

Our ref: JCH00967

20 Farringdon Street
London, EC4A 4AB
T +44 20 3691 0500

Date: 13 December 2019

Dear Sanchita,

Subject: 59-60 Russell Square London WC1B 4HP (2019/4560/L)

Following the on-site meeting on 14 October 2019, further research on the historical development of nos. 59-60 Russell Square was carried out and the development proposals have been updated on the basis of this research and on the basis of the discussion we had on site. The historical research, which focuses on the historical development of the internal architectural form of No. 60 Russell Square, is detailed hereunder. Further to this and in accordance with Section 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the significance of nos. 59-60 Russell Square (Grade II), including the contribution that the internal architectural form of the no. 60 makes to this significance, and the effects of the proposals on this significance are also assessed hereunder.

Historical Development of Nos. 59-60 Russell Square

Nos. 59-60 Russell Square were originally built as two separate terraces on the Bedford Estate in c. 1800-03 as part of a terrace of nine houses (nos. 52-60) located on the southeast side of Russell Square. They were designed and built by the architect and property developer James Burton and were altered in c. 1898 by P.E. Pilditch, particularly with the addition of decorative terracotta architectural details to their front elevations. The whole terrace (nos. 52-60) was listed Grade II on 28 March 1969 (refer to the attached listing description in Annex 2).

As the 1967 ground-floor plan shows (fig. 1 in Annex 1), in the late-1960s, the ground floor of no. 60 Russell Square consisted of an entrance hall, preceded by a large porch, which then led to a principal staircase, similar to the existing ground-floor layout of no. 59 Russell Square. The entrance doorway to the front reception room was located within the stairwell space. This front reception room was then connected to another room to the rear by a set of double doors. A photo dated 1972 taken from the stairwell shows that the entrance hall was separated from the former by a glazed double doorway flanked by Ionic pilasters and topped with a fanlight. This was similar in design as the one that still exists in no. 59 Russell Square.

By the early 1980s, as shown by the 1981 ground floor plan (fig. 2 in Annex 1), the ground floor plan had been changed considerably as works had been carried out to combine no. 59 and no. 60 as one office building. The principal staircase and the stairwell of no. 60 were completely removed. The stairwell space at ground floor was then combined with the entrance hall and converted into office space, with the earlier glazed double doorway with Ionic pilasters being removed in the process. The entrance door appears to have been moved closer to the arched porch entrance, diminishing the size of the front porch. This entrance door would have

Our ref: JCH00967

been similarly placed as the entrance door of no. 57 Russell Square, which is still recessed well from the porch entrance. The room to the rear was considerably altered with the insertion of a lift, while the front reception room was reduced in size with the insertion of a partition wall at the back to create a lobby space that led to a new entranceway into no. 59 Russel Square.

In the subsequent years, probably in the late 1980s, the ground floor layout of no. 60 Russell square was changed yet again to its present formation (fig. 3 in Annex 1). The space where the stairwell was previously located was separated again from the entrance hall with the insertion of a partition wall at the location where the glazed double doorway with Ionic pilasters was once located. This space was then amalgamated with the room to the rear to form a large meeting room. The large flat-arched opening that is located between entrance hall and the reception room was probably inserted in this period. This was later blocked, except for a large top-light, and a moulded doorcase was inserted to connect the entrance hall with the reception room. The two moulded doorcases in the reception room's back wall also appear to have been inserted during this period to connect the reception room to the new meeting room at the rear and to the lobby space next to the lift.

As such, due to major alterations carried out in the 1970s and 1980s, most of the fabric of no. 60's ground floor is not likely to be historic and the existing architectural features, such as cornices, dado rails and moulded doorcases, are either likely to have been readapted from earlier decorations or inserted all anew as late-twentieth-century pastiche replicas: the cornices in both the entrance hall and reception room are likely to have been re-adapted as new partition walls were inserted and as the front door was moved forwards; the ceiling rose in the entrance hall is also likely to have been relocated or completely replaced when the front door was moved forwards; the dado rail in reception room is likely to either have been re-adapted from an earlier form when the room was bigger or inserted all anew as a pastiche replica; the three moulded doorcases in the reception room are most likely to be late-twentieth-century pastiche replicas; while the mirror appears to be far too big to be historic and is likely to be a pastiche replica.

Significance

The significance of nos. 59-60 Russell Square is interlinked with the significance of the whole terrace (Nos. 52-60), which is considered to have high architectural and historic interest. The terrace was built in c. 1800-03 and has a characteristically late-Georgian or early-Regency architectural form. However, ornate terracotta architectural details were installed to the entire front elevation in c. 1898, after the Duke of Bedford was inspired by the elaborate terracotta work of then newly-built Russell Hotel, giving the terrace a unique external appearance.

Although the original architectural plans from the early-nineteenth century could not be located, the terraced houses are likely to have had a similar internal layout (bar the central terrace), with their ground-floor consisting of a porch, entrance hallway leading to a principal staircase to one side and a front reception room and second room to the rear to the other side. This historic ground-floor plan form appears to have remained legible in both no. 59 and no. 60 until the 1960s. However, when the two terraces were amalgamated in the late-1960s and converted into offices, no. 60 was considerably altered, particularly with the removal of the principal staircase, insertion of a lift and new partition walls, and the relocation of doorways. As a result, most of its internal

Our ref: JCH00967

architectural features were either considerably adapted or inserted all anew as pastiche replicas as detailed above.

Therefore, whilst the internal architectural form of no. 59 has remained largely faithful to its historic form and is thus considered to contribute to the significance of the listed terrace, the internal architectural form of no. 60 is considered to contribute very little to significance due to the high degree of alteration carried out in the late-twentieth century. Nonetheless, the historic separation between the entrance hall and front reception room has remained (largely because it was crudely restored with an infill wall within the large late-twentieth-century arched opening). This provides some contribution to significance.

Development Proposals

The development proposals are confined to the entrance hall and reception room of no. 60 Russell Square and include:

- The removal of the late-twentieth-century flat-arched opening and the existing infill, top-light and doorcase within it, whilst leaving the cornices in both the entrance hall and the reception room intact;
- The construction of a wall with a 1.8m wide by 2.1m high double hinged door with architraves on both sides to match the existing doors;
- The installation of new dado rail and skirting on the proposed wall to match the existing finishes in the reception room;
- The installation of a frameless glazed double door with sidelights and fanlight above to form an entrance vestibule within the entrance hall, which would be similar in its arrangement to the one found in no. 59 Russell Square;
- The installation of cornices around the down-stand of the proposed vestibule door to match the existing cornice in the entrance hall; and
- The relocation of the existing ceiling rose to the proposed vestibule.

Assessment of Impact

The development proposals aim to preserve and provide a degree of enhancement to the significance of the listed terrace.

The removal of late-twentieth-century flat-arched opening and the existing infill, top-light and replica doorcase within it, will not harm the significance of the listed terrace as these are late-twentieth century alterations that are not very respectful to the historic relationship between the entrance hall and front reception room. The removal of the existing single doorcase, which will not be reuse, will also not harm the significance of the listed terrace as it is a replica, installed in the late-twentieth century when the existing partition wall blocking the large archway was inserted.

Instead, the proposals include a wall, finished off with a skirting and dado rail to match the existing, and a double doorway with architraves on both sides to match the existing doorways in height and style. This is considered to be far more respectful to the historic architectural arrangement of the internal plan form of the

Our ref: JCH00967

terrace. This part of the proposal is considered to provide a degree of enhancement to the architectural interest of the listed terrace.

The installation of the frameless glazed double door within the entrance hall would create a vestibule, similar in its arrangement to the one found within the entrance hallway of no. 59 Russell Square. The proposed door will be placed in the location where the main entrance door was originally located. This will restore, to a degree, the historic porched entrance of the terrace and the arrangement of the entrance hall and is thus also considered to provide a degree of enhancement.

The design of the proposed glazed doorway is contemporary and does not seek to replicate the historic glazed doorway with Ionic columns. This is because this historic doorway was located at the far end of the entrance hallway, where a partition wall is now located, and not at the location of the proposed glazed door. As such seeking to replicate the design of the historic doorway at a different location would be considered to go against the principals of conservation and authenticity.

The existing cornices and ceiling rose within the entrance hall will be retained and replicated above the proposed vestibule door to preserve the existing architectural interest of the entrance hall. The mirror that is located above the fireplace in the reception room will be retained.

Therefore, in accordance to the NPPF, the development proposals are considered to preserve and enhance to a degree the significance of the listed terrace as they preserve the historic separation between the entrance hall and the front reception room but also enhance the architectural interest of the property by replacing unsympathetic late-twentieth-century alterations with additions that are informed by the historic architectural form of the listed terrace.

Yours sincerely,

for RPS Consulting Services Ltd



Joachim W Abela
Built Heritage Consultant
joachim.abela@rpsgroup.com
+44 2077965071

Annex 1

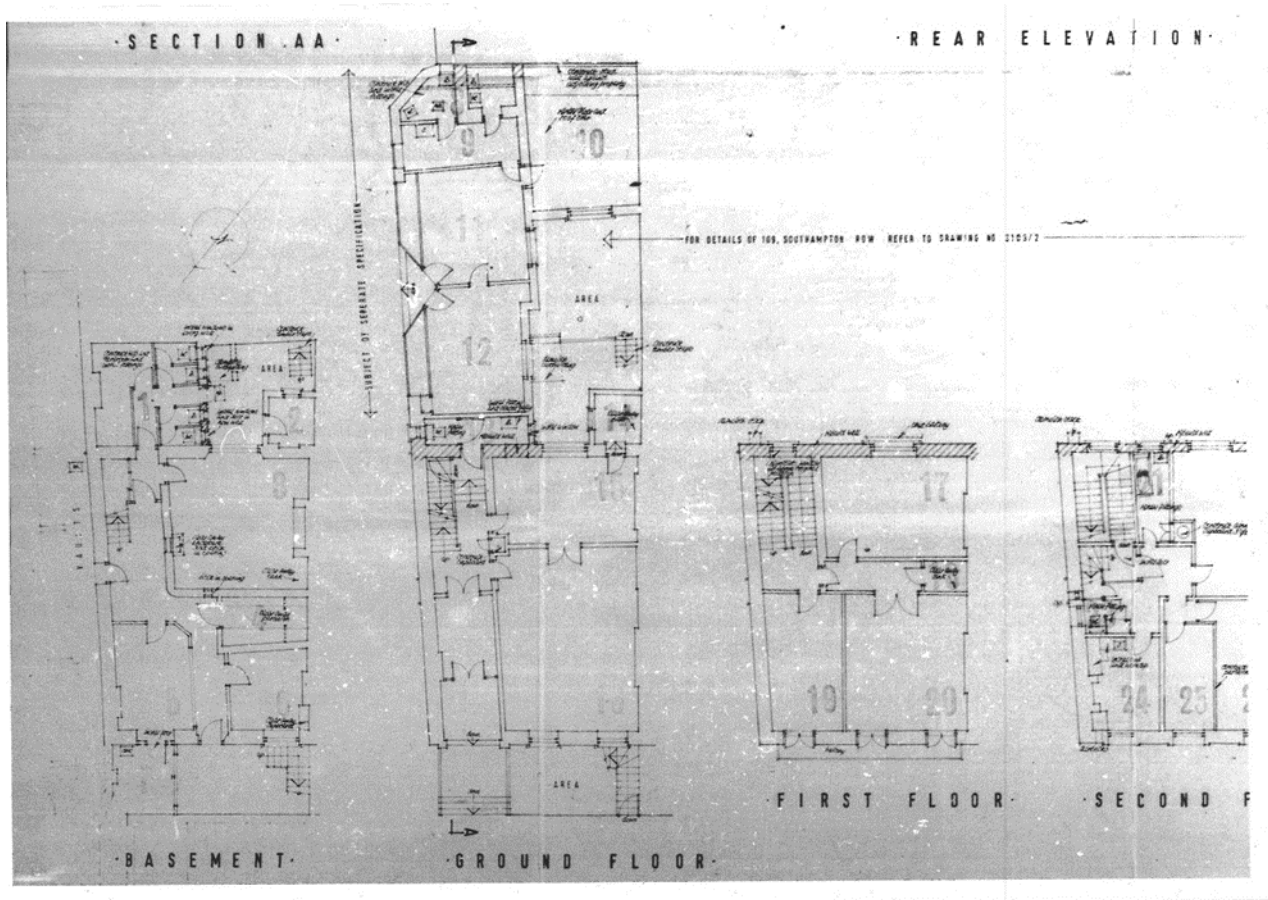


Figure 1: Floor plans of no. 60 Russell Square dated 1967 showing the layout of the ground floor in the late-1960s (Source: Camden Archive).

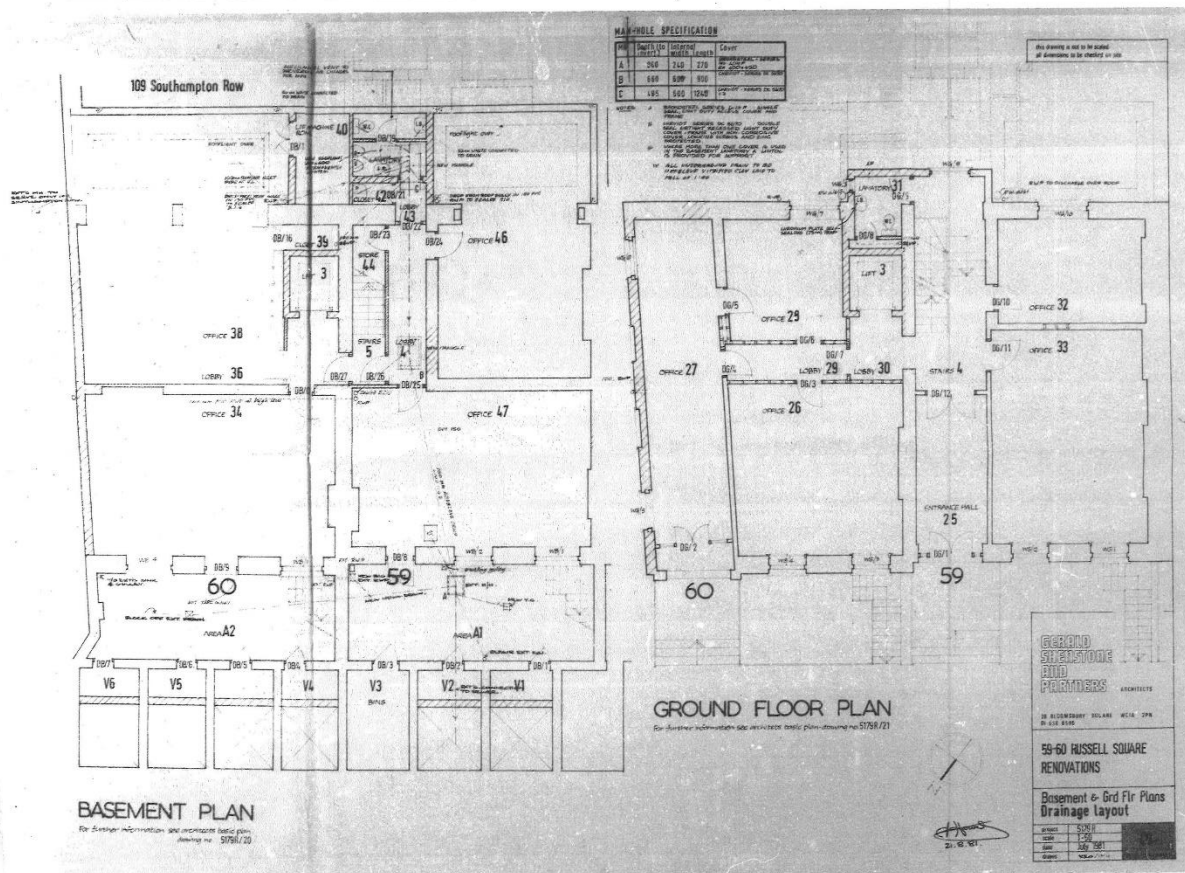


Figure 2: Floor plans of nos. 59-60 Russell Square dated 1981 showing the layout of the ground floor in the early-1980s (Source: Camden Archive).

Area to which the application relates

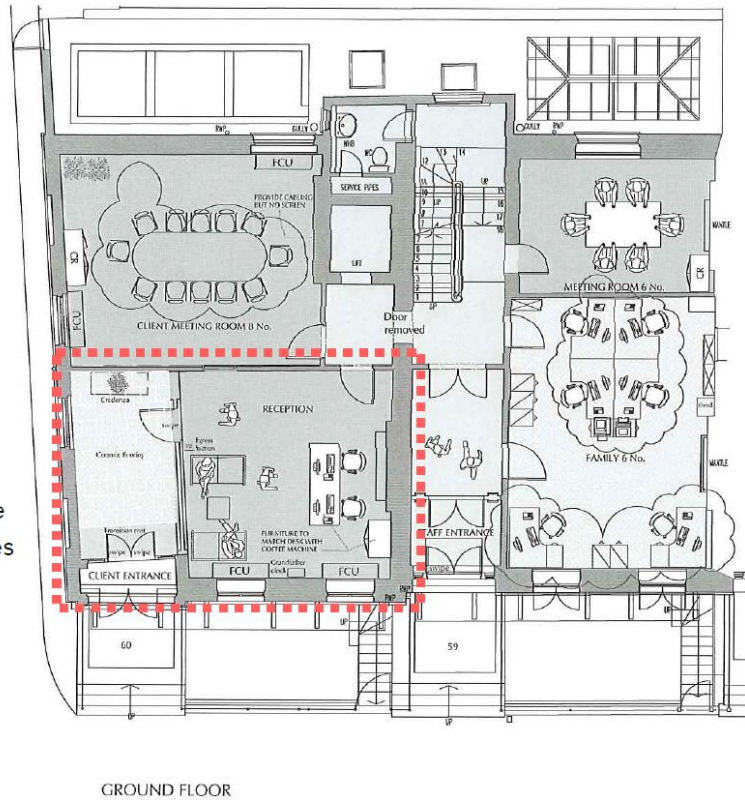


Figure 3: Existing floor plans of nos. 59-60 Russell Square (Source: Maber).

Our ref: JCH00967

Annex 2