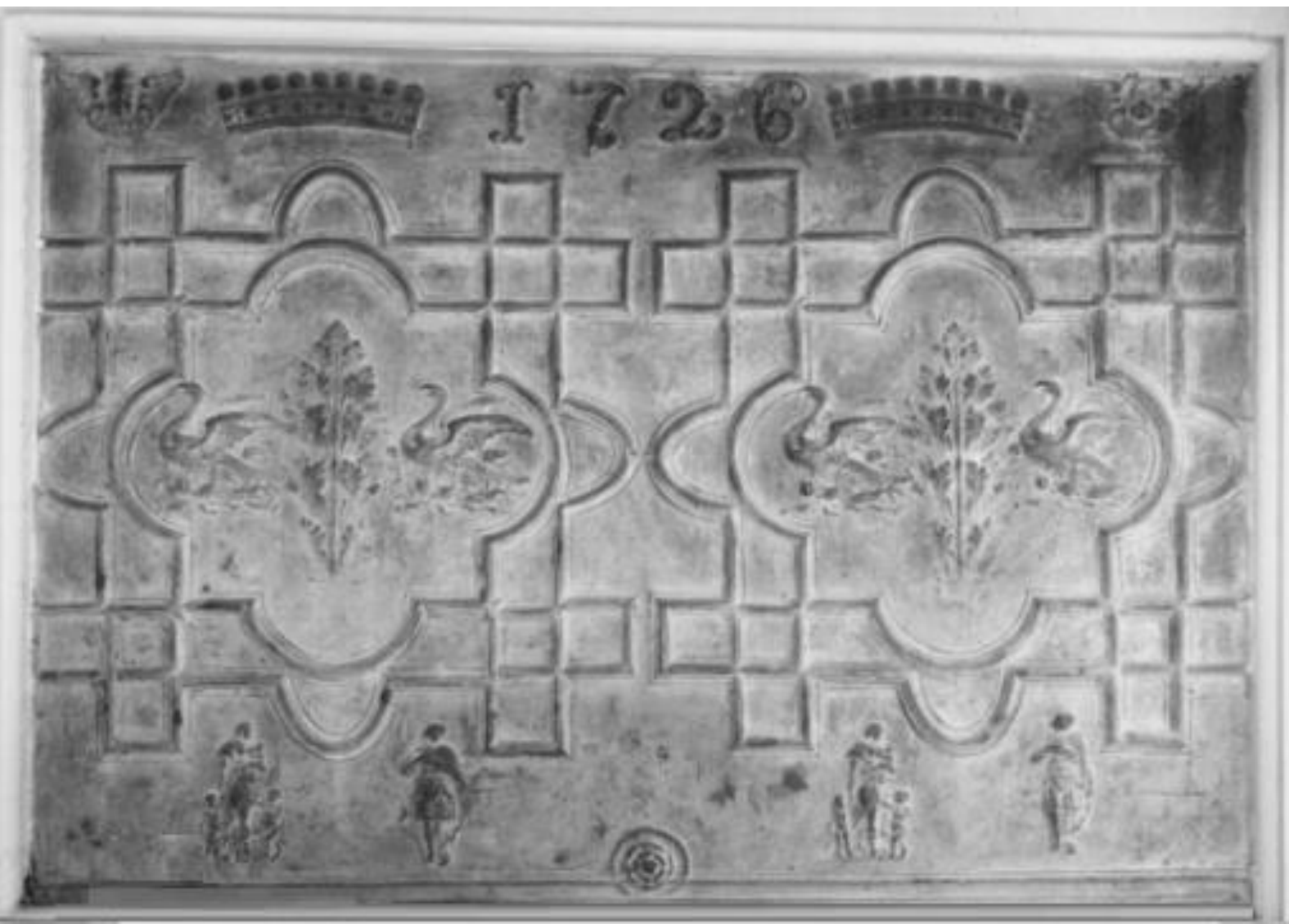


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Heritage Appraisal
No. 8 Great James Street, London, W1CN
December 2020





1 Introduction

1.1 The following Heritage Appraisal has been prepared in support of proposals to extend and carry out alterations to the grade II* listed no. 8 Great James Street, London, WC1N 3DP (the site). This report sets out the historic development and significance of the site and its context and considers the proposed scheme against relevant historic environment policy.

1.2 No. 8 is situated on the east side of Great James Street and forms part of a listed group with nos. 3 to 16 Great James Street and attached railings. All are highly graded and important examples of classically proportioned and detailed, early Georgian London terrace townhouse architecture. These buildings exemplify the neoclassical architectural traditions and proportions of Great James Street and its original form, character and layout.

1.3 The proposed scheme seeks to reinstate the building as a single family dwelling together with the appropriate and careful adaption of the existing fabric to suit the needs of a modern family home. This will reinstate the partywalls and remove lateral connection with no.7 Great James Street.

1.4 This report should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement and drawings prepared by Marek Wojciechowski Architects and Planning statement by Montagu Evans.

Research and report structure

1.5 This appraisal briefly sets out the historic development of nos. 7 & 8 Great James Street which are laterally connected and operated as a single building. It sets out the significance of the existing building and the works previously approved, it goes on to consider the effect of the proposals on that significance having regard for relevant historic environment policy.

1.6 The report is divided into three main sections. The first (section 2) describes the historic development of the site and its context. Section 3 provides a brief overall description and an outline of the significance of the site. An assessment of the proposals against significance is provided at section 4. Relevant historic environment policy is outlined in appendix A.

1.7 It should be noted that in common with many historic buildings, sites and places, it is not possible to provide a truly comprehensive analysis of the site's historic development. The research and analysis set out in this report is as thorough as possible given the type and number of archival resources available during the current COVID restrictions. Research has been undertaken using the London Metropolitan Archives; OS mapping; the Camden Local Archives Centre; the LCC Bomb damage map; LBC outline planning website; the Historic England Archive. As well as a number of online sources have also been used.

Author

1.8 This appraisal has been prepared by Charles Rose of The Heritage Practice Ltd. Charles Rose BA (Hons) who has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the townscape and historic environment. He has over fifteen years of local authority experience, including twelve years as a Principal Conservation & Design Officer at the London Borough of Camden. He also has experience in the private sector, preparing heritage statements and appraising the significance of historic buildings.

1.9 Historical research for this report was undertaken by Dr Ann Robey FSA, a conservation and heritage professional with over twenty years experience. She has worked for leading national bodies as well as smaller local organizations and charities. She is a researcher and writer specialising in architectural, social and economic history, with



a publication record that includes books, articles, exhibitions and collaborative research.

Designations

1.10 As noted above, no. 8 Great James Street is a grade II* listed building. The building was listed in 1974 and forms one of a group of 14 terraced houses dating from 1720-24. The terrace is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and an archaeological priority area.

1.11 The list description for the terrace of which it forms part reads as follows:

*Terrace TQ3081NE GREAT JAMES STREET
798-1/101/658 (East side) 24/10/51 Nos.3-16
(Consecutive) and attached railings*

*GV II**

14 terraced houses. 1720-24. For J Metcalfe. Brown brick, upper storeys with some later refacing in multi-coloured stock brick. No.3 refaced in yellow stock brick. EXTERIOR: 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Segmental red brick arches and dressings to flush frame windows, some with glazing bars and some with reeded frames with roundels. Parapets. Wooden, architraved doorcases. Nos 3 and 4 with half pilasters, plain pediments, patterned fanlights and panelled doors. Nos 5, 7 and 10-16 with enriched carved brackets carrying hood with panelled soffits, most with patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. No.6 with engaged columns (Tower of Winds), frieze with festooned urns, dentil pedimented cornice, round arched doorway with fanlight and panelled door. Nos 8 and 9 with pilasters, dentil cornices, patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. Between the houses, lead rainwater heads with lion masks and lead pipes. At 2nd floor level of No. 16, a very worn stone cartouche inscribed "Great James Street 1721". INTERIORS: most houses with good panelling; open staircases with turned balusters, column newels and carved brackets to treads. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron

railings to areas, with urn or torch flambe finials. No. 14 was listed on 14/05/74.

1.12 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was designated in 1968. The current Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (adopted 2011) includes the building in sub area 10: 'Great James Street/Bedford Row' of the conservation areas and notes that:

'Due to their early construction and fine architectural treatment, there are a large number of listed buildings in the sub area: all the buildings in Great James Street and in the stretch of Great Ormond Street in the sub-area are listed, with a high number at grade II. The townhouses in Great James Street are particularly well preserved; the only notable alteration is the loss of glazing bars from some sash windows.'*



2 No.8 Great James Street

Background history

2.1 Great James Street is an elegant and almost complete street of Georgian houses dating from the 1720s. It is named after James Burgess who helped George Brownlow Doughty and his wife, Frances, develop the area which became known as the Doughty Estate.¹

2.2 Widespread development began in the Holborn area following the Restoration. Landowners saw the potential for new fashionable suburbs to be developed, and took their inspiration from Covent Garden, just to the south. Development extended northwards from St Giles High Street to Great Russell Street, and between Holborn and Great Ormond Street.

2.3 The extent of development by the mid-18th century can be seen on Rocque's map of London of 1746. Just to the east of James Street (now Great James Street) the open fields still remained (Figure 1).

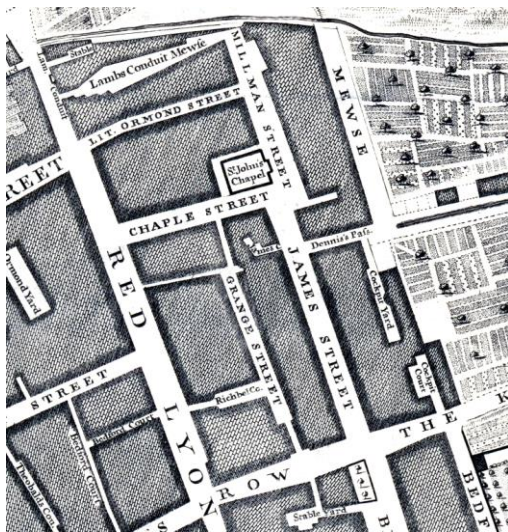


Figure 1: Rocque's map of 1746 showing James Street fully developed

2.4 Today it forms part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area², and Great James Street is built up of terraced townhouse of four-storeys in height, which are also the predominant building type in the larger conservation area. In addition, the townhouses generally have basements and attic storeys. Many of the houses are listed.³

2.5 Roofs are commonly defined by parapets, giving strong and consistent roof lines. The most widespread roof forms are butterfly roofs behind parapets or mansards where there is habitable attic space.⁴ It has been said that Great James Street 'demonstrates a remarkable degree of uniformity, achieved through the repeated use of a standardised prototype' and 'is a gem'.⁵ The street has almost all its original buildings with minimal external changes. Built in brown-red brick with red brick dressings including arches to the windows, and common features include decorative iron boundary railings, carved wooden doorcases with brackets supporting leaded hoods (Figures 2).

2.6 Both nos. 7 and No. 8 are Grade II* listed as part of a group of 14 terraced houses built between 1720 and 1724.⁶ Great James Street is identified as a secondary street in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, less grand than some other adjacent streets (e.g. John Street). Although primarily residential in the 18th and early 19th centuries, the area now has a mixture of uses including solicitors offices.

² *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Adopted draft 18 April 2011. It forms Sub Area 10: Great James Street/Bedford Row.*

³ *The listed houses in Great James Street are 3-16, 20-22, 23-25, 26-37, 39-40. See paragraph 1.11*

⁴ *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Adopted draft 18 April 2011.*

⁵ *Elizabeth McKellar, The birth of modern London. The development and design of the city 1660-1720, (1999), p.27 and Nikolaus Pevsner & Bridget Cherry, The Buildings of England: London 4 North, (2002), p.312.*

⁶ *A decorative plaque discovered in No. 7 has the date 1726 etched onto it. It is shown in Appendix B*

¹ *B. Weinrab and Christopher Hibbert, The London Encyclopaedia, (1983), p. 335.*

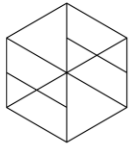


Figure 2 A general view of four-storey buildings at 3-16 Great James Street, Holborn, as seen from number 16 on the corner of Northington Street, signposted on the wall. 1966 [71749]

2.7 Many of the properties in Great James Street were both historically, and more recently occupied by legal firms due to their proximity to Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn. The solicitor Robert Maugham, first Secretary of the Law Society, lived and worked at No.17. It was also attractive to the wider middle classes and professionals, with architect William Wood Dean working at No.13 in the 1850s, and census records indicate surgeons and art dealers living on this street.

2.8 In recent years there is an increasing trend to return townhouses to their original use as single family dwellings. The early uses of nos. 7 and 8 Great James Street would have been residential but from the 19th century onwards some of the properties were occupied by solicitors and other lawyers (figure 6) no. 7 had a number of architects and surveyors residing there including as recently as 1935.⁷ As can be seen from the OS Map of 1873, many of the houses had mews buildings to the rear, accessed from Cockpit Yard and Green (later Emerald) Street (figure 4). They were still insitu 1914 (figure 5).



Figure 3: A view of the rear elevation of 8 Great James Street in 1976. [© LMA Collage Collection, image no. 71885]

Changes to nos. 7 & 8 Great James Street in the 20th and 21st centuries

2.9 A number of houses in Great James Street have been laterally converted and amalgamated with the next-door properties. This occurred frequently before World War One, and also at a later date, sometimes without formal permission. No. 7 was joined with no. 6 (refer to planning history). No. 8 was historically joined with No. 9, as by the time of the 1911 census, nos. 8 and 9 are listed as one property. There were undoubtedly business occupiers of the premises as well. It is not clear when Nos. 8 and 9 were converted to offices, though it may have been when the two properties were combined at the beginning of the early 20th century, which would be consistent with the probable age of the tiled step and the removal of the dividing railings.

2.10 A high explosive bomb fell between October 1940 and June 1941 in Cockpit Yard, just east of Great James Street, behind no.9.

⁷ LMA/4070/03/A04430.



Figures 4 & 5: OS maps of 1873(above) and 1914 (right)

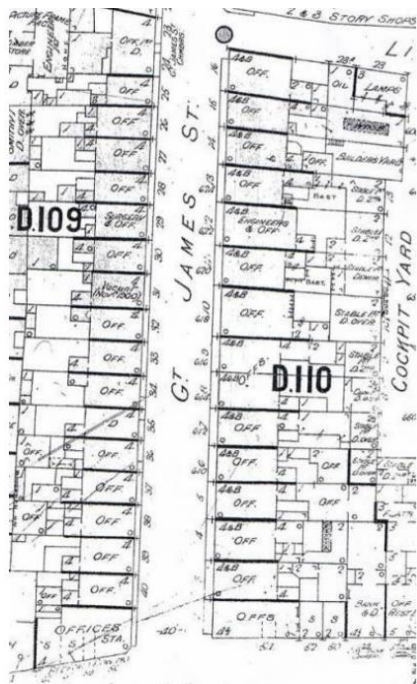


Figure 6: The Goad Insurance map of 1901 with number 7 marked 'Off' for office use.



Figure 7: LCC Bomb damage map (black indicates total destruction)



It seems likely that the impact caused damage to many properties in Great James Street, including to the fenestration. This explains why multipaned sashes survive in so few of the properties (figure 7).⁸ Bomb damage undoubtedly affected the houses in the southern part of the street, including nos. 7 and 8.

2.11 A measured drawing of the elevation of nos. 3-10 Great James Street dating from 1933⁹ in the Historic England Archive shows nos. 7 and 8, and depicts the doorcase at no. 7 to have a pedimented canopy, while no. 8 had a carved wooden doorcase with brackets supporting a flat leaded hood¹⁰ (figure 8). These are characteristic doorcases typical of Great James Street with large hoods on carved brackets. Today no. 7 has a flat roof without pediment canopy (figure 9). Figure 8 also shows the 'M' roof profile to nos. 6-8 Great James Street with dormer windows to no. 7 (c.f. figure 21). Dormer windows have subsequently been installed to the roof pitch of facing Great James Street of no. 6.

2.12 Measured drawings, including plans and sections of the houses survive in the Historic England Archive but are as yet unseen due to the closure of the archive due to COVID-19.

⁸ *Beacon Planning, Nos. 8 & 9 Great James Street D&A and Heritage Statement V. (2015).*

⁹ *The Historic England Archive catalogue entry says it dates from 1933 but where it is reproduced in the Beacon Planning, Nos. 8 & 9 Great James Street D&A and Heritage Statement V. (28 January 2015) it says it is from 1947. There are two other important measured drawings which are unavailable at the moment due to COVID-19 restrictions that ought to be ordered from the HE Archive. They are a labelled sheet showing sections through 3-10 Great James Street, and interior plans, sections, and elevations of the stairs, doors, and mantels made in 1933 [MD47/00323] and a labelled ground floor plan of 3-10 Great James Street [MD47/00321]. They would reveal much about the plan and condition of the premises in the 1930s.*

¹⁰ *Beacon Planning, Nos. 8 & 9 Great James Street – D&A and Heritage Statement V. 28 January 2015.*

2.13 In the 1960s and 1970s a large number of photographic images of both nos. 7 and 8 were taken by the GLC, which are today held in the London Metropolitan Archives Collage Collection. They show the houses in use as offices between those dates and include a few images showing repair work to the premises. It is unknown why these images were taken but it seems to have been around the time that the two properties were laterally converted. The images are reproduced in the body of this report and in Appendix B.

2.14 In 1976 plans were drawn up for alterations to various elements of the drainage especially on the second floor.¹¹ At the time, there were offices on all floors including the basement, although the attic floor contained a bedroom (figures 9, 10 & 11). There were openings along the party wall between the houses on the ground, first, second and third floors consistent with the openings which currently exist.

Planning history

2.15 In July 1990, the property department of Equity and Law undertook the repair and refurbishment of no. 8 Great James Street. One of the disused vaults in the basement of no. 8 was converted in 1990 into a kitchen.¹² There were also alterations to the toilet accommodation and the formation of an opening in the basement centre wall, plus general repairs and redecoration (figure 13).

2.16 In 2015 there were alterations to nos. 8 and 9 Great James Street including new Portland stone steps, repair and reinstatement of the railings, and repair of the door case to no. 9 only.¹³ No. 9 was converted to residential use. No. 8 remained in commercial use.

¹¹ *Unfortunately, the images sent by the archives are very poor quality and until access is permitted no better ones can be obtained.*

¹² *LB Camden planning online 9070132 (1990).*

¹³ *LB Camden planning online 2015/0450/P.*

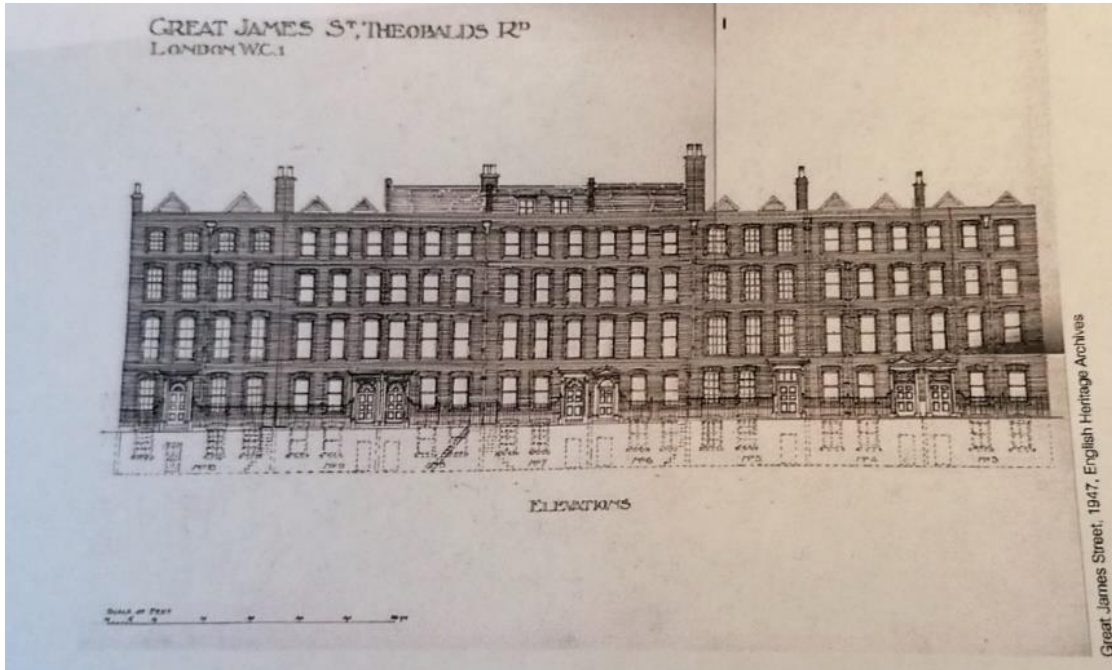


Figure 8: Labelled exterior front elevation of Nos. 3-10 Great James Street [© Historic England Archive MD47/00322]



Figure 9: Nos. 7-8 Great James Street in 1969. Panelled doors can be seen and one door has enriched carved bracket carrying hood, both with patterned radial fanlights. Between the houses, lead rainwater heads and lead pipes are

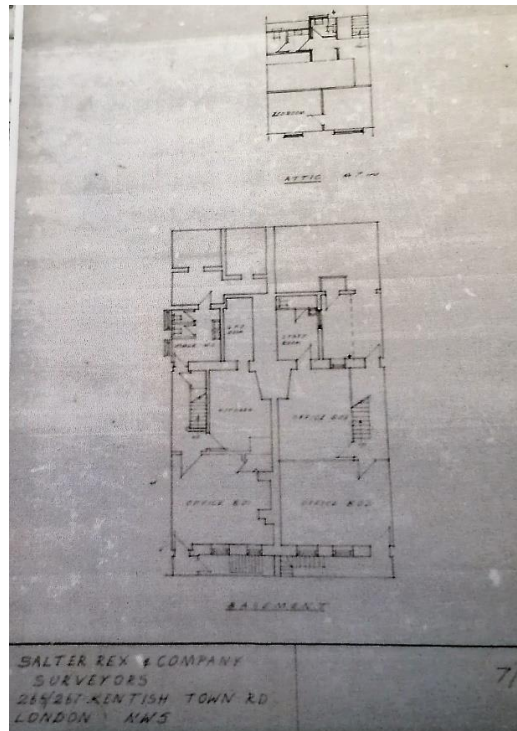


Figure 10

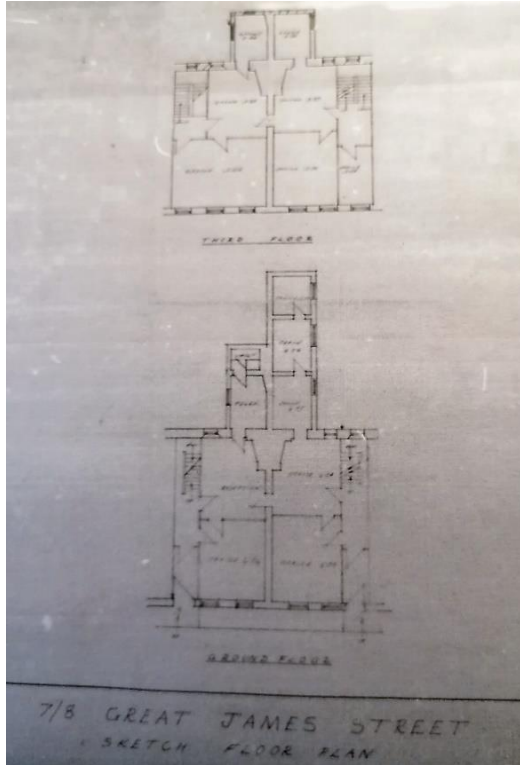


Figure 11

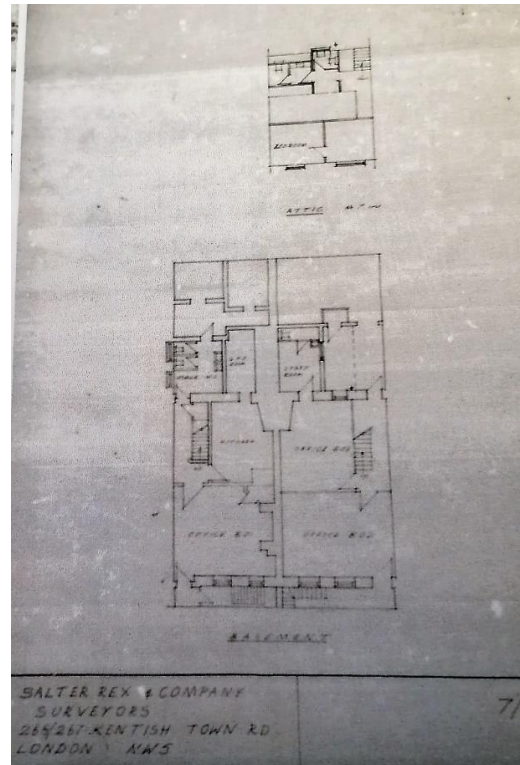


Figure 12

Figures 10, 11 & 12: Plans of nos. 7-8 in 1976 [© Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre drainage plans on microfiche for Nos. 7/8 Great James Street]

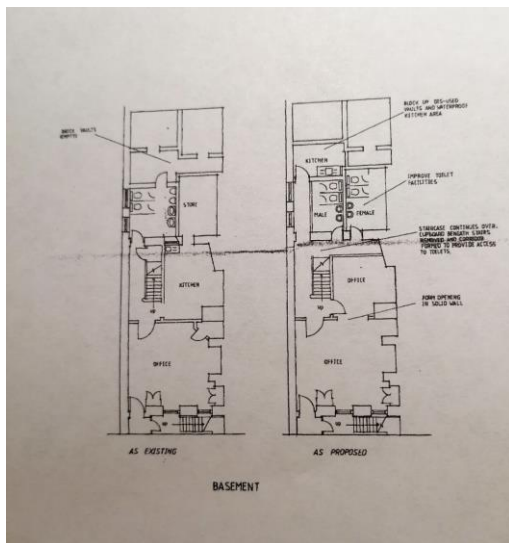


Figure 13: Basement alterations to No. 8 Great James Street in 1990



3. Description & Analysis

3.1 No.8 Great James Street is a substantial early-eighteenth century terraced house. The plan of the building is characteristic of the first half of the eighteenth century, with two main rooms on each floor, and a small closet wing opening off the rear room and rising to second floor level. The entrance hall and staircase is set against one party wall and the chimneystacks against the other. The rear rooms and the rear closet are heated by corner hearths served by single substantial chimney-stack.

Elevations

3.2 The main front is four storeys high above the basement and three bays wide. The main entrance door has a flat leaded hood on handsome carved brackets similar to others in the street. The windows have segmental heads with red brick arches. The windows are all sashes, with the sash-boxes set flush with the façade, an feature of early Georgian properties prior to 1775. The sash boxes of the ground and first floor do not have reeded surrounds. All windows have been replaced with one over one or two over two sash windows. These appear relatively modern possibly following world war II bomb damage. The rear façade contains more multipaned windows (figure 3) except for the upper floors of the closet wing.

Roof

3.3 The house has a 'M'-shaped roof with two ridges parallel to the street. The roof is of modern construction and doesn't appear to contain historic fabric, as can be seen from figure 14 which also shows steel beams connection both party walls and spanning front to back. The roof is currently accessed from no.7 Great James Street. The existing modern fabric of the rood indicates a modern rebuild although the historic form has been retained.

Plan form

3.4 The original plan is still clearly evident on all floors, although this is highly confused by the lateral connection with no. 7 Great James Street, particularly at ground floor level where the corridor disturbs the rear room. The third floor spine wall has been removed and a partition cuts through the chimney breast at the front of the house. As with no. 7 the rear additions and subdivision have swallowed the closet wing at basement almost entirely at basement level.



Figure 14: View of the rear attic space showing rebuilt party wall with no.9, modern timber, water proofing membrane and steel work.

Exterior

3.5 As a result of historic ownership arrangements (lateral connections with no.9) there is no access to the rear courtyard. This area is occupied by no.9 Great James Street which owns a 'flying freehold' extension positioned directly in front of the ground floor rear windows.



Interior

3.6 The interior has retained an early eighteenth century character, largely thanks to the panelling which lines the walls of most of the principal spaces, but it is clear that there has been a considerable amount of alteration particularly to the less significant third floor and basement.

Basement

3.7 The basement rooms, originally the kitchen and scullery, probably never had panelling and are now modern office spaces with new doors with new toilets in the closet wing. The rear room has no access to light and ventilation and a corridor has been built from the back of the staircase accessing the toilets (figure 14). The rear basement vault has been cement rendered to protect the storage area from damp. No historic fireplaces exists at this level except for the lead plaque above a cupboard in the front room.

Ground

3.8 The ground floor vestibule, front, rear room and closet rooms are fully panelled and retain a high degree of character. The cornice to the front room is later but there is a likely original fireplace. A door from the closet leads to a strong room. A door in the rear room connects with no.7 with a corridor cutting through the rear room (figure 15).

First floor

3.9 The first floor front room also has a later cornice and an Artex ceiling which detract from the early Georgian character of the room. The rear room appears to be in its original condition except for the fireplace as is the closet which may have an early fire surround. The first floor landing is highly decorative and clearly demonstrates the high status of the dwelling with three twisted balusters per tread and carved tread-ends to the cut strings. A door in the rear room connects with no.7.

Second Floor

3.10 Each room, including the staircase enclosure, on this level is panelled. The panelling at this level is plainer than the floors below. The partitioning to the front room, although often historic, is clearly modern being scribed around existing panelling and cornice. The rear room has a fireplace of some age, although it is unlikely to be original, this is to be retained. A door in the rear room connects with no.7.

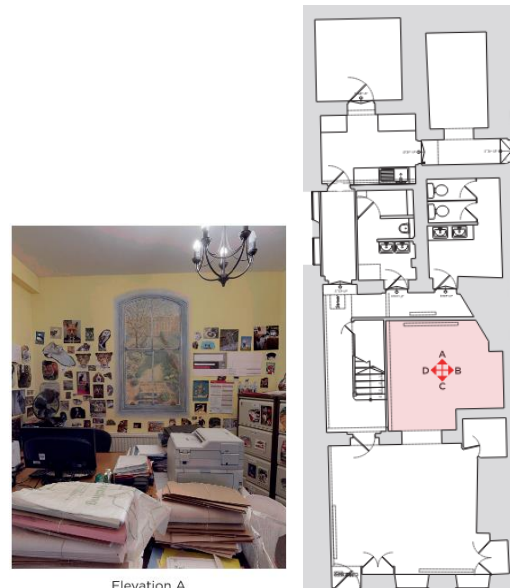


Figure 14: view of the corridor wall containing fresco of a window installed to the rear room at basement level.



Figure 15 showing current ground floor rear room divided with corridor accessing no.7 Great James Street.



Figure 16: Images showing 2nd floor front room with modern partition dividing the space

Third floor

3.11 This floor has undergone considerable change and retains no early eighteenth century character. The spine wall has been removed and all partitions are modern with steel beams can clearly be seen at ceiling level. The walls are plain plastered, probably on plasterboard, and the rooms have no cornices (figure 18). This accords with the evidence in the roof space and the staircase. It appears highly likely that the balustrade and handrail have been replaced as a minimum (figure 19.) A door in the rear room connects with no.7.

3.12 We have found no record of major rebuilding work to the upper floor of no.8 Great James Street but this could be related to the WWII bomb damage or major structural work carried out to no. 9 Great James street in the early 2000s (Camden planning reference: PS9904681) given the ownership and occupation arrangements.



Figure 17: Image showing 2nd floor landing and modern flight of stairs to the 3rd floor.



Figure 18: Image showing 2nd floor landing and modern flight of stairs to the 3rd floor.



Figure 19: Image showing 3rd floor staircase and landing.



Significance

3.13 The assessment of heritage significance below draws upon the definitions of heritage interest provided by the Statutory legislation; the NPPF, the widely-referenced definitions of heritage value devised by Historic England's 2008 study Conservation Principles, and the Government's supplementary planning Historic England guidance 'London Terrace Houses 1660-1860- A Guide to Alterations and Extensions'¹⁴ and newly adopted guidance on conserving Georgian and Victorian terraced housing¹⁵.

3.14 Statutory designations provide some guide to the importance of historic buildings. No. 8 Great James Street, like the other houses in the street, is listed II*, meaning it is a building of national architectural and historic importance and great weight should be given to its preservation and enhancement.

3.15 The building is clearly of considerable evidential value because of the good survival rate of interior panelling, although the evidence is difficult to interpret.

3.16 The house is of exceptional historical value as part of a well-documented early eighteenth century building development, where the land owner, the principal developer and the building craftsmen are all known. The later history is less well-documented and of lesser value. It does not appear that the building has any associations with well-known persons of historic significance.

3.17 The house is of exceptional aesthetic value as part of one of the best-preserved early Georgian streets surviving in London.

3.18 The house has little communal value, except as a valued part of the street scene and an important element in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3.19 Architecturally no.8 Great James Street is a relatively well-preserved example of a typical early eighteenth century London building type and for this reason can be considered as being of high architectural significance. The house is part of an important ensemble which is one of the best-preserved early Georgian streets in central London and of high artistic significance on that account.

3.20 Historically Great James Street is a very well-documented building project undertaken during the London building boom of the 1720s and can be considered as of high historical significance. The setting of no. 8 in many respects almost unchanged since it was built nearly 300 years ago and is on that account of high significance.

¹⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/a-z-archived/#atocL>

¹⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conserving-georgian-victorian-terraced-housing/>



4. Heritage Impact Assessment

4.1 The following section takes into account the significance of the building and the relevant policy context (which is set out at appendix A). It also takes into account recent decisions relating to the site and planning permission and listed building consent decisions for similar proposals. The proposals must be assessed against national, London-wide and local planning policy and policy relating to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

4.2 The proposed works are fully set out in the drawings and statements prepared by Marek Wojciechowski Architects. In sum, they comprise the re-conversion of the whole building from offices (class E) into a single family dwelling (class C3).

4.3 Works related to this application include (but are not limited to):

- Proposed change of use from Class E office to Class C3 Residential;
- Reinstatement of vertical townhouse by closing the party wall openings with no. 7 Great James Street;
- Removal of the roof of the 'strong room' on the ground floor rear extension to provide external courtyard/amenity space and the reinstatement of rear lightwell;
- Conservation of roof spaces into habitable accommodation with new secondary staircase extending from the main stair;
- Air conditioning to 4 principal front rooms; with external condenser located between double pitched roof;
- Replacement of all non-original windows with 6 over 6 double hung sash windows sashes;
- Removal of all non-original joinery and fittings;
- Minor reconfiguration of plan layout to make more authentic;
- Refurbishment and reinstatement of original floor finishes, wall panelling and ceilings as appropriate.

4.4 The overarching strategy for the internal treatment of the property is to reinstate the proportion and detail where missing, thereby

preserving and enhancing the existing character and reinstating the original use.

4.5 The internal restoration will include:

- Restore all original decorative moulding & wall panelling where possible/necessary;
- Reinstall traditional decorative mouldings where they have been lost over time, ensuring they are ordered and proportionate to the Early Georgian period;
- Expose and utilise existing original floorboards as floor finish to principal floors – Ground, First and Second. (Where non-original floor boards are discovered, replace with reclaimed pine boards to traditional dimensions)

Change of Use

4.6 It is good conservation practice for a building to be used for the purpose it was originally intended. The original use is almost always the most compatible with a building and will enhance the character, significance and understanding of the building, as long as that use would secure the long term future for the building.

4.7 In recent heritage vocabulary this is frequently termed 'optimum viable use,' referring to a use which sustains a heritage asset in the long term whilst causing least harm to its significance.

4.8 No. 8 Great James Street was originally built as a terraced single family dwelling townhouse. It was subsequently converted to office use around the turn of the 19th century and was laterally connected to no.9 and is currently co-joined to no. 7 Great James Street.

4.9 In this instance, reinstatement of the original residential use will result in significant tangible and intuitive heritage benefits. This will, subject to the detailed design outlined below, result in a substantial benefit to the architectural and historic interest and character of the grade II* listed building.



4.10 The tangible benefits include separating nos.7-8 Great James Street and restoring the original access, vertical circulation and plan form. The proposal would also result in active conservation and restoration through repair and replacement of missing architectural features such as panelling and chimney pieces. The more subconscious or intuitive benefits involve the restoration of the buildings character as a dwelling house and its ability to function and be appreciated as a family home.

4.11 In this respect it is important to illuminate the value of the early 18th century plan form and its compatibility with modern family living through its three room plan form per floor (compared with later Georgian dwellings). This layout allocates space for the bathrooms required for modern family living in the closet wings with minimal impact or additional pressure on the principal rooms.

4.12 It should be noted of the 14 terraced houses which form part of the grade II* listed group (group nos. 3 to 16 Great James Street), seven have been given permission for conversion from offices to single family dwellings. These include no.3 (Jan 2008); no.9 (Feb 2000); no.10 (Nov 2003); no.11 (March 2009); no.12 (March 2009); no.14 (January 2014); no.15 (January 2014).

4.13 Of the 14 terraced houses which form part of the grade II* listed terrace to the west of the street (nos. 26-40 & 38) ten have been given permission for conversion from offices to single family dwellings including no. 28 (May 2014); no.30 (March 2014); no.31 (June 2013); no.32 (June 2014); no.34 (sept 2013); no.35 (December 2015); no.36 (February 2005); no.37 (April 2004); no.39 (2018) and; no.40 (2017 upper floors only) have been converted back to single family dwellings from office use.

External works

4.14 The front elevation of the building will remain unaltered except for the replacement of non original windows with traditional scholarly

early 18th century sashes. This would significantly improve the appearance and original character of the building and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The existing roof would be stripped and insulated to meet modern standards. Authentic clay tiles would reclad the roof.

4.15 There will be similar alterations to the rear facade, chiefly the replacement of all non-original windows and the removal of a non-original suspended WC positioned of the first floor half-landing. This would reinstate the staircase window and enhance the character and contribution made by the early 18th century staircase.

4.16 The existing strong room is positioned at the rear of the closet wing and is accessed via a narrow lobby/landing. The landing would be removed to provide a lightwell at the rear of the closet wing which would provide light and ventilation to the basement. This would physically separate the ground floor rear extension and help better understand the original envelope of the 18th century house. The roof of the strongroom would be removed to provide welcomed outdoor space accessed from the ground floor. This is currently lacking due to the landownership arrangements whereby no.9 owns the rear courtyard.

4.17 The works in the rear courtyard would also restore natural light and ventilation to the basement floor through the opening up of the lightwell adjacent to the rear wall. This would be of significant benefit to the quality of space and understanding of the original layout of the building.

Internal Works

Entrance Hall and Staircase

4.18 The panelled entrance hall and staircase compartment will be retained unaltered.



Basement

4.19 The works at this level include the removal of the all modern fixtures, fittings and boxed in modern pipework and services. The front and rear rooms to be restored with double doors inserted in the spine wall and the corridor in the rear room removed. The modern cubicles in the closet wing will be replaced with bathroom access to the lightwell.

Ground floor

4.20 The front room will remain unaltered other than refurbishing the existing floor boards. The corridor to the rear room will be removed and a kitchen installed as 'built in joinery. The chimney piece would be retained. Details of servicing and extractions can be provided on request. We are confident that the services to the kitchen can be installed without harm in similar manner to other properties on the street including nos. 28, 34 and 36 Great James Street.

First floor

4.21 The rooms will be restored with the Artex ceiling removed to the front room and the panelling restored as necessary. In the rear room the door leading to no.7 would be blocked and the panelling restored.

Second floor

4.22 This floor will become the master suite with the bedroom to the front, dressing room to the rear and a shower room in the closet wing. The modern partition to the front room will be replaced. The door leading to no.7 would be blocked and the panelling restored.

Third floor

4.23 The rooms on this floor will form a bedroom and en-suite shower room to the front of the house with the removal of the obtrusive partition which abut the fireplace. The rear room would become a second bedroom at this level

with an en-suite shower room to the closet wing. The spine wall would be reinstated using timber stud partition and the likely original plan form restored.

4.24 The modern staircase between 2nd and 3rd floor would be replaced with a more appropriate design which will extend to 4th floor level. The likely original staircase can be seen in appendix B photographed in figure 20 below. On close inspection it is clear to see the differences between the existing and the images in figures 17 and 19 above, including shape and style of newel posts and bottle balustrade. The existing staircase is clearly a modern replica built after the 1976 photograph and possibly when the changes to the third floor and roof occurred.



Figure 20: A view of a staircase from 2nd to 3rd floor at 8 Great James Street in 1976, [71894]

4.25 Extending the stair above the main stair would be consistent with no.7 Great James Street as well as nos. 15, 36, 35 and 39 which all have either originally staircases to fourth floor or recent approvals for a secondary staircase to extend from the main staircase to provide access to fourth floor level or roof terrace.



4.26 Given the considerable alterations which have occurred at this level the work would not harm the structural integrity of the floor or roof which is supported with steel columns and beams, and is unlikely to result in loss of historic fabric given the modern finishes found at 3rd floor level and within the attic. The 3rd floor staircase is modern and whilst it is not obviously out of place does it not feel entirely at ease in the dwelling and could be improved.

Fourth floor

4.25 The fourth floor would be converted to habitable accommodation in much the same manner as no.7 and no.6 which, due to their common roof profile, form a group of three on the east side of the road (figure 21). As previously set out, the roof to no.8 is entirely new and the works would not result in the loss of historic fabric. A link dormer concealed from view between the roof pitches would provide access to the front roof pitch. Two dormer windows would be installed to the front roof pitch with one to the rear.

Flooring

4.26 Historic floorboards would be uncovered, retained and restored. All new flooring would be reclaimed and restored pine boards to match as closely as possible the existing floorboards. Engineered board would be laid on the concrete slab at basement level. Bathrooms would have stone floors,

as one would expect from 'wet' or utilitarian areas, in a house such as this.

Heating

4.27 Heating would be provided by conventional column radiators unless otherwise specified reusing existing pipe runs.

Air Conditioning

4.28 Cooling would be provided to the four principal front rooms. The external condenser would be concealed between double pitched roof. A vertical service riser is indicated to be located within the existing cupboard in the front room adjoining the spine wall with no. 7 and will provide direct access to the internal units concealed in joinery without harm to the fabric or structure.

Servicing

4.29 Along with the A/c the servicing to all bathrooms, particularly the third floor front ensuite has been carefully considered and can be confidently inserted without obtrusive surface mounted waste pipes or harming the fabric and structure of the dwelling. The waste pipe from the front room third floor bathroom will travel to the rear façade concealed behind new panelled wall adjacent to the new staircase without harm to fabric or features (figure 22)

Figure 21 (below): Ariel view of the east side of Great James Street showing nos. 6-8 with 'M' profile roofs. Nos.6 & 8 are used as habitable accommodation the roof pitches joined and dormer windows to front and rear roof slopes.

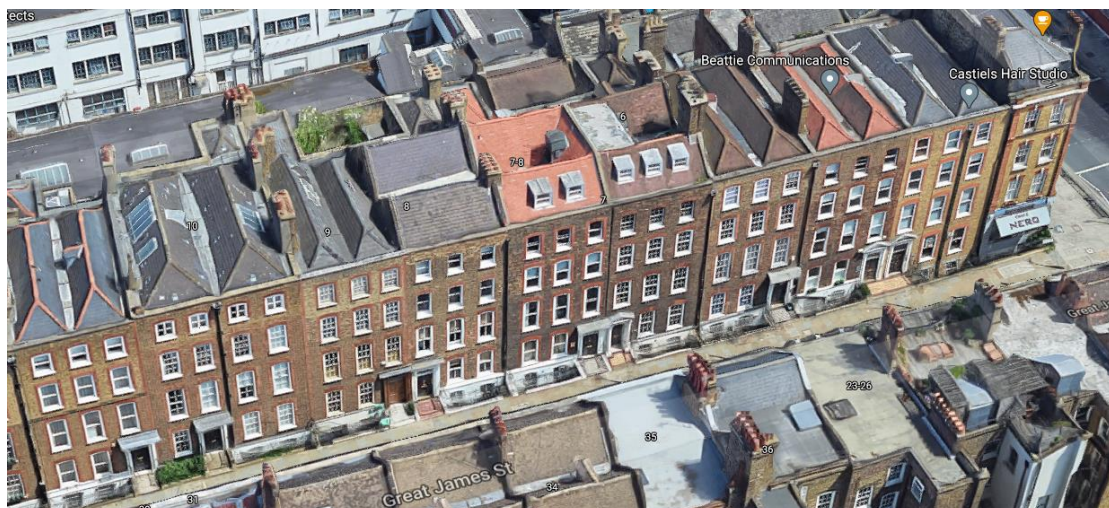




Figure 22: plain plastered landing wall with stepped string at third floor level

4.30 No element of the internal works results in harm. Overall the internal works would result in a meaningful heritage benefit gain to the special interest of the grade II* listed building.

Heritage Impact

4.31 The general thrust of national and local historic environment policy is to conserve and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets (such as listed buildings and conservation areas) and understandably to avoid harmfully affecting their special interest.

4.32 The proposals as set out above have been informed and shaped by an understanding of the historic building and its development.

4.33 In regard to no. 8 Great James Street, and taking into account the proposals as a whole, it is considered that the proposed scheme would not cause harm to the special interest of the listed building and would bring about genuine enhancements brought about not only from restoring the residential dwelling house but also through an appropriate programme of restoration and reinstatement of lost features and the sensitive layout and design of the internal and external works.

4.35 Undoubtedly the building is of national significance as an early 18th century terrace townhouse development both as an individual

dwelling but also as part of the development of Great James Street. Much of the original character remains legible internally and externally and although some alterations having been carried out sympathetically the inevitable changes and long term commercial use do detract from the special character and appearance of the listed building.

4.36 The significance attributed to the building warrants the highest quality restoration and conversion and will result in welcome heritage and public benefits.



5 Conclusions

5.1 No.8 has been subject to alteration and extension like many of the buildings in the street. However, its elevational composition, interior and plan retains much of 18th century layout and character. It forms part of a group of highly listed grade buildings at nos. 3-16 (grade II*) Great James Street.

5.2 Although built as a house, the building has been in office use for a number of decades. Although alterations have been made and the level of maintenance generally has been quite low, in many respects this has been a relatively benign use, with original features and fittings surviving across the building.

5.3 The proposed development will return the house to its original use as a single family dwelling and will have no adverse effect on the identified significance(s) of the building.

5.4 The front of the building will be restored with appropriately detailed early Georgian double hung six over six sash windows. This will improve the appearance of the building and enhance the Conservation Area.

5.5 At the rear, which is entirely hidden from public view, the some windows would be replaced to match the original along with the reinstatement of the basement lightwell.

5.6 Internally, the main spaces on all floors will be retained and the original form and proportion restored along with panelled walls restored where necessary. There will be some minor modifications to allow the creation of new bathrooms and other modern conveniences, but there will be no loss of historic fabric, or of any feature which contributes positively to the character and special interest of the listed building.

5.7 The main change to the layout would be the creation of a new staircase from 2nd to 4th floor and provision of habitable accommodation

in the attic. The proposal has been brought forward on the basis of the evidence identified on site with the knowledge of other buildings which form the two listed terraces in the street. It has been demonstrated that the current 2nd to 3rd floor staircase is a modern replica. The 3rd floor has been substantially and structural altered in the recent past and the existing roof is entirely modern. As such, the proposed works would not harm the historic fabric or structure. A main staircase extending to fourth floor level is also a known historic feature of buildings on the street and has been allowed along the street in similar recent application for conversion to single family dwellings without causing harm. The opportunity exist to enhance the existing staircase and subject to the detailed design of the staircase would not cause harm to the special interest of the listed building.

5.8 National policy (set out at appendix A) seek to enhance the significance of listed buildings and to protect them from unjustifiable harm, in common with local historic environment policy. The proposals would not harm the significance and special interest of the listed building and would significantly enhance its special character largely through restoring the building back to its original use, layout, character and appearance. It is therefore considered that the proposed alterations would importantly improve its current poor state of repair reverses its slow decay. The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of historic environment statutory and policy provision and should be welcomed unreservedly.



Appendix A

Relevant Policy Context

The following paragraphs briefly set out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment. The relevant statutory provision for the historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019 and sets out the government's approach to dealing with the historic environment. Section 12 of the NPPF deals specifically with this area of policy. Policies relevant in this particular case are as follows.

Paragraph 189 states that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 'The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.' A history of the site and its context and a statement of significance are presented in this report at section 2.

Paragraph 192 is clear that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Paragraph 193 sets out 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. The more important the asset,

the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.'

Paragraph 200 deals with opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and setting of to enhance or better reveal their significance. It states "Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."

London Borough of Camden Local Plan

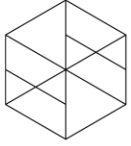
Camden's Local Plan was adopted in June 2017. The most relevant policy in this case is Policy D2: Heritage.

With regard to Conservation Areas, the policy states that the Council will:

- Require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character and appearance of the area.

With regard to Listed Buildings, the policy sets out that the Council will:

- 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.



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Heritage Appraisal
No. 8 Great James Street, London, W1CN
December 2020

Appendix B

No. 8 Great James Street

Images from the Collage Collection at the London
Metropolitan Archives



Two views of the entrance hall and stairs at 8 Great James Street in 1969 [71756, 71758]



A view of a staircase at 8 Great James Street in 1973 [71858] thought to be taken from first floor to half landing showing the do to the cantilevered WC.



Views of the staircase at 8 Great James Street from ground floor landing to first floor taken in 1973, 3 years before the building was listed. Intriguingly the image show agrow props supporting the flight to 2nd floor.



Two views of a ground-floor rear room at 8 Great James Street in 1976 [71889, 71888]



Two views of a first-floor rear room at 8 Great James Street in 1976, [71893, 71892]



A view of a second-floor rear room at 8 Great James Street in 1976, [71891]



A view of a plaque in a basement front room at 8 Great James Street. It shows the year 1726 written above a decorated motif and at the bottom is a row of people.



A first-floor rear room at 8 Great James Street in 1969, [71760] and a ground-floor rear room at in 1969 [71762]

