

RUNDELL ASSOCIATES



Design and Access Statement

40 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HX

REV P5 SEPTEMBER 2020





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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Design and Access statement is written to support a Householder Planning Application for alterations to the glazed link structure that provides access between the Main House at 40 Bedford Square and the Mews House to the rear.

1.2 The link was built during the 1980s at the same time as substantial alterations were made to the Mews House; the structure is, however, listed as it lies within the curtilage of 40 Bedford Square which is a Grade I listed building located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area of Camden Borough London Council.

2.0 Applicant and Agent

The applicant for this application is Mr Robert Villiers who owns the property:

Mr Robert Villiers
40 Bedford Square,
London,
WC1B 3HX

2.1 The client's agents for this application are:

MRJ Rundell & Associates Ltd,
12 Salem Road
London,
W2 4DL

Project Architect: Sam Rose

3.0 Site Location, Setting and Description

3.1 The site is located on the North side of Bedford Avenue on the corner with Adeline Place. The link faces the rear courtyard of the property and Adeline Place. The existing building is used for informal storage and as the primary access route between the Main Grade I Listed house at 40 Bedford Square and the Mews House to the rear.

3.2 Setting

3.3 The description of the setting and its historical development references the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy that was adopted in 2011 and the Local Plan Document produced by Camden Council.



3.4 Bedford Square is a virtually intact and exemplary piece of late 18th century town planning, consisting of terraced housing built speculatively by a number of different builders to a plan produced by the Bedford Estate. Smaller scale Mews Houses which serviced the townhouses are located to the rear of the square.

3.5 Description

3.6 The link structure at 40 Bedford Square does not exhibit any very evident architectural qualities. Facing the rear courtyard of the listed property and exposed to Adeline Place it is a somewhat awkward and undistinguished element within the assembly of buildings.



Aerial photograph showing the site location (Google Earth)

At Lower Ground Floor level the structure is open to the courtyard; on the upper floors the façade features timber framed glazing set under a pitched lead roof. The structure has been unaltered since it was original built in the 1980s, and no historical or Heritage values have been attributed to it.



4.0 Planning History

4.1 Following searches of the planning archive on Camden Council's website it appears that the link was designed and constructed in the 1980s as part of planning permission 8470170.

4.2 8470170 - APPROVED

Which has granted the construction of the link.

No more pre application advice has been sought regarding the link



Existing Link

5.0 The Proposal

5.1 Design Process

The façade of the link plays a significant part in the streetscape of Adeline Place and is clearly visible from the Grade I listed building at 40 Bedford Square - it is therefore a highly prominent and important piece of architecture within the area.

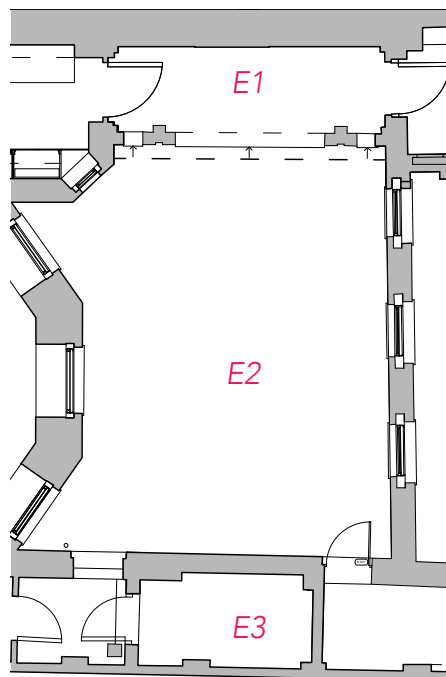
Despite its prominent position there is little in the design, decoration or craftsmanship of the existing link that presents any particular architectural quality. Although it was constructed in the 1980s it does not clearly relate to the dominant schools of Architecture



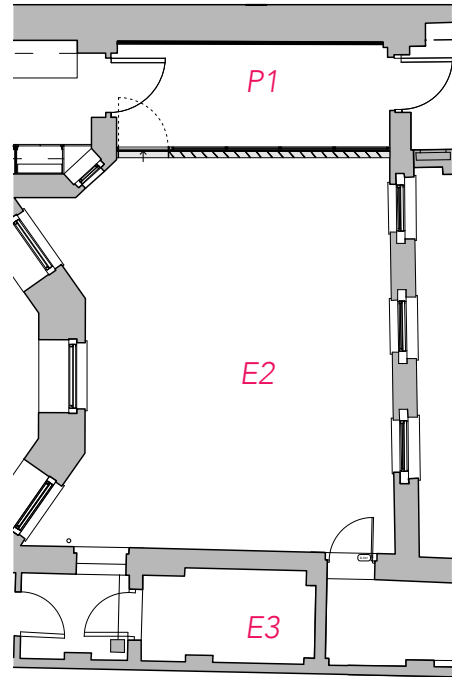
at the time. The design neither references neo-classical architecture in the style of post-modernism, nor is it cleanly detailed in the style of late modernism.

Some relationship to the main house was evidently considered in the design of the existing link, though this appears limited to details and materiality of the fenestration. The framing and facade cladding does not reference the unadorned 'flat-ness' of the exemplary Georgian house adjacent to it. There is no discernable continuous datum between the main house and the link structure. Neither heads of windows, sills, or the parapet is at the same horizontal datum as any feature on the back facade of 40 Bedford Square. The overall effect is of a structure divorced from its two hosts, whilst its considerable height and the extent of decorative detailing call attention to its presence. It is not a quiet structure.

The feedback from the council following submission of a previous proposal to replace the link structure with a flush fronted metal glazed option – reminiscent of a Crittal glazing system – was that the numerous glazing bars created an atmosphere that was too visually "noisy" and the whole façade was not of sufficiently high quality for its prominent position. The proposal to lower the level of the link substantially was welcomed and the removal of the pitched roof and its replacement with a flat roof was also considered to be appropriate.



Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan



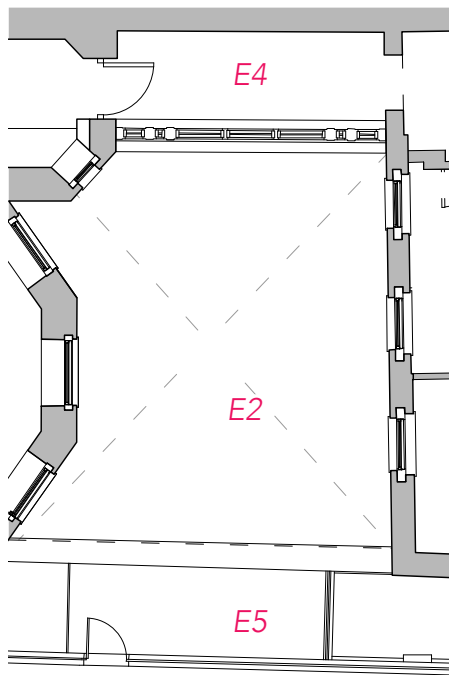
Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan

*E1 - Existing Link,
exterior space*

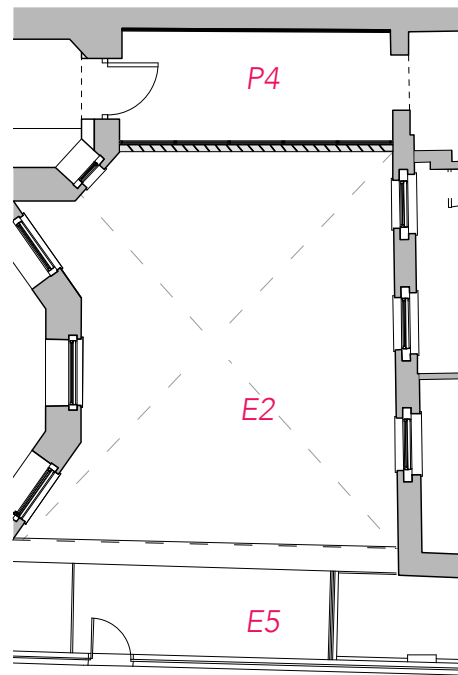
E2 - Existing Courtyard

E3 - Existing Boiler Room

P1 - Proposed Link, internal room



Existing Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

- E2 - Void over Existing Courtyard*
- E4 - Existing Link, interior room*
- E5 - Existing Boiler room roof*
- P4 - Proposed Link, interior room*

A proposal to use large plain sheets of glass in place of the Crittal glazing was felt to be problematical as it would lack finesse and be overly visible at night when the link would glow brightly and be prominent in the street scene.

The current proposal has therefore been developed in conjunction with a bespoke metalworker with whom we have developed a system that will allow unjointed 6m lengths of treated steel fins – set at a precisely determined angle – to form a semi transparent screen that will provide the link with a seamless flush façade. The dark hue of the metal will echo the dark brickwork adjacent to it, and the doorway will be formed from a flush steel panel, again minimizing extraneous detailing in a direct response to the plain brickwork facades that are such a feature of the main square.

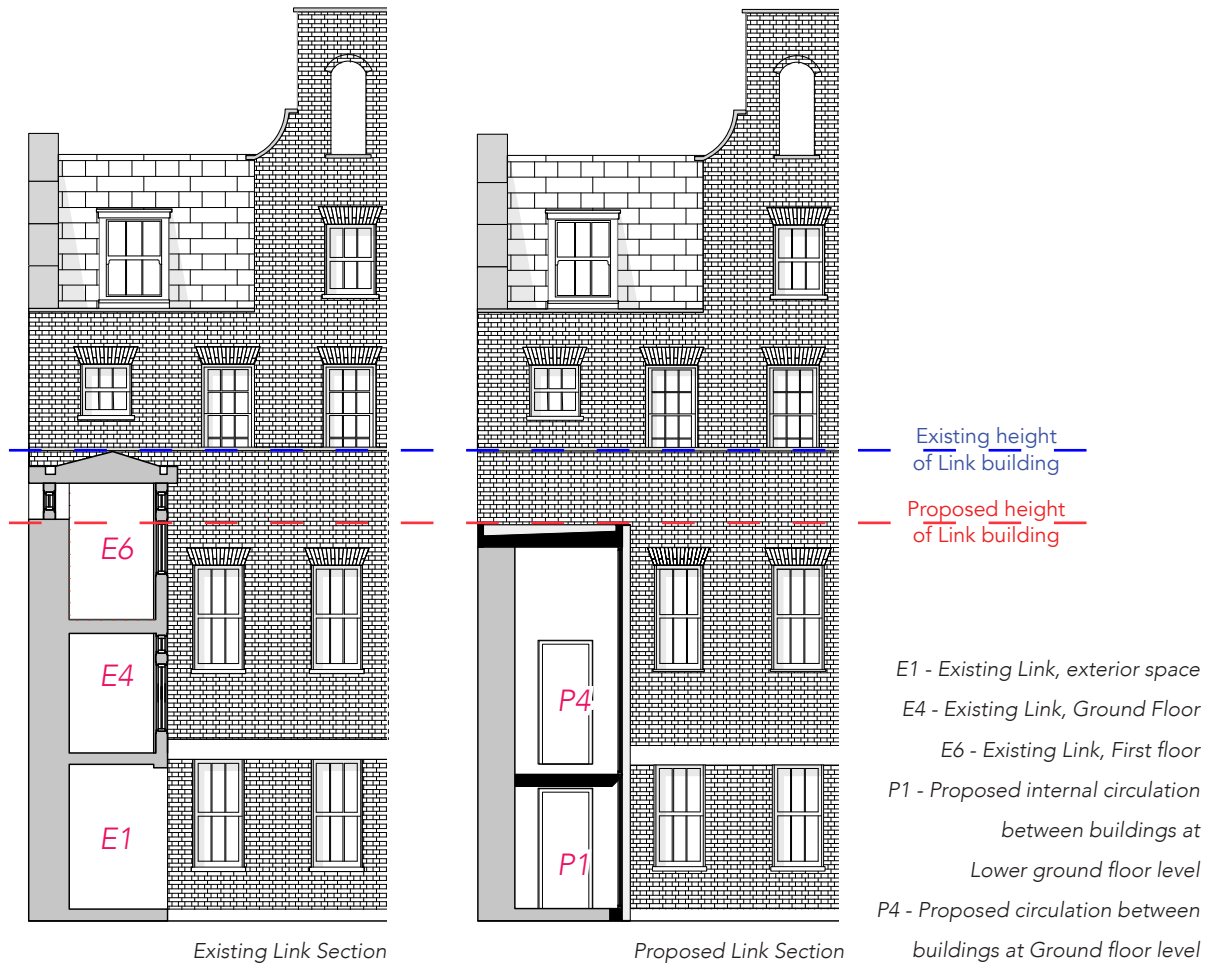


The style and materiality of the door and the fins will be similar to the metalwork on the Peter Zumthor's Kunsthhaus in Bregenz – a project which similarly was required to present a quiet external face whilst allowing light penetration into (but not out of) the building. A photograph is attached showing the finish of the doors in a granulated metal system with a matt surface.



Image of door of Peter Zumthor's Kunsthhaus in Bregenz

As the façade will present a flush face to the yard it will be evidently quiet, and as the light spillage at night will largely be hidden by the angles fins it will again be as inconspicuous as possible. Further to reduce any visual impact at night the lighting will be controlled by using proximity sensors to ensure that the lights are only illuminated as and when someone is using the link.



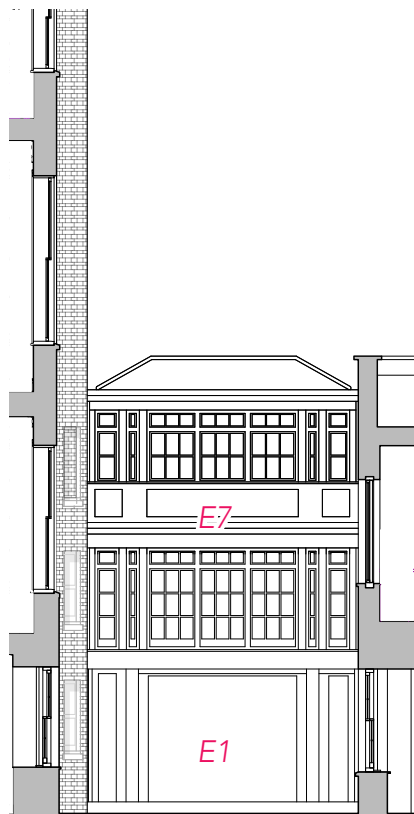
5.2 Internal alterations

5.2.1 It is proposed to reorganize the floor plates to allow access between the Main House and the Mews House at Lower Ground Floor and Ground Floor levels.

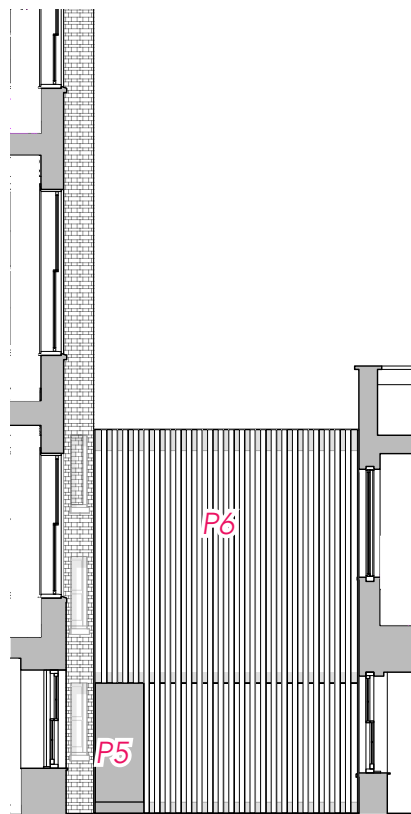
5.2.2 Lighting in the Lower Ground and Ground Floor corridors within the Link structure will be diffuse, with no light fixtures directly visible from the street.

5.4 External Layout

5.4.1 The facade system will have a double skin: to the exterior of the proposed glazing, full-height vertical metal 'fins' fixed at an angle will create a consistent and visually quiet facade. These fins will allow views from the Link to the Mews House while obscuring views into the Link from Adeline Place.



Existing Link Elevation facing Court Yard



Proposed Link Elevation facing Court Yard

- E1 - Existing Link, exterior space*
- E7 - Existing white painted timber windows*
- P5 - Proposed door access to existing court yard*
- P6 - Proposed Link facade*

6.0 Sustainability

- 6.1 Through the completion of the proposed works it is anticipated that the environmental performance of the building can be significantly improved. A “fabric first” approach will be taken regarding the environmental sustainability of the house relying on improvements to the performance of the building fabric. The new façade will incorporate double glazing units throughout and insulation will be added to the party wall and the roof structure to improve thermal performance of the link.

7.0 Access

- 7.1 Currently the main pedestrian access to the Link is via the Main House or Mews house. The courtyard offers direct access to the Link via a steep set of stairs from Adeline Place. No changes to the access routes are proposed.

8.0 Waste

- 8.1 All waste produced during the refurbishment can be kept within the curtilage of the building and removed at the end of every working day thereby avoiding the need of a skip located in the street outside. We will look to develop a full waste management plan in collaboration with Camden Council during the application process.



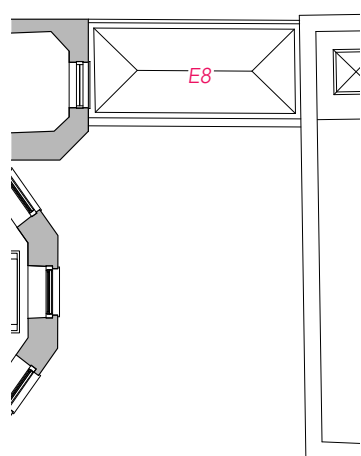
9.0 Heritage value

9.1 As the Link is entirely of modern construction it has little Heritage Value beyond its location in the Conservation Area and the views it provides from the listed building. This aspect of the proposal is more fully developed in the Heritage Statement.

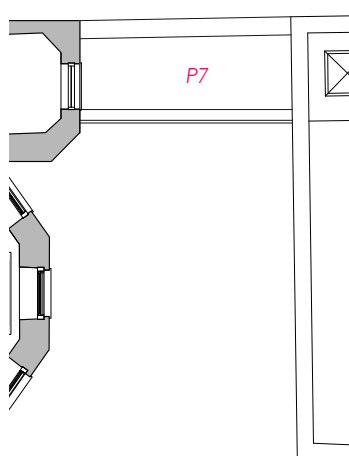
10.0 Conclusion

10.1 We believe that the proposed refurbishment has been designed to be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Conversation Policy and the Camden Local Plan.

10.2 The proposed works will allow the creation of improved access routes between the two buildings either side of the Link. No alterations to Historic fabric have been proposed as the work will take place within the structure that was constructed in the 1980s. External alterations are limited to the reduction in height of the party wall, and the replacement of the 1980s timber glazing that has no clear architectural rationale or quality with a high quality contemporary double-glazed windows and metal facade system.



Existing Roof Plan



Proposed Roof Plan

E8 - Existing Link, Roof

P7 - Proposed Link Roof