
Design and Access Statement

relating to

Refurbishment Works

at

23 Bedford Square

London, WC1B 3HH

for

The Bedford Estates

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Section 1 - Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany a Planning and Listed Building application for 23 Bedford Square, London.

23 Bedford Square comprises 4,177 square feet and is arranged over basement, ground and three upper floors.

23 Bedford Square is one of a collection of symmetrical terraced houses on the North side of the square. As with the other properties on Bedford Square, the property became Grade I Listed on 20 August 1971 (Listing Reference – 1379983). Supplementary to this document is a heritage statement which gives a commentary of the significance of the building and how the proposals impact on the original fabric of the building. This assessment has been submitted as part of this application.

In the recent past and up to 1988, the building was grouped with 21-25 Bedford Square, having lateral links at various levels and a single occupant. Several planning applications exist from the late 1980s detailing the subsequent refurbishment, at which point the 5 buildings returned to single occupancy.

Section 2 – Design Statement

Use

The current use of the property is B1 Offices and the application does not seek to change this.

Internal Proposals

Our proposal is to refurbish the modern services of the property installed in the 1980s whilst conserving the original fabric of the building. We propose to install comfort cooling to all rooms within the main building. By undertaking the following works, the property will be brought up to a modern day standard, suitable for office use, which will hopefully secure a long term tenant.

■ Installation of Comfort Cooling to Offices

A variable refrigerant volume (VRV), heat pump system is to be installed to provide heating and cooling throughout the building. The cooling installation will require indoor VRV units, 2 No. condenser unit located within the existing roof level water storage room associated pipe work connections. The walls to the roof level storage room will need to be adjusted to accommodate louvers to ensure sufficient ventilation is provided. New, plain, electric panel heaters shall be installed in the common parts and WC's to provide heating during the winter months.

Location the VRV condenser units within the former water storage room at roof level will mean that they are not visible from street level.

The indoor units are to be chassis type, floor-mounted around the building perimeter, within bespoke joinery casings on the basement, ground and first floors. See drawing TPS/23BS/TN3 for details of the bespoke casing. The units on the basement and third floor are to be proprietary chassis mounted units with steel casings.

Where possible the indoor units have been located in the same position as the redundant radiators so that the condensate pipework to and from the VRV units will be run between existing floor joists. Where they cross joists, they will run within redundant notches where the heating pipework is removed, except where this is not reasonably practicable. The pipe runs will not disturb any external features and any notches made, will be made good and structurally sound via the addition of a metal plate, fitted and secured to the joist over the notch position as detailed in the timber notch plate drawing TPS/23BS/TN1

There is an existing riser in the rear of the building, currently housing redundant heating pipework. This pipework will be removed and the new pipework will be run in its place, negating the need for any further risers.

Existing, redundant pipe work running across the joists will be removed and a repair will be made as detailed in the timber notch repair drawing TPS/23BS/TN2.

■ **Kitchen Facilities**

The existing kitchenette in the basement will be removed and a new modern facility installed in the rolled vault adjacent to its former position, where the redundant toilets were located.

■ **Upgrade of Existing WCs**

The WCs, installed during the refurbishment in the 1980s, will be replaced with modern facilities. At basement level they will be located within the former kitchen to allow for larger facilities and a shower to be provided. At second floor level the WC will be reduced in size to allow for a new cupboard to be formed.

■ **Testing and Repairs to Existing Electrical Installations**

23 Bedford Square has an electrical system from the late 1980s and as such it is somewhat dated. The proposed scheme involves renewing all electrical installations from the point of entry into the building to facilitate a single occupier, designed and installed to new statutory standards. This full re-wire will involve lifting floorboards and chasing walls. All floorboards will be numbered and carefully reinstated on completion. Walls with decorative mouldings will not be touched as part of any re-wiring that may be required. Walls will be repaired to exactly match existing materials.

■ **New Lighting**

All light fittings throughout the property will be replaced. The type of fitting proposed depends on its location within the building. The lighting scheme will be similar in concept and design to the scheme recently carried out at 22 Bedford Square by The Bedford Estates.

Generally, the existing chandeliers within the front principal rooms on the ground and first floors will be replaced with new contemporary chandeliers. This will ensure no damage is caused to the existing wall and ceiling finishes.

Slimline luminaries suspended from the ceiling will be installed in the basement, the rear rooms within the first, second and third floors.

The existing stairwell and landing lighting mainly comprises decorative wall fittings. New fittings will be installed in a similar configuration, incorporating an emergency lighting to comply with modern fire safety regulations.

When removing the wall fittings, the redundant cabling will be safely terminated and the walls made good. When removing the ceiling recessed fittings, the cabling will be removed and the surface repaired matching the adjacent surface in both material and technique. The works will have limited impact on any lath and plaster ceilings.

Through our design, we have been careful to specify fittings which will not have a negative impact on the appearance of the building.

■ **Fire Alarm**

A new wireless fire alarm system will be installed throughout to meet current building regulation requirements. We have deliberately selected a wireless system so that no walls or floors will need to be disturbed.

The fire alarm panels will be located behind the main entrance door.

■ **Data/Telecommunications**

A new CAT 5e system will be installed throughout the property. Data points will be installed to all walls to provide flexibility for any incoming tenant. Where possible, existing wall mounted data points will be reused to avoid chasing of walls and disturbance to existing skirting boards.

The property is currently served by floor boxes and the intention is to re-wire these adding a minimal number where the coverage is inadequate.

■ **Door Access Control**

A replacement door access control system will be installed to the main entrance at street level. The external door access panel will be recessed into the brickwork reveal (to match existing) and finished in satin brass.

■ **Removal of Internal Walls**

The proposal extends to minor demolition works, much of which is non original. This includes the removal of the walls subdividing the basement front room. Given the layout of the other adjoining properties, this intervention would result in 23 Bedford Square matching the others. However, it is unclear whether this wall is original, as the adjoining surfaces, such as the ceiling, are of modern plasterboard construction.

The demolition work to reconfigure the WCs and kitchen at basement level will be of modern fabric and have no loss of historic fabric.

■ **Service Riser**

The existing service risers will be utilised for the new services, removing all redundant equipment. No new service risers will be required.

■ **Flooring**

All existing carpets throughout the property will be replaced with new carpet. Stair runners with satin stainless steel stair rods will also be installed on staircases.

The existing floor tiles to all WCs will be replaced with new porcelain tiles.

■ **Doors**

The doors will be upgraded with Envirograf intumescent paint to ensure they comply with modern fire safety requirements whilst having little impact on the historic elements of the building.

■ **Ironmongery**

All existing ironmongery, which are non-original, will be replaced with new brushed brass fittings.

■ **General Repairs**

Inevitably, there will be a need to undertake repairs to walls, floors and ceilings. Where required, these repairs will be undertaken to match the existing in terms of materials and method applied.

Any patched in wall and ceiling mouldings and joinery items will be made to match the existing as closely as possible.

■ **Redecorations**

All existing ceilings, walls and joinery items will be suitably prepared and redecorated. We do not propose to carry out poultice cleaning to the decorative coving unless it is deemed essential on site. Most of the areas of redecoration are sound but in some areas we may need to strip and relime the walls where damage has occurred, either through impact or water. It may also be necessary to replace plasterwork in those areas which is only obvious once we commence repairs. If repairs are required, we will use traditional lathe and plaster.

External Proposals

■ **External Condensers**

It will be necessary to install external condensing units to serve the cooling for the offices and the communication room as detailed above.

The external plant will be located within redundant cold water storage tank room at roof level. To ensure that adequate ventilation is provided the wall of the housing will be replaced with timber louvers. The housing will not be visible from street level as it is concealed behind existing pitch roofs.

We commissioned an acoustic report to assess the impact these external condensing units will have on the adjoining buildings. This report confirmed that the noise levels will not exceed the permissible levels detailed within Camden planning policy. A copy of this report is included within the application.

Section 3 – Use/Layout

The proposal seeks to alter the layout at basement level, removing the subdivision to the front room so the layout is aligned with other properties on Bedford Square. It also includes removal of non-original partitions at basement level to reconfigure the WCs/shower room.

Section 4 – Access

As part of the design phase, we have undertaken an assessment of the current access arrangements with the view of improving access where possible.

The benefits of installing a motorised lifting platform to assist wheelchair users gaining access to the property from street level have been considered. Even if a wheelchair user could access the property, the changes in levels and the lack of an internal passenger lift will prevent access to all but the ground floor rooms.

Due to the above and as the building is Grade I Listed, it is our opinion that it is not feasible to make all of the necessary adaptations without having a detrimental effect on the fabric of the property. The visual appearance of an external motorised lifting platform within the Conservation Area would also be contentious and the introduction of an internal passenger lift will result in significant loss of historic building fabric.

Every effort will be made to bring access opportunities up to the best available standard within the constraints imposed by the listed nature of this building.

The following best practice guidelines have been considered:

- Equality Act 2010
- Building Regulations Approved Document M and K
- BS 8300:2001 – Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people Code of Practice

Section 5 – Landscaping

There are no landscaping works proposed as part of this scheme.

Section 6 – Vehicular and Transportation Links

The vehicular and transport links to the building will not be affected by the proposed works.

Section 7 – Conclusion

We believe that the proposed works will not adversely affect the original fabric of the building.

Through our design, we have carefully considered the most discreet and practical location for the external plant to minimise the impact on the building externally and internally. The plant will not be visible from any adjoining properties and the acoustic assessment has demonstrated that it will not have any adverse impact on the amenity of the adjoining owners.

Where possible we have located indoor heating/cooling units in the same position as the existing radiators allowing for the associated pipework to run within the existing service routes, minimising the impact on the property. The units are also to be positioned on the floor, which will minimise potential damage caused to original skirting and joinery items.

In our opinion, the installation of comfort cooling will not adversely affect the original fabric of the building and will benefit all future occupiers. By improving the service provision within the property, such as lighting, data, WCs, small power, etc, we anticipate securing a long term tenancy.