

MARTIN O'ROURKE

CONSERVATION - REGENERATION

martin.orourke.consult@gmail.com

tel: 0044(0)7895063839

3 Chesterton Hall

Chesterton Road

Cambridge

CB4 1BH

53 Bedford Square London Borough of Camden



A Heritage Statement Describing the Heritage Significance of the Building and the Possible Impact of the Proposed Replacement Basement Area Door.

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1 Purpose of the Statement

1.01 This statement aims to outline the heritage significance of No.53 Bedford Square. The proposal to replace the existing front basement area entrance door will be assessed to terms of the possible impact on the significance of the listed building.

2 Designations

2.01 No.53 Bedford Square is listed Grade 1 as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The listing description states;

TQ2981NE 798-1/99/80

CAMDEN BEDFORD SQUARE (South side) Nos.40-54 (Consecutive) and attached railings Includes: Nos.33 AND 35 BEDFORD AVENUE. (Formerly Listed as BEDFORD SQUARE Nos.1-54 (Consecutive)) GV

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Terrace of 15 houses forming the south side of a square. No.54 formed by the return of No.53 to Bloomsbury Street. All built by W Scott and R Grews; probably designed by Thomas Leverton or Robert Palmer; for the Bedford Estate. Nos 40-53 form a symmetrical terrace. Yellow stock brick with evidence on most of the houses of tuck pointing. Plain stucco band at 1st floor level. The centre houses, Nos 46 & 47 are stuccoed. Slate mansard roofs with dormers and tall slab chimney-stacks. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, attics and basements. 3 windows each. Recessed, round-headed entrances with Coad stone vermiculated intermittent voussoirs and bands; mask keystones. Enriched impost bands and cornice-heads to doors. Side lights to panelled doors, some 2-leaf. Fanlights, mostly radial patterned. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars. Nos 40-47 & 53 have cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Cornice and parapet, Nos 40 & 53 with balustraded parapets. INTERIORS not inspected but noted to contain original stone stairs with cast and wrought-iron balusters of various scroll designs, decoration and features; special features as mentioned: No.40: 4-window return to Adeline Place, 3 blind. Rear elevation has a full height canted bay. INTERIOR has fine plasterwork, ceiling with 5 restored painted panels and joinery. No.41: rear elevation with a full height bowed bay. A fine plaster ceiling. No.42: a fine plaster ceiling and friezes. Interesting original staircase in the canted bay at the rear. No.43: rear elevation has a full height bowed bay. A fine plaster ceiling. No.44: rear elevation has a full height canted bay. Good detailing and a fine plaster ceiling. Nos 46 & 47: rusticated ground floor; 5 Ionic pilasters rise through the 1st and 2nd storeys to support a frieze, with roundels above each pilaster, and pediment with delicate swag and roundel enrichment on the tympanum. At 2nd floor level a continuous enriched band running behind the pilasters. Rear elevations with full height canted bays. INTERIORS have identical form staircases which terminate with a series of winders at the head of a straight flight and returns with a long landing. No.46 with some curved doors; No.47 with 2 fine plaster ceilings. No.48: rear elevation with full height canted bay which is bowed internally. A fine plaster ceiling and good friezes. No.49: rear elevation with full height canted bay. 2 fine plaster ceilings. No.50: rear elevation with full height canted bay which is bowed internally. 2 fine plaster ceilings. No.51: rear elevation with full height canted bay which is bowed internally. 2 fine plaster ceilings. Courtyard retains original York stone paving. No.52: rear elevation with full height canted bay. Friezes of interest but otherwise plain. No.53: return to Bloomsbury Street forming No.54. 4 blind windows and entrance with Gibbs surround and sash to right. Rear elevation with a full height canted bay. Some houses with original lead rainwater heads and pipes. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to areas with urn or torch flambe finials. Most houses with good wrought-iron foot scrapers. HISTORICAL NOTE: the houses in Bedford Square form a very important and complete example of C18 town planning. Built as a speculation, it is not clear who designed all the houses.

Leverton was a country house architect and may have been involved with only the grander houses; he lived at No.13 (qv). Palmer was the Bedford Estate surveyor and may be responsible for the vagaries of the square. The majority of the plots leased by the estate were taken by Robert Grews, a carpenter, and William Scott, a brickmaker. The following have plaques or tablets: No.41 was the residence of Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins, novelist; No.42 of William Butterfield, architect; and No.49 of Ram Mohun Roy, Indian scholar and reformer (LCC / GLC plaques). Nos 50 & 51 have oval plaques inscribed "St. G.F.1859" and "St. G.B. 1823", the line that divides the parishes of St Giles in the Fields and St George, Bloomsbury running along the party wall. (Byrne A: Bedford Square, An architectural study: London: -1990).

2.02 Bedford Square is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3 Heritage Significance

3.01 No. 53 is an end terrace house on the south east corner of Bedford Square. The whole Square is listed Grade I. Grade I listing denotes a building, or group of buildings, of exceptional interest and importance. Only 2.5% of the estimated 400,000 listed buildings in England are Grade I.

3.02 No.53 forms part of a Grade I listed Square where the individual houses are of intrinsic interest but are also of exceptional interest as a complete 18th century London Square. The group value of the whole Square is further recognised by its inclusion within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, denoting an area of special architectural or historic interest.

4 The Proposal

4.01 The proposal is to replace the existing painted and glazed modern metal door in the front basement area under the ground floor stone entrance bridge (see Drg AR/01 attached). This door was fitted to meet security concerns, but is of an inappropriate design and choice of materials.

4.02 The proposed replacement door is intended to maintain a secure entrance to the basement of the house from the front basement area. The replacement design is more appropriate in design and material. The modern metal door would be replaced with a painted timber door of traditional design, drawn from existing examples in the Square. (see Drg AR/05A & AR/06 attached)

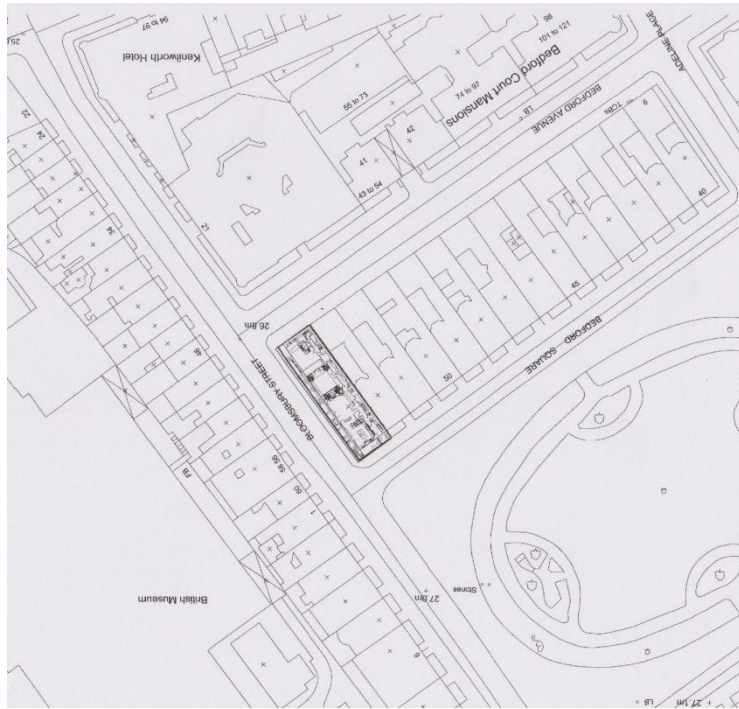


Existing basement area door on the north side of Bedford Square

4.03 It is proposed to finish the new timber door in silk finish white paint. Many of the similar examples elsewhere in Bedford Square basement areas are also white painted. This may be because the areas are somewhat shaded and the proportion of glazing to joinery gives the visual impression of a window rather than a door. If the door was solid and set within a brick opening, a dark colour would be typical, but in this context a dark painted door among glazing appears discordant.

5 Conclusion

5.01 The existing white metal unauthorised door is clearly unacceptable. The proposed painted timber and glass door is of traditional design derived from other examples in Bedford Square. The proposal therefore represents an enhancement of the listed building's basement area. It complies with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and the policies of Camden Council for managing change in the historic environment.



Location Plan

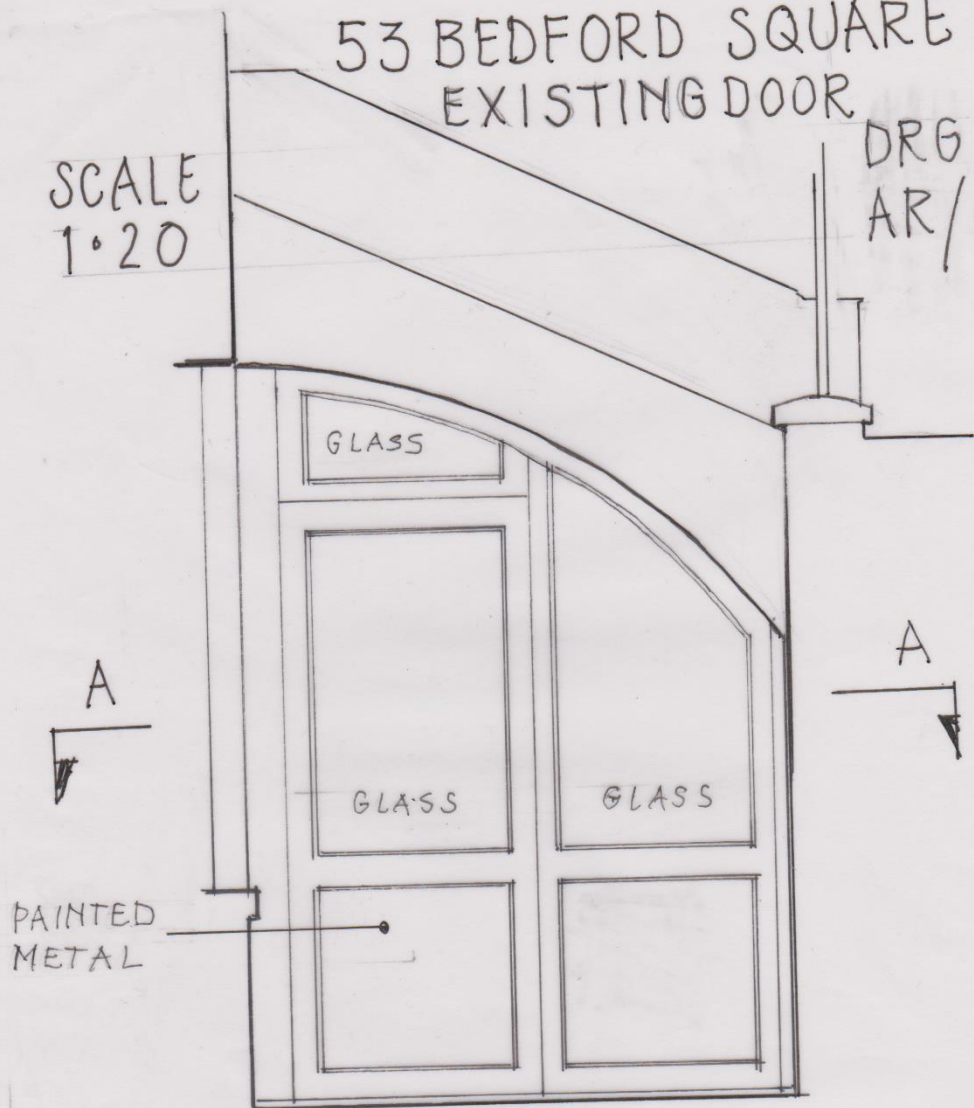


Site Plan

53 BEDFORD SQUARE
EXISTING DOOR

SCALE
1:20

DRG
AR/01



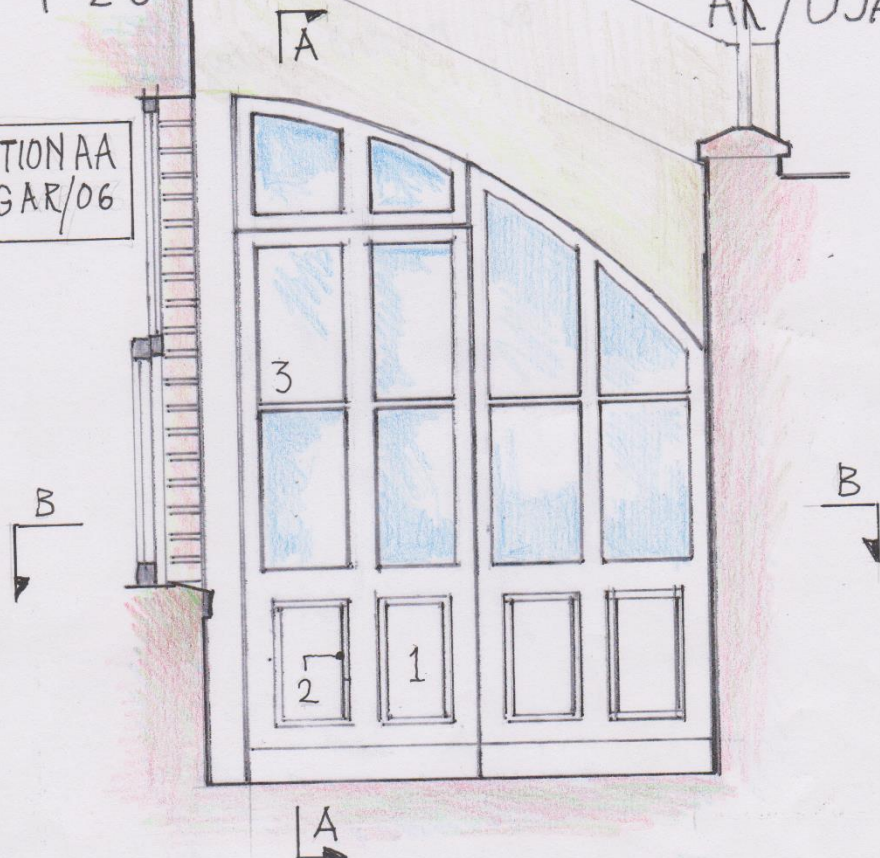
SECTION AA

53 BEDFORD SQUARE
PROPOSED BASEMENT
AREA DOOR

SCALE
1:20

AR/05A

FOR SECTION AA
SEE DRGAR/06



- 1 PAINTED WOOD
- 2 FLUSH BEAD PANELS
- 3 HISTO GLASS 12MM D/G

SECTION BB

