

LABS, Victoria House, Camden

Design & Access Statement

February 2019



L A B S

HUTCHINSON & PARTNERS

Document Control:

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01.00

Introduction

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01.01 Overview



Image of the Current Site from Bloomsbury Square



Image of the Existing Building from Bloomsbury Square

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Hutchinson and Partners (the Architect) on behalf of LABS (the Applicant), in order to describe the design for the proposed refurbishment of the plant rooms penetrations to the 4th and 5th floors of their property, Victoria House at Bloomsbury Square, Camden, WC1B 4DA. The applicant

(LABS) is submitting a Listed Building Consent application for the penetrations from plant rooms of the 5th floor of the Grade II listed Victoria House at Bloomsbury Square, Camden. There are two separate applications (2019/4278/L and 2019/6203/L) for the floor layouts that have been submitted. The application for this proposal is accompanied by a set

of application drawings and this document, the Design and Access Statement which includes a Heritage Statement. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) should be read in conjunction with the other Planning Documents and drawings submitted as part of this application. The DAS describes the proposal, and includes the existing floors, the development

context, the layout, use, size and scale of the proposals. The refurbishment is to allow LABS to run co-working office floors, whilst sensitively considering the heritage assets of the site, and bring the building up to modern standards for ventilation for an office building within the unique historic setting of the Grade II Listed Victoria House.

01.02 LABS: An Introduction



Southampton Place, Camden



LABS Triangle, Camden



LABS Lockside, Camden



LABS House, Camden



Hogarth House, Camden



Hawley Wharf, Camden



LABS Avenue, Camden



LABS Atrium, Camden

LABS are currently responsible for running a number of co-working spaces across the London Borough of Camden, within existing listed buildings in Camden Market, High Holborn and Southampton Place, and within new builds in Hawley Wharf. These spaces offer a creative place for freelancers and small companies to work, meet clients and

collaborate, alongside offering organised collaborative events for networking, socialised and keeping fit. Due to the positive reception of their co-working spaces, LABS are excited to provide this new space within Victoria House.

01.03 Hutchinson and Partners: An Introduction



Brady Square and Albion Walk, Whitechapel Square



Hendon Waterside, Residential Buildings



101 Camley Street, Camden



90 High Holborn, Camden



Chapel Square, Ilford



101 Camley Street, Marketing Suite



Camley Street, Camden



90 High Holborn, Camden

Hutchinson & Partners is formed of a collection of like-minded architects dedicated to creating places and architecture of enduring quality. We work across all sectors and scales employing passion, free-thinking, rigor and process in our responses to brief, context, sustainability and legacy. Our body of work is characterised by considered placemaking,

simplicity of form, elegance of proportion, contextual abstraction and material composition. Our iterative design process has built a clear architectural language that runs throughout our work with differentiation between projects provided through responses to context and programme to create moments of delight in composition, ordering,

reveal, entrance, crown, colour, material palette and detail. The images above are taken from a number of our most significant projects to convey our approach to place-making and architecture and two of the mixed use projects we have designed for LABS. They include two key projects that we have designed within the London Borough of Camden, both

of which are in collaboration with LABS, namely 101 Camley Street and the refurbishment of 90 High Holborn. These projects have provided us with a good knowledge of the area and have led to us having a collaborative relationship with the local authority's planning and design officers.

02.00

Setting

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02.01 Wider Context

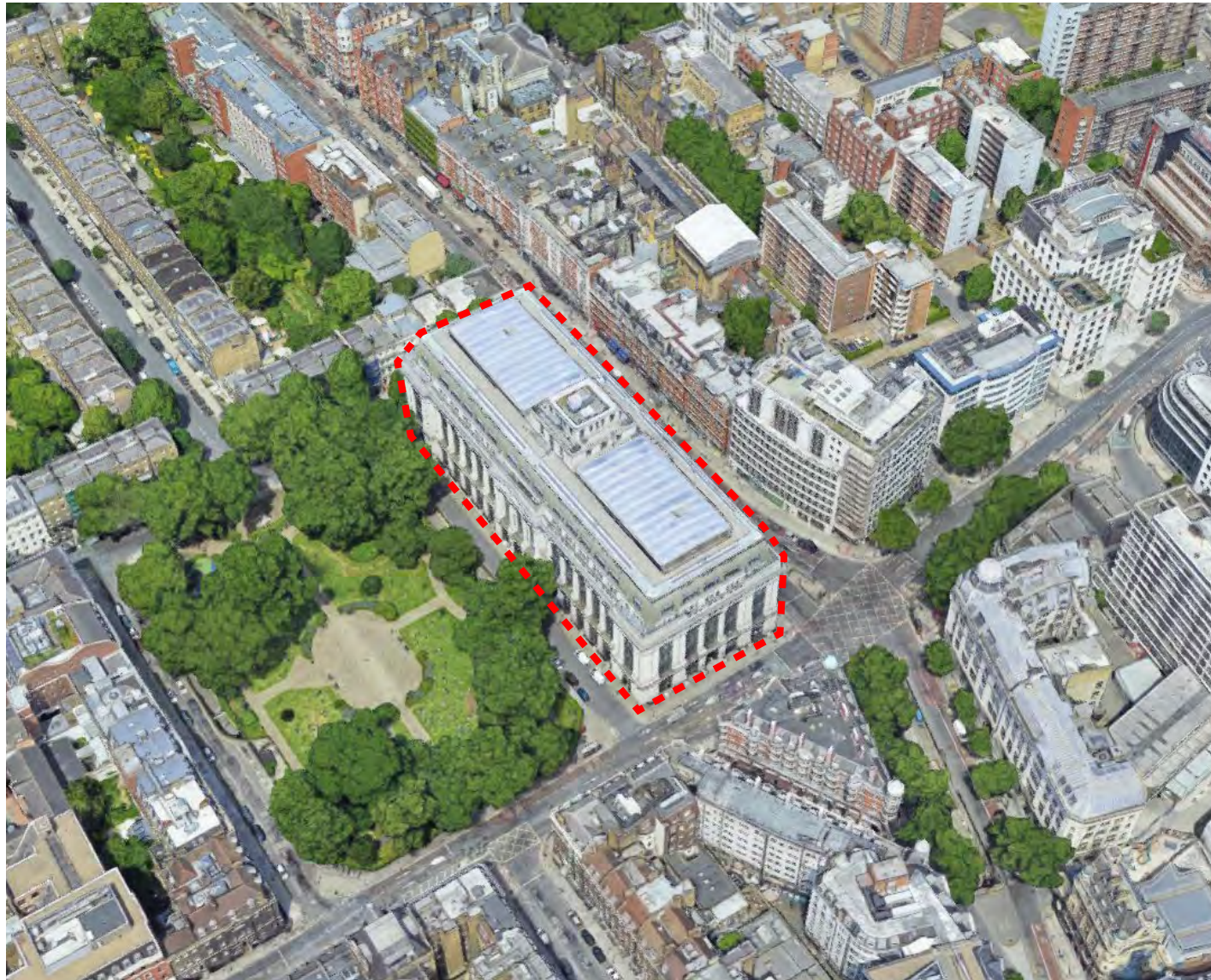


Existing Aerial Photo

The site is located to on the east side of Bloomsbury Square. It is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and part of the London Borough of Camden. It is well connected, with Holborn Underground Station to the South, and a number of bus routes that run past the building. A notable feature of the area is its Central London and historic nature.

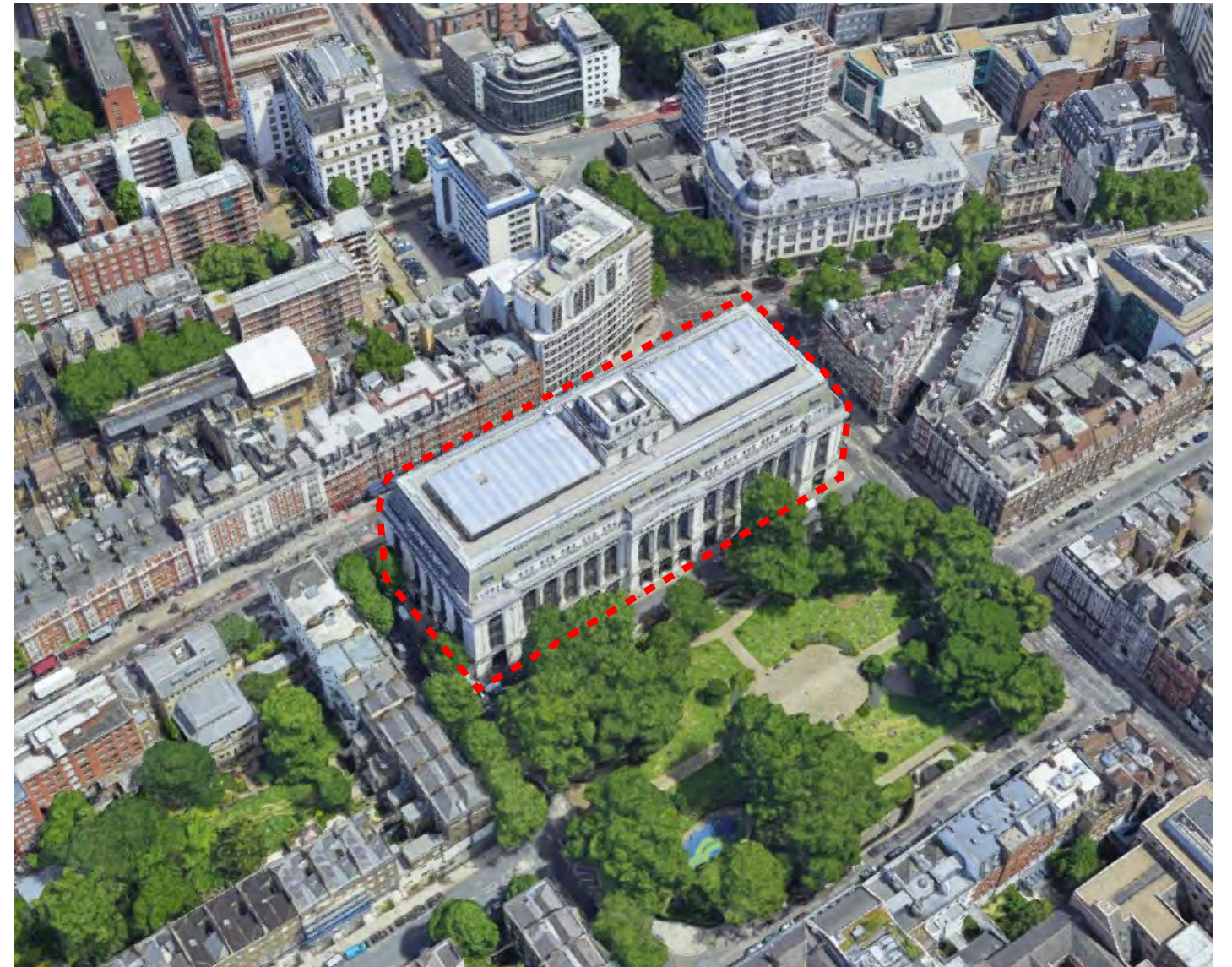
- - Site Location
- 01. British Museum
- 02. Bloomsbury Square
- 03. Lincoln's Inn Fields
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area
- Seven Dials Conservation Area (Covent Garden)
- Kingsway Conservation Area

02.02 Bird's Eye Views



Bird's Eye View facing North

The building occupies an island site facing Bloomsbury Square, Theobalds Road, Southampton Row and Bloomsbury Place. The building's relationship with the formal green space of Bloomsbury Square is of particular note. The building, at its tallest point, is nine storeys, and at such a height and footprint it is an imposing, and impressive, addition to the city.



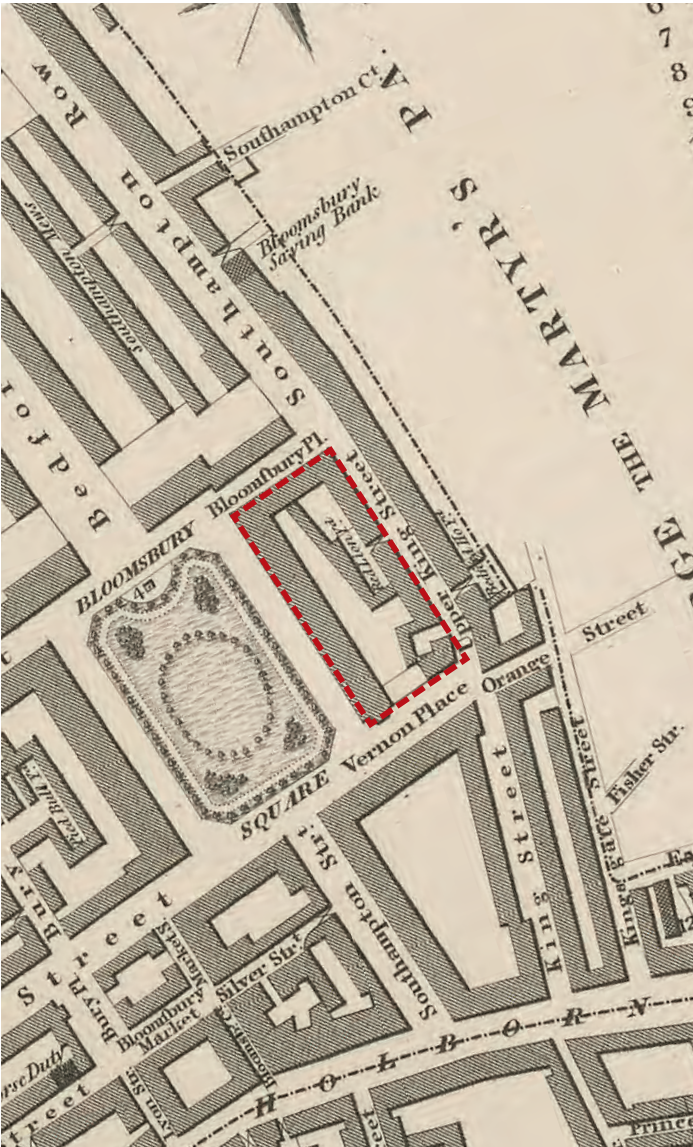
Bird's Eye View facing East

02.03 Historical Development



Bloomsbury Map, 1816

Bloomsbury Square, originally known as Southampton Square was developed in the late 17th century for the Earl of Southampton. The site of Victoria House was occupied at this time by typical terraced houses of the time and occupied by aristocracy. Throughout the 18th and 19th century the area was no longer fashionable with the upper classes,



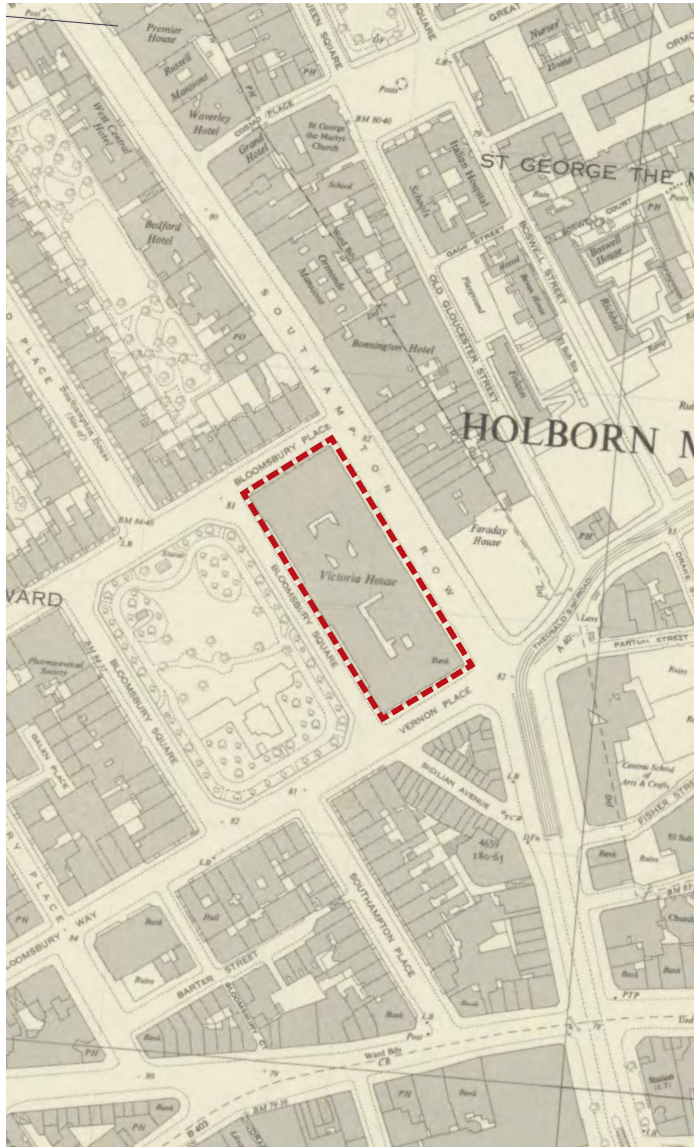
Bloomsbury Map, 1824

and became occupied by middle class professionals. In the 1920's, Victoria House was constructed for and occupied by the Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society. The building is a Grade II listed neoclassical building with Portland stone clad exterior, bronze infill panels, and copperlite glazing surrounds, with ornamental brasswork. Notably the building includes



OS London Map, 1893-1896

fireplaces within the building from the 18th century houses previously on the site.



OS London Map, 1953

02.04 Heritage Assets of the Interior



Light fixtures and coffered ceiling of the main reception



Inticate neo-classical marble detailing to the main reception



Brass staircase handrail finial to the entrance on Southampton Place



Wooden post box from the original 1920's design



Brass signage in the main reception



Brasswork clock by the Bromsgrove Guild

The images above depict a few of the original features of the interior of the building that contribute towards its listed status.

02.05 Historic Interior of 4th & 5th Floors



Double height room to the northeast corner with extensive mahogany panelling



Parquet flooring and mahogany panelling within rooms on 4th floor



Ornamental brasswork to the staircases of the 4th and 5th floors



Fireplace from the terraced houses on the site before Victoria House

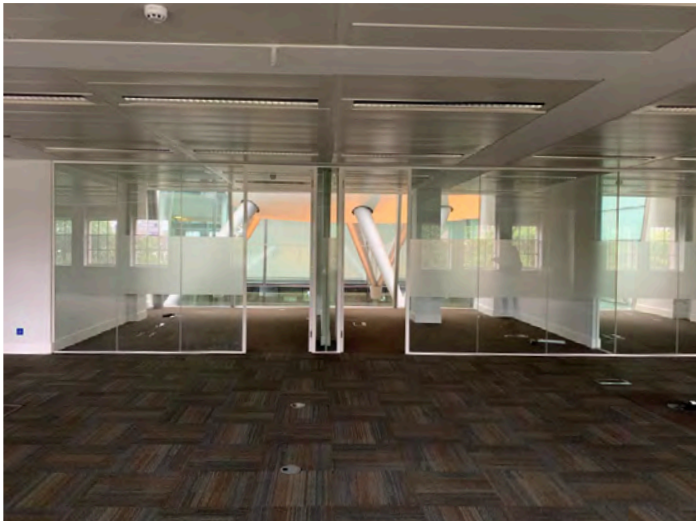


Timber and glazing detail to historic interior

The fourth floor includes rooms to the northeast of the building that feature extensive original mahogany panelling throughout. Within the rooms there are fireplaces that date from the 18th century that were previously within the terraced housing on the site before Victoria House. Along with these features there are four staircases from the original design

with ornamental brasswork. The exterior walls of the building also feature glazing from the original design. These areas are not within the extent of the area that is being put forward for refurbishment, and this information is only included here as background detail to the application.

02.06 Existing Photos of 4th Floor



The Glazed Office Partitions of the Existing Fourth Floor



A Photograph of Typical floor Plate on the Fourth Floor



A Photograph of Typical floor Plate on the Fourth Floor



A View from the Atrium Down onto the Second Floor Breakout Pods



The Existing Auditorium on the Fourth Floor



A Run of Existing Meeting Rooms to the Fourth Floor



An Existing Glazed Office Space in the Entrance



The Existing Washroom Provision

The fourth and fifth floors were extensively refurbished in 2003, in a way that was very much synonymous with the trend for office space at the time; raised floors with contract carpets; perforated metal plank ceilings and white plasterboard walls. Aside from the inevitable wear and tear over time, the space does little to enhance the assets of the existing building.

02.07 Existing Photos of 5th Floor



A Photograph of Typical floor Plate on the Fifth Floor



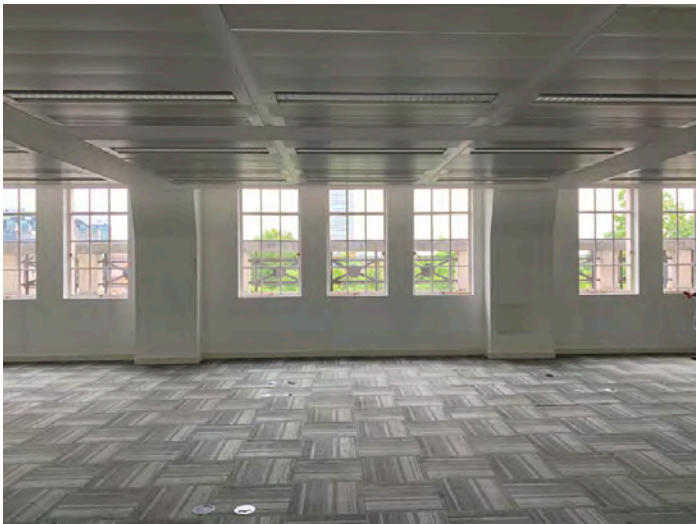
A View of the Entrance to the Pods Suspended in the Atrium



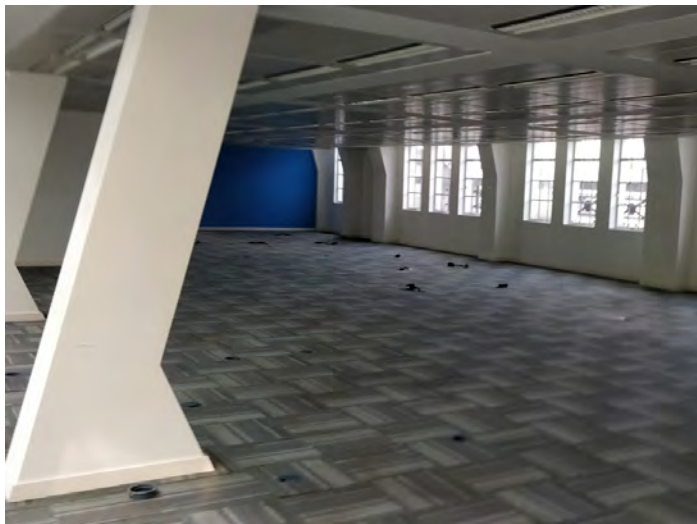
A Photograph Back Towards the Atrium



An Internal View of the Meeting Room



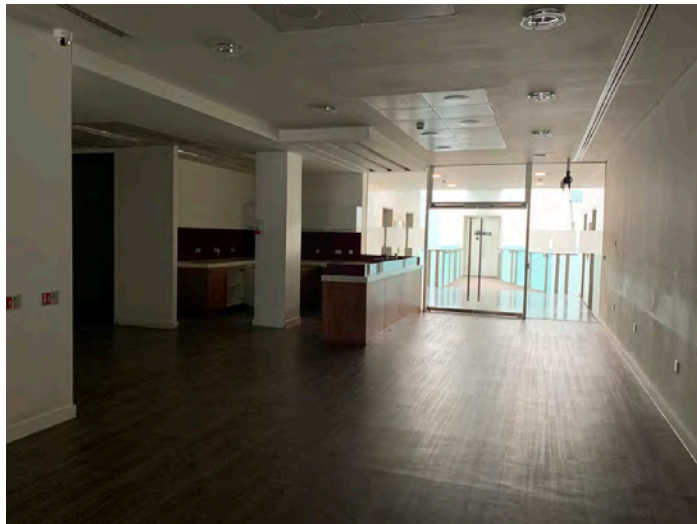
A View Showing the Grouping of Windows



A Photograph of the Isolated Structural Column



The Linking Bridge to the Meeting Room Pods



A View of the Existing Kitchen Provision

The fifth floor benefits from a reduced floorplate width between the external facade and atrium, this means that it benefits from abundant natural lighting. As with the fourth floor, the existing fit out is of a simple, but typical specification of its time, and would benefit from a sensitive refurbishment. The floor is notably for the strong presence of the enhanced

structure, and meeting room pods that were a significant feature of the 2003 refurbishment of the building.

03.00

Heritage Statement

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03.01 Overview



Historic Photographs of the Building

This chapter describes the heritage and historical character of the building, with reference to the Grade II listing, the planning history of the building relevant to the proposed works, areas excluded from the works, the significance assessment of the building and the impact of the proposal upon the historic fabric.

03.02 Planning History

Application No.	Address	Development Description	Date	Decision
2019/4278/L	Victoria House, 36-63 Southampton Row London WC1B 4DR	Internal works to improve the existing layout and redecorate the office areas in the 4th and 5th floors	05/09/2019	Granted
2009/2300/L	Victoria House, 36-67 Southampton Row London WC1B 4DA	Removal of internal partitions at fourth floor level (Class B1).	31/07/2009	Granted
2006/3016/P	Victoria House, 36-67 Southampton Row London WC1B 4DA	External alterations to the existing office (Class B1) at 5th floor level including retention of two external air conditioning units, and installation of associated air handling plant and one extract fan to be mounted behind the parapet wall at 5th floor roof level.	07/07/2006	Granted
2006/2828/L	Victoria House, 36-67 Southampton Row London WC1B 4DA	Internal alterations to the existing office (Class B1) at 5th floor level and retention of two air conditioning units, installation of associated air handling plant and extract fan to be mounted behind the parapet wall at 5th floor roof level.	07/07/2006	Granted
2003/3437/L	Victoria House, 36-67 Southampton Row London WC1B 4DA	Internal alterations to the fourth floor including internal partitions, secondary glazing and installation of plant at seventh floor	10/02/2004	Granted
PSX0105141	Victoria House, 36-67 Southampton Row London WC1	Submission of details of position materials and detailed design of shopfronts and installation of plant and equipment pursuant to additional conditions 1 and 5 respectively of planning permission dated 18 July 2001 ref: PSX0004957/R1 and submission of details of precautions to be taken to secure and protect interior features; details relating to alterations and repairs of the external envelope and details of the new atria, new entrances, internal treatment of office areas and proposed new floor in central reception hall and full details of position of shopfront pursuant to additional conditions 2(a-d) 6(a-d) and 7 respectively of listed building consent dated 18 July 2001 ref: LSX0004958/ R1, as shown on drawing numbers; 0770/01/091 RevP1; 170 Rev P1; 260 rev P1; 192 Rev P1; 193 Rev P1; 325 Rev P1; 326 Rev P1; 421 to 425 Rev P1 (inclusive). 1000 to 1002 Rev P1 (inclusive); 1008 to 1010 Rev P1 (inclusive); 1501 to 1503 (inclusive) Rev P1; 1700 Rev P1; 2002 Rev P1; 2005 Rev P1; 2008 Rev P1; 2009 Rev P1; 2101 Rev P1; 2300 Rev P1; 2350 Rev P1; 11022 to 11023 (inclusive) Rev P1; 14010 Rev P1; 15000 Rev P1; 15001 Rev P1; 15101 to 15102 (inclusive) Rev P1; 17000 to 17001 (inclusive) Rev P1; 19060 Rev P1. Architectural specification reports C20 Demolition works/ alterations-listed areas; C40 Stone repair and cleaning; C50 Window renovation works; C90 conservation works. Acoustic consultancy report.	22/10/2001	Grant Approval of details
LSX0105235	Victoria House, 36-67 Southampton Row London WC1B 4EA	Submission of details of position materials and detailed design of shopfronts and installation of plant and equipment pursuant to additional conditions 1 and 5 respectively of planning permission dated 18 July 2001 ref: PSX0004957/R1 and submission of details of precautions to be taken to secure and protect interior features; details relating to alterations and repairs of the external envelope and details of the new atria, new entrances, internal treatment of office areas and proposed new floor in central reception hall and full details of position of shopfront pursuant to additional conditions 2(a-d) 6(a-d) and 7 respectively of listed building consent dated 18 July 2001 ref: LSX0004958/ R1, as shown on drawing numbers; Drawings 0770/01/091 RevP1; 170 Rev P1; 260 rev P1; 192 Rev P1; 193 Rev P1; 325 Rev P1; 326 Rev P1; 421 to 425 Rev P1 (inclusive). 1000 to 1002 Rev P1 (inclusive); 1008 to 1010 Rev P1 (inclusive); 1501 to 1503 (inclusive) Rev P1; 1700 Rev P1; 2002 Rev P1; 2005 Rev P1; 2008 Rev P1; 2009 Rev P1; 2101 Rev P1; 2300 Rev P1; 2350 Rev P1; 11022 to 11023 (inclusive) Rev P1; 14010 Rev P1; 15000 Rev P1; 15001 Rev P1; 15101 to 15102 (inclusive) Rev P1; 17000 to 17001 (inclusive) Rev P1; 19060 Rev P1. Architectural specification reports C20 Demolition works/ alterations-listed areas; C40 Stone repair and cleaning; C50 Window renovation works; C90 conservation works. Acoustic consultancy report.	22/10/2001	Grant Approval of details (listed Bldg)
PSX0004957	Victoria House, 36-67 Southampton Row London WC1	Refurbishment of the listed building including alterations at roof level; alterations to the shopfronts; the formation of an internal vehicular loading bay at the north end of the Bloomsbury Square elevation; the erection of a roof over the two existing two light wells to form atria, with new internal walls, and the insertion of pods in the atria. The use of the building to involve:- retention of office use on part of the ground and all the upper floors; double height Class A1 retail units on the Southampton Row frontage; retention of the existing bank on the southern corner and introduction of new restaurant use (with entrance and bar on Vernon Place); and a new health club on the basement floors. as shown on drawing numbers and documents listed on the schedule dated 18.1.2001, reissued on 6.4.2001	22/01/2001	Grant Full Planning Permission (conds)

The planning applications on Victoria House outlined above are relevant to the proposed works only.

Application No.	Address	Development Description	Date	Decision
9570191	Victoria House, Southampton Row, WC1	Internal alterations to remove existing ducts for refurbishment of toilets as shown on drawing numbers P124/646-649 651 655 657 659A 666 667A 669 673 677 680A 683A.	19/06/1995	Grant List. Build. or Cons. Area Consent
9370125	Victoria House, Southampton Row, WC1	Relocation of 2 air conditioning condenser units from basement area on south elevation to first floor gallery level on east elevation as shown on location plan dated 4th December 1987 and on drawing numbered OPUS SK No E1879B/1	24/06/1993	Grant List. Build. or Cons. Area Consent
9270216	Victoria House, Southampton Row, WC1	Fire precaution works including new doors and signage as shown on fourteen un-numbered floor plans and drawings nos. P124/487B and 489B.	04/12/1992	Grant List. Build. or Cons. Area Consent
9270214	Victoria House, Southampton Row, WC1	Remodelling of the south part of the fourth floor to create open plan offices as shown on drawings nos. P124/467 470C 471A 477 478 479A 491 492 493 494 and 506 (parts 1 and 2).	04/12/1992	Grant List. Build. or Cons. Area Consent

The planning applications on Victoria House outlined above are relevant to the proposed works only.

03.03 Historical Background



West facade central distyle-in-antis portico



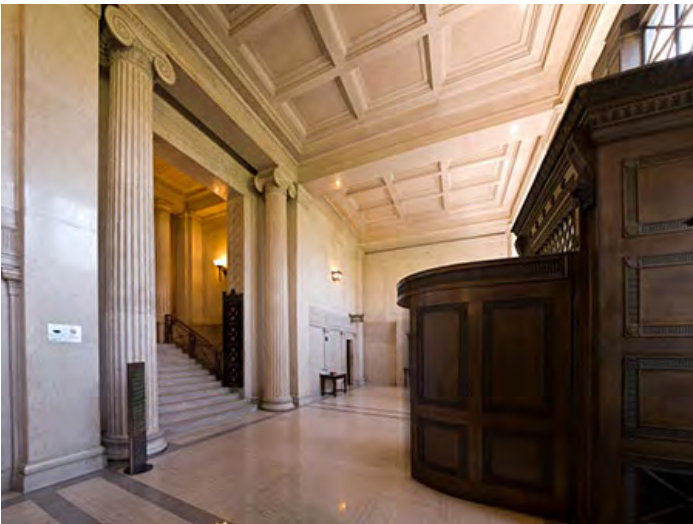
East facade tympanum depicting navigation and industry



Central ground floor public area with elaborate coffered ceiling



18th century fireplaces from houses previously on the site



West facade entrance lobby in Subiaco marble



Extensive mahogany panelling to the third floor



Basement dance hall with coloured glass fittings

Victoria House was commissioned as the headquarters of the Liverpool Victoria Insurance Company and built between 1926 and 1932. The architect was Charles William Long. The Grade II Listed building comprises 8 storeys with a basement and sub-basement. It occupies a rectangular island site with facades on Bloomsbury Square, Bloomsbury Place, Vernon

Place and Southampton Row. The building is steel framed and clad in Portland stone. It features sculptures by Herbert William Palliser and ornamental brasswork by the Bromsgrove Guild. At ground floor level are a series of impressive lobby spaces, faced in marble and with decorative brasswork and a coffered ceiling to the central space. At basement level is

the original ballroom and circulation spaces, with coloured glass light fittings and original door surrounds and stainless steel furniture. The building was refurbished in 2003 to create modern office accommodation to a Category A standard arranged around two central enclosed atria created from previous courtyards. This building retained the original facades

and much of the structure with additional strengthening works carried out. The individual tenants within the building have also undertaken fitting out works beyond the landlord's Category A finish, some of which are very bespoke. Externally the building is in its original form but for the retail units on Southampton Row, which have new glazed shopfronts.

03.04 Consented Works by LSX0004958

Details of the listed building consent granted in 2001 in respect of specified works for the alteration and extension of the listed building have informed the conditions and level of intervention recommended for the new proposals.

Summary of Internal Works consented by LSX0004958

The refurbishment works internally were very extensive within the office accommodation areas and included major alterations that created new space arrangements. These areas have been retrofitted with:

- Raised access floors
- Suspended ceilings
- Lighting
- New power distribution
- New fire alarm installation
- Air conditioning and heating from new fan coil units
- Refurbishment of existing windows

The office accommodation located on the Bloomsbury Square side of the building on the third and fourth floor levels have remained unaltered in their arrangement and appearance. These are known as the ‘Heritage Rooms’. All fixtures including the light fittings, the finished joinery including such items as the timber polished panelling, door sets and doors, the marble skirting and mouldings have been retained.

The only areas within the ‘Heritage Rooms’ that appear to have been altered are the lighting units that have been converted to provide emergency lighting, the fire alarm installation and the heating and cooling system that was designed to fit within the constraints of the existing perimeter radiator covers.

Two atria to the south and north ends of the building have been formed within the existing light wells. These have curved walls of glazing from ground to roof level. Within the atria are suspended ‘pods’ that provide meeting room areas. These are accessed directly from the office accommodation and lift lobby landing areas via glazed lined walkways.

The central reception area has been fitted with a new raised glazed floor which has been fitted over the existing covering and steps.

Four new lift shafts have been constructed to provide access to the newly arranged floor layouts.



Image from the current Upper Ground Floor atrium



Image from the current Upper Ground Floor reception



Image from the current 2nd Floor lift core

03.05 Planning Considerations

Assessment of Heritage Significance

The following sets out the methodology adopted, in line with planning legislation, policy and guidance relevant to heritage assets, to determine the heritage significance held by the Site, a designated heritage asset, owing to the Grade-II listing attributed to Victoria House.

Planning Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Where any development may have a direct or indirect effect on designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure the proposals are considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment.

Primary legislation under Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority or Secretary of State, as relevant, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

All proposed works are internal and although the building is located within a Conservation Area, Section 72(1) of the Act does not apply as there would be no potential for impact upon the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in which the building sits.
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018, revised February 2019)

In July 2018, the government published the new revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”), replacing the March 2012 published framework which had previously replaced the previous policy regime, including the design and heritage policies set out in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1), and Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5).

The guidance contained within Section 16, ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’, relates to the historic environment, and developments which may have an effect upon it. This guidance in Section 16 remains substantially the same as the previous guidance regarding the Historic Environment, published in Section 12 of the March 2012 published NPPF.

‘Heritage Assets’ are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: ‘a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority. Listed buildings and Conservation Areas are both designated heritage assets.’

‘Significance’ is defined as ‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be architectural,

artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.’

Paragraph 189 states that, when determining applications, local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance. According to Paragraph 189, local planning authorities are also obliged to identify and assess the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact upon the heritage asset.

Paragraph 193 and 194 state that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. It emphasises that the weight given to an asset’s conservation should be proportionate to its significance, and that clear and convincing justification will be required for loss and harm to heritage assets.

Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”) (Department for Communities and Local Government, February 2018)

The guidance in the PPG supports the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. It states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change that requires a flexible and thoughtful approach, and that neglect, and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.

The PPG refers to key elements of a building’s special architectural or historic interest when assessing harm. If proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset’s special interest, then those works could amount to substantial harm. It is the degree of harm rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed by the decision taker. Substantial harm is stated to be a high test that may not arise in many cases.

The London Plan

Regional policy for the London area is defined by the London Plan (Greater London Authority/ Mayor of London 2011), Revised Early Minor Alterations to the London Plan (Greater London Authority/ Mayor of London 2013) and Further Alterations to the London Plan 2014 Consultation Draft (Greater London Authority/ Mayor of London 2014), and defined by the London Plan Consolidated with Amendments (2015).

The current 2016 London Plan Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 remains the formally adopted Development Plan for London. However, as stated by the GLA, the Draft London Plan (2017) now revised under the Draft London Plan (2018) which is currently undergoing consultation, ‘is a material consideration in planning decisions’. The Draft London Plan gains more weight as it moves through the

process to adoption, however the weight given to it is a matter for the decision maker. The relevant proposed changes to strategic planning policy dealt with in this Heritage Statement concern those on Design and Heritage, but whose Core Principles remain largely the same. For the purposes of this report and considering the absence of response to consultation on this to date, the formally adopted London Plan policies will be applied here, unless otherwise requested by the Local Planning Authority.

The Consolidated London Plan deals with heritage issues in Chapter 7, London’s Living Spaces and Places – Historic environment and landscapes. Policy 7.8 ‘Heritage assets and archaeology’ establishes the following clauses regarding heritage assets in London: Strategic: London’s heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.

Planning Decisions: Development should identify value, conserve, restore, reuse and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate. Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

London Borough of Camden Policy

The London Borough of Camden’s Local Plan was adopted by the Council on 3 July 2017. Along with the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) also form a key part of LB Camden’s Local Development Framework. Relevant heritage policies contained within Local Development Plan documents are as follows:
Local Plan: Policy D1 Design part (q) and Policy D2 Heritage
SPDs: Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal
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.

Designated Heritage Assets

Designed heritage assets include Conservation Areas and listed buildings. The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed ‘designated heritage assets’. To preserve or enhance the borough’s listed buildings, the Council will:

- i. resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;
- j. resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and
- k. resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

Historic England Guidance

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment
This document provides advice on how decision-taking in the historic environment should be undertaken, emphasising the importance of identifying, and understanding the significance of, any affected heritage asset and the contribution of their settings towards their significance. In line with the NPPF and the PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. The advice suggests a structured, staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information as follows:

- 1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- 2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
- 3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
- 4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- 5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change;

Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing other aspects through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets that are affected.

The advice reiterates that heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. The document sets out the recommended steps for assessing significance and the impact of development proposals upon it, including examining the asset and its setting and analysing local policies and information sources. In assessing the impact of a proposal on the significance of a heritage

asset the document emphasises that the cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change. Crucially, the nature and importance of the significance that is affected will dictate the proportionate response to assessing that change, its justification, mitigation and any recording which may be necessary.

03.06 Heritage Considerations

Areas Excluded from the Application

Precautions shall be taken to secure and protect the interior historical features against accidental loss or damage, or theft during the building works. No such features shall be disturbed or removed temporarily or permanently and are to be fully excluded from this application as follows:

- At street, upper ground and mezzanine level: all internal finishes, fixtures and fittings in the entrance halls, stair halls, lift lobbies and surrounding spaces, and in the entrances and stairs at the northern and southern ends of the building;
- At first to seventh floor levels inclusive: all internal finishes, fixtures and fittings in the entrance halls, stair halls, lift lobbies and surrounding spaces;
- At third and fourth floor levels all internal finishes, fixtures and fittings in the executive office suite and associated halls and toilets in the north western corner of the building (Heritage Rooms).

Methodology

The assessment methodology used for assessing the significance of the identified heritage asset and its setting is the framework set out in the November 2017 consultation draft of Historic England’s best-practice guidance document ‘Conservation Principles’. This proposes the use of three heritage interests – historical, archaeological, and architectural and artistic - in assessing what makes a place and its wider context special. These are broadly in line with the values – evidential [now archaeological], historical, aesthetic [now architectural and artistic], and communal [now part of historical] – set out in the previous, 2008 version, but are consistent with the heritage interests in the NPPF, the definitions for which are now included in the updated Planning Practice Guidance (July 2019).

These three heritage interests are defined as follows:

- Archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- Architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
- Historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Proposed works and impact on the significance of Victoria House

Proposed internal ventilation plants inserted through 4 existing window openings at 5th floor within 2 plant rooms on the Bloomsbury Square and Southampton Row elevations, and ductwork serving both 4th and 5th floors. The removed windows, which sits behind the existing raised parapet, would be carefully removed and stored on site.

The proposed layouts also reference the previous granted application 2019/4278/L which were internal works to improve the existing layout and redecorate the office areas in the 4th and 5th floors, in terms of location of proposed partitions.

There are changes to this approved application on these partition locations, which have been picked up in a separate application 2019/6203/L which describes the

internal refurbishment and flexible layouts of the offices from the 1st to the 9th floor. The proposed floor layouts within this application match the layouts of the 2019/6203/L application.

Assessment

Victoria House is of national importance, acknowledged in its designation for special interest as a Grade-II listed building.

The previous settlement types do not survive on the site since its redevelopment between 1926-32, but the historic streetscape pattern has been well maintained since the initial layout of the 18th century. Additionally, Victoria House has maintained the historic formal address onto Bloomsbury Square since its establishment. There have been various changes to the site as the fashions of the area have changed, including the change from finer grain residential properties to the more monolithic commercial building and further when updated internally to potentially facilitate governmental functions which overall adds to the special interest of the building and to the medium level of archaeological interest held by the site.

The site consists of one substantial building which occupies the whole urban block between Southampton Row and Bloomsbury Square and is arranged over eight floors, with further accommodation at basement and sub-basement levels. Its elevations are an elegant neo-classical composition built of high-quality materials such as Portland Stone bronze. The architectural motifs and articulation repeats on all four elevations creating a harmonic sense of solid coherence and grand proportions. The exterior of Victoria House remains largely in its original form, having experienced no damage following the bombing of WWII, retaining its external finishes and architectural detailing. To Southampton Row the ground floor retail units have been altered, with new glazed shopfronts, however these works do not detract from the overall quality of the facade, blending with the retail and commercial character of Southampton Row. There has, however, been various internal alterations and including the complete and significant level of internal works carried out under the 2003 to the designs of Will Alsop, a well commended modern architect. Most of these alterations and additions have been done to a high quality and have even added architectural interest, contributing to its judged medium-high architectural and artistic interest.

The building has been an important contributor to the evolution of the Bloomsbury area, including the various uses it has accommodated such as the Liverpool Victoria Insurance Company, and it has significant townscape value due to its imposing neo-classical facades which are highly visible within the streetscape and its strong relationship with Bloomsbury Square. The retention of the historic streetscape and strong profile onto the square supports a physical reading of the building history

but also of the historic development of the area. It is therefore considered that Victoria House holds a medium level of historic interest.

Overall, the site holds a medium to high level of significance.

Assessment of Impact

The proposals will as a whole result in limited intervention to the fabric of the building at floors 4 and 5. This is a result of the limited level of alterations that would result to historic fabric. The windows that will be removed and carefully stored on site are a ‘like for like’ replacement that was introduced under the 2001 consented works. Much of the ground, ceiling and servicing materials are modern additions and replacements that have been introduced over time, including the internal plaster work where openings are required to run ductwork from the ventilation plants through to 4th and 5th floor. Both internal spaces of floors 4 and 5 are highly altered, with interest found most in the exterior walls and original cores, with some from the atrium additions of the 2001 consented works.

The ductwork will require penetrations through the floor slab between floors 4 and 5 to run the ventilation system through. The steel frame concrete floor slab is original to the building and the approach to installing these utility works have been careful to consider this and minimise any interventions required. Where these works would be carried out, they would be almost entirely fully reversible, by replacement of existing modern services, or in some cases, with limited intervention to existing historic fabric, to such a degree that no harm would be caused to its significance. Full details on the proposed ductwork layouts can be found further in the DAS or within the accompanying technical reports.

03.07 Grade II Listing Entry

VICTORIA HOUSE AND ATTACHED RAILINGS

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1378788
Date first listed: 04-Dec-1990
Date of most recent amendment: 11-Jan-1999
Statutory Address: VICTORIA HOUSE AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 37-63, SOUTHAMPTON ROW

Details
TQ3081NW 798-1/100/1481

CAMDEN SOUTHAMPTON ROW(West side) Nos.37-63 (Odd) Victoria House and attached railings

(Formerly Listed as: SOUTHAMPTON ROW Nos.37-67 Victoria House and attached railings)

04/12/90 GV II Commercial building with ground floor shops on east side. c1926-32. By Charles William Long. For the Liverpool Victoria Insurance Company as their headquarters. Sculpture by Herbert William Palliser. Ornamental brasswork by the Bromsgrove Guild. Steel frame clad with Portland stone, bronze infill panels and copperlite glazing surrounds. Green slate mansard roof with dormers.

EXTERIOR: eight storeys, sub-basement and basement on a rectangular island site with facades to Bloomsbury Square, Bloomsbury Place, Vernon Place and Southampton Row. Long sides, 15-window bays; returns five-window bays. West facade to Bloomsbury Square with tall channelled ground floor, central distyle-in-antis Ionic (Erechtheion) portico through first to fourth (attic) floors. Attached columns as far as projecting end bays with paired pilasters. Ground floor to third floor windows tripartite with small panes; second floor with relief pediments. Attic windows, with small panes in plain rectangular recesses, grouped in trios in the frieze (corresponding to window beneath). Tympanum with sculpture of central robed figure with arms outstretched flanked by other figures expressing the bounty of the natural world. To either side, cornice surmounted by parapet with panels of open ornamental brasswork behind which a further attic storey with trios of windows slightly offset from parapet openings. Mansard dormers slightly offset again; all echoing shape of triangular pediment. Central two storey feature above mansard. East facade similar but with shops at ground floor level (originally recessed but now with projecting C20 shopfronts) and tympanum sculpture on the theme of navigation and new forms of industry. Returns similar in style with distyle-in-antis centres, paired pilasters and no tympana. Entrance doors on all sides of panelled bronze.

INTERIORS: virtually unaltered. Entrance lobbies on all four sides faced in Subiaco marble with Greek style decoration and much decorative brasswork. Central ground floor public area, open through three floors to elaborate coffered suspended ceiling. Basement meeting/dance hall with coloured glass light fittings, door furniture and surrounds in polished steel and radiator grilles embossed with VH monogram. Extensive mahogany panelling to third floor offices. Some rooms with C18 fireplaces from houses previously on the site.

Listing NGR: TQ3039381709