

Citizen Architects

Stage 3

Design, Access, & Heritage Statement

Flat C First Floor, 3 Mecklenburgh Street , London,
United Kingdom

June 2020 v1



Client:

Ms. X. Tisdall

Site Address:

Flat C, First Floor
3 Mecklenburgh Street London
United Kingdom
WC1N 2AH

Below: Present Layout from the marketing material of the flat (Stirling Ackroyd)



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Introduction

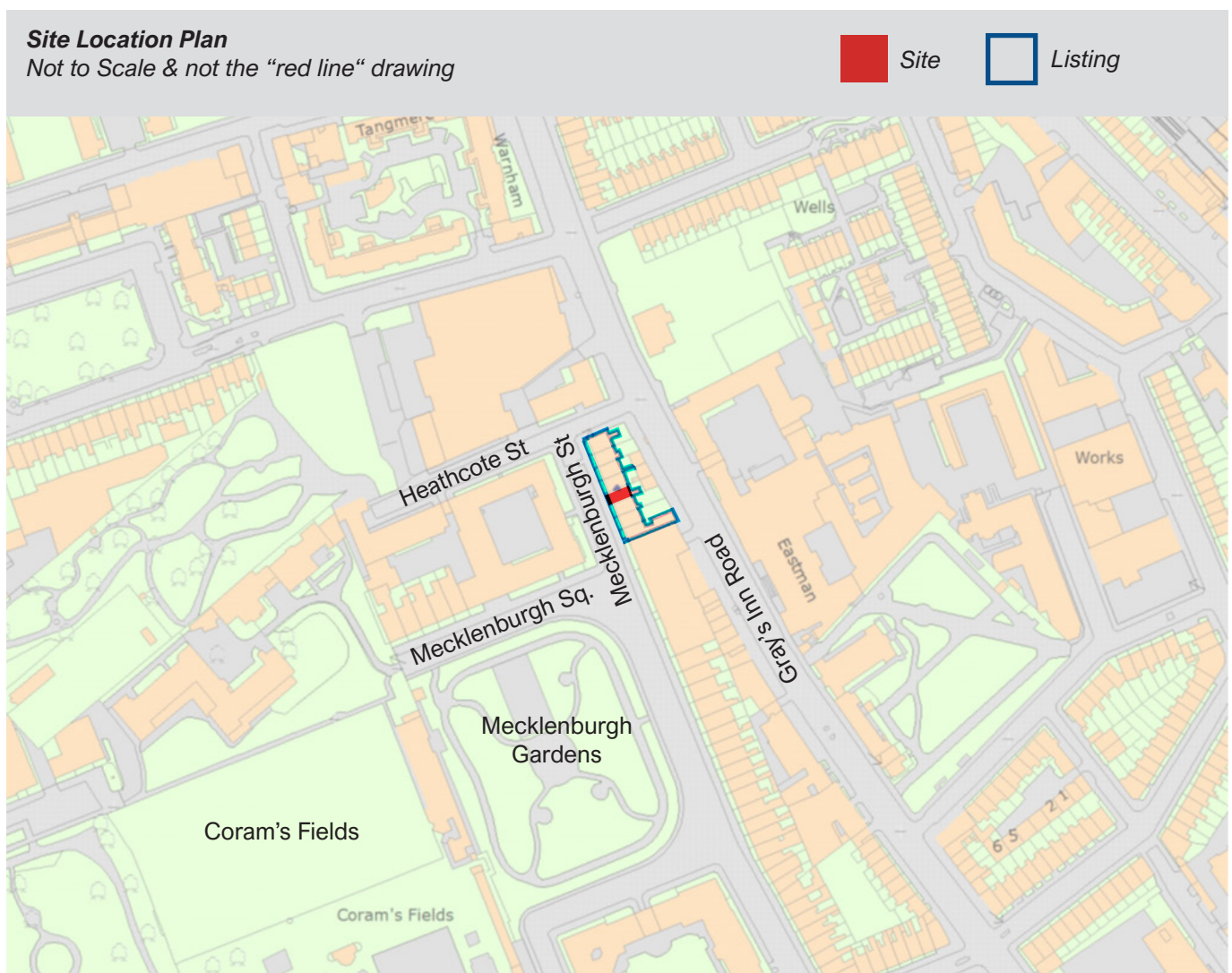
Citizen Architects were approached by the Client to assess if Listed Building Consent was in place for the present layout of an apartment, they had recently taken possession of in late 2019 and to look at improving the glazing to the rear bedroom.

Following a desktop assessment of the available documents it would appear part of the present layout and fixtures are not covered by previous approvals. Our Client has asked us to establish that this is the case and if necessary, to apply retrospectively to naturalise the situation. In addition, our Client would like to apply to replace two windows at the rear of the property, facing Gray's Inn Road.

The Site

No 3 Mecklenburgh Street is a well presented building that forms part of a consistent terrace in South Camden, close to the border with Islington. The rear of the property is bounded by Gray's Inn Road, though the building is accessed from the quieter Mecklenburgh Street side. Flat C is on the first floor of the building and extends from the front of the building to the rear. It is accessed from a communal stair.

The apartment is comprised of a small entrance hall, bedroom, separate bathroom, and a large reception room that today has the kitchen in one corner. Today, each room today is accessed from the small entrance hallway. The main reception room is the largest room in the apartment and appears to be original in shape. This room also has original details: the fireplace, skirting board, window surrounds, and cornice. The large sash windows appear to be original and give access to a small balcony that overlooks the street.



Heritage - Listing

The building forms part of a terrace that has had Grade II Listing since the 14th May 1974 [List Entry Number: 1113122 covering numbers 1-8 Mecklenburgh Street]. The Listing states:

TQ3082NE MECKLENBURGH STREET 798-1/91/1115 (West side) 14/05/74 Nos. 1-8 (Consecutive) and attached railings

Terrace of 8 houses. Early C19. Yellow stock brick with later patching. 4 storeys and basements. 2 windows each, No.8 with 3-window return to Heathcote Street. Round-arched doorways with fluted 1/4 columns, cornice-heads and fanlights; panelled doors. Entrance to No.8 on return in single storey extension; doorway with fluted pilaster-jambs and cornice-head (Greek key pattern). Blind arcade. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, 1st floor with continuous cast-iron balconies. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood (St Pancras part IV): London: -1952: 49).

The substance of the listing only describes and notes its external attributes, and to the front. The interior has not been formally assessed for its historic significance or sensitivity to change (that we are aware of). None-the-less, Listed Building Consent would be required for any internal alterations. It would appear the previous owners or others did not obtain permission before undertaking their works.

The building also sits close to the Listed Mecklenburgh Gardens and so may be considered to be within the curtilage of that historic asset.

**Present Front Elevation of 1-8
Mecklenburgh Street**
Facing Mecklenburgh Street
Flat C Highlighted



History

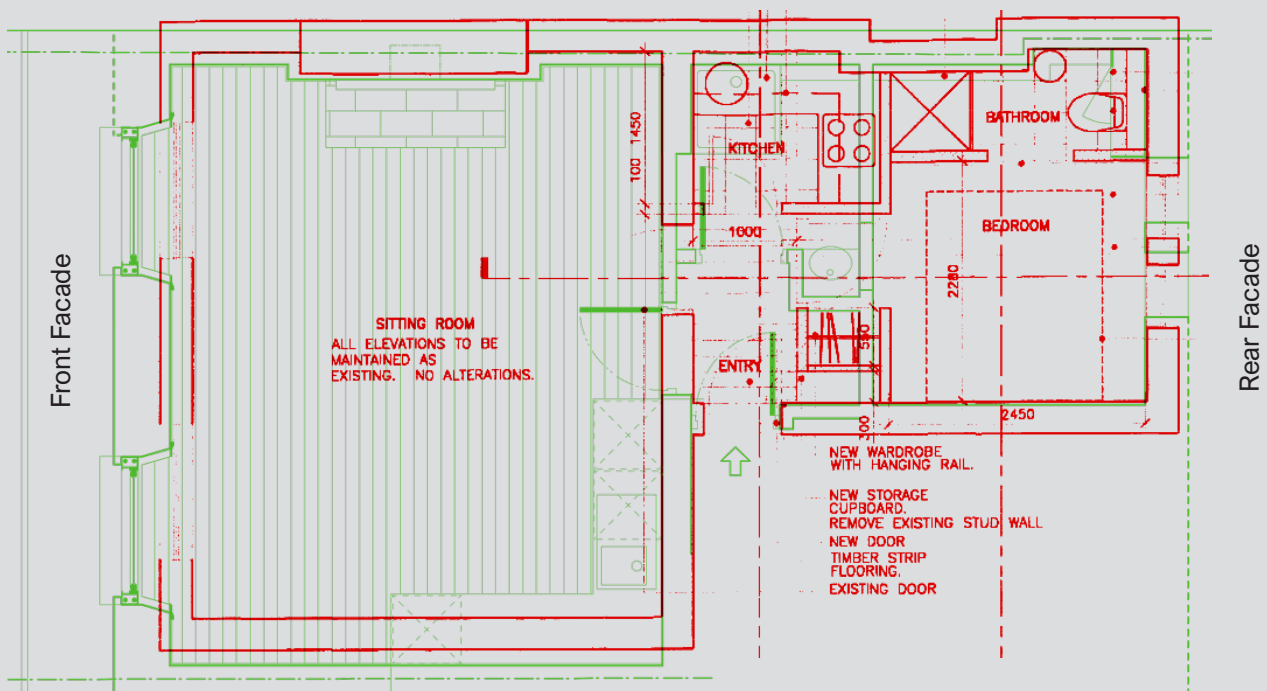
The original building is estimated to be from the late 19thC, and the front facade reflects that. The rear facade is more informal in composition with visible downpipes and exposed butterfly-type roof. There is no parapet here as there is to the front elevation. A few of the buildings in the terrace have changed the window configuration to their rear rooms, this is the case with the apartment in question. These changes are historic and are thought to be accepted.


From the available documents, the most recent approval for listed building consent for this flat was in 2002 [reference number LSX0105409]. From the application documents available, changes to the layout of the rear rooms were permitted but do not reflect the layout today - see below.

Although our Client did not undertake these works due to the discrepancies between the approval and present layout, we have advised our Client to make an application to regularise the situation.

Indicative Comparison of Present Layout Against Approval in 2002

Although the plans do not exactly align, this comparison highlights the main areas of difference being to the rear rooms of the property from the approved in 2002 and today. The changes to the position of the internal door into the main living space is noted in the correspondence of the application but not the drawings.



 Plan indicating the present layout from measured survey conducted by Citizen Architects late February 2020

 Extract from Approval LSX0105409 c.2002

Application to Naturalise Changes

The main changes are described into two sections:

1-The Changes to the layout

The present layout is described on the application drawings. The discrepancies in the layout with the 2002 are to the rear of the apartment. However, there are points to note in the approval history that we believe would make the changes as they stand today reasonable and acceptable.

The approval in 2002 would have resulted in the removal of the original fabric and the previous layout of the rooms to this area. So, the present layout did not remove original fabric or if the plan in 2002 was not enacted, the removal of that fabric was previously approved.

Separately, there was an approval in 2013 to amend the layout the flat on the third floor of the building (see details below). Given this and the earlier approval to remove the layout of the rear rooms from 2002, we there infer that the layout of the building is not deemed significant.

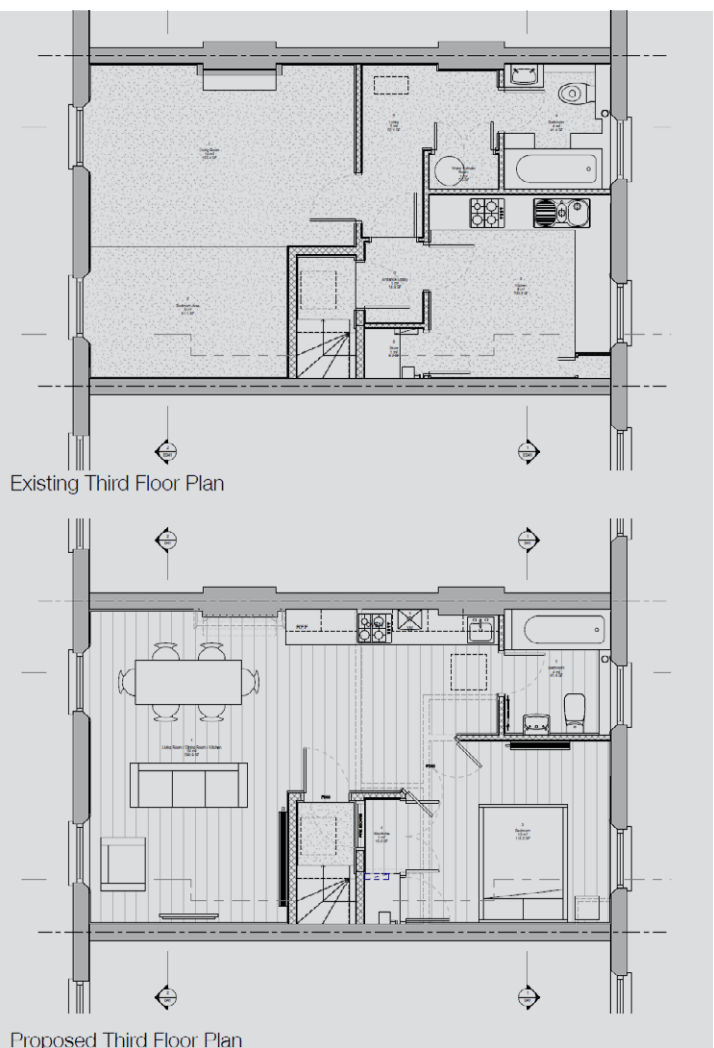
The layout today is rational and affords a more modern apartment layout with the bathroom accessed from the hallway. The bedroom is slightly larger than it would have been allowing for better usability and furnishing. We note a double bed does not allow for any circulation space in the room in the 2002 approval. The present layout aligns to the spirit of modern standards by providing better proportioned rooms and a separate shower room. This is similar to the plans approved for the third floor.

While it is not possible to be sure that original detailing has not been removed, there are no remnants or indications

Approved Changes to the Third Floor Flat, 3 Mecklenburgh Street (extract)

Approved under 2013-2664-L

An application was made in 2013 to make changes to the flat on the top floor. This achieved Listed Building Consent and would indicate that changing the layout is not particularly sensitive to change.



that there were fine details present in these rooms. It was common that the spaces facing the street would be more elaborately detailed with the rear rooms more utilitarian in decoration.

2- Installation of the Kitchen & Ancillary Changes

Today the Kitchen stands in the main living space in the southeast corner against the walls.

It would appear a small portion of the existing skirting on the south wall only has been removed at some stage, but the vast majority remains.

The cornice to this room appears to be original as do the window surrounds. The shutters to the windows have been removed at some stage but the recesses hosting them remain.

The internal door leaf into this room has been replaced but the architraves are older. New service outlets are included throughout but are of low impact.

The front door appears to be an older panelled door but not original. The new internal doors match the 6-panel spirit of the older front door.

These features are not perceived from outside the building. Although a change from the previous layout, we do not see this change as affecting significance of the historic asset and afford a more modern arrangement and proportion of rooms with better natural light for the kitchen.



Above: View of the kitchen today (from the marketing material of the flat from Stirling Ackroyd)



Present Windows in Rear Elevation

Thermal staining is apparent on the jambs and cill of the right hand window, marker 'A'.

Application for minor Change

The windows to the rear room of the flat are in poor repair and are coming to the end of their useful life. The Client proposes to replace the units with newer casement type with a more sympathetic design.

The present units are not original fabric, are non-thermally broken steel frames with single glazing. This would not meet modern standards and leaves the room cold. Their deficiency has also caused thermal staining and damage to the internal plaster and finishes. They also provide poor acoustic barrier to the busy Gray's Inn Road beyond.

Each window is split into a top hung casement on top and side hung casement below.

Looking at the rear elevation facing Gray's Inn Road, see previous leaf, the window apertures have been modified in this location of have been amended sometime in the past. This is the case with other floors of No.3 and No.1 in the terrace. The present window arrangement of Flat C was on the approval in 2002 so we deem it as accepted.

The proposed units will be modern replacement metal casements, white in colour to match the other windows in the elevation with double glazing to improve the thermal and acoustic performance. The proposal is that these are side casements full height.

Present Rear Elevation of 1-8 Meckelburgh Street
Facing Gray's Inn Road, building numbers noted

Flat C rear Windows



Heritage - Conservation Area

The site is in Bloomsbury Conservation Area in sub area 12, as defined by the conservation area management plan [LON\NEW Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Adopted draft 18 April 2011]. The character analysis for the conservation area is broken down into sub-areas. The sub area of concern here is focused on the open space of Coram's Fields and Mecklenburgh Square. No. 3 Mecklenburgh street is at the periphery of this sub area.

Notable character is described from the primary facade, helping define the backdrop to the open space not the rear facade. Changes in the window proportions of windows moving from ground up the façade relate to the front. Similarly, the description of the parapet would apply to the front façade only.

None of the changes described will affect the townscape character of the conservation area or its parts.

In Conclusion

We believe that the significance of the internal layout is low and therefore the changes that stand today are of little consequence to the importance of the heritage asset. Although the kitchen location is a change it does not detract from the perception of the volume of the main reception room and not at all its perception from the protected open spaces in the public realm. This position more importantly affords a more rational and better balance of the sizes and proportion of the limited number of rooms. It also allows for better functioning of those rooms and gives the kitchen access to natural light.

Additional Images of the Interior



Above: View from the small entrance hall towards the main living space Below: View into the living room (from the marketing material of the flat from Stirling Ackroyd)





**Above: View of the main living space Below: View of the rear bedroom
(from the marketing material of the flat from Stirling Ackroyd)**

