ3081NE THEOBALD'S ROAD 798-1/101/626 Raymond Buildings Gateway and Walls 14/05/74

**GV II** 

See under: Gateway and walls to north and west of Raymond Buildings GRAY'S INN.

Listing NGR: TQ3085081844

### Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:

477463

Legacy System:

**LBS** 

# 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