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Heritage Appraisal  
No. 37 Great James Street, London, W1CN  
January 2020





## 1 Introduction

1.1 The following Heritage Appraisal has been prepared in support of proposals to change the use of, and make alterations to the grade II\* listed no. 37 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. 37 is situated on the west side of Great James Street and forms part of a listed group with nos. 26 to 37 and 39 to 40 and attached railings. All are highly graded and important examples of classically proportioned and detailed, early Georgian London terraced townhouse architecture. These buildings exemplify the classical 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.

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 sets out the historic development of the site. 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 an assessment of the existing building and its significance. An assessment of the proposals is provided at section 4. Section 5 sets

out the heritage impact and conclusion. 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; and, 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) 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. 37 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.

*James Street are particularly well preserved; the only notable alteration is the loss of glazing bars from some sash windows.'*

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

*Grade: II\**

*List Entry Number: 1113203*

*Date first listed: 24-Oct-1957*

*Date of most recent amendment: 11-Jan-1999*

*GREAT JAMES STREET 798-1/101/662 (West side)  
24/10/57 Nos.26-37 and 39-40 (Consecutive) and  
attached railings (Formerly Listed as: GREAT JAMES  
STREET Nos.26-37, 38, 39 & 40 (Consecutive))*

*GV II\**

*14 terraced houses. 1720-24. For J Metcalfe. Brown brick, upper storeys with some refacing in multi-coloured, yellow (Nos 28, 34 & 40) and brown stock brick (1st floor and above to no.30). 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Nos 27-38 and 40, good wood architraved doorcases with enriched, carved brackets carrying hoods with panelled soffits, most with patterned fanlights and panelled doors. No.27, C20 hood with shaped brackets; No.39, architraved doorcase with pilasters, plain cornice, radial fanlight and panelled door. Red segmental arches and dressings to flush framed windows, No.35 upper storeys with glazing bars. Some frames reeded with roundels. Parapets. Some original lead rainwater heads with lion masks. INTERIORS: mostly having fine panelling. Staircases mostly with twisted balusters, column newels and carved brackets to treads. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn or torch flambe finials to areas.*

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*



## 2 No.37 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 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) nearby fields remained open (Figure 1).

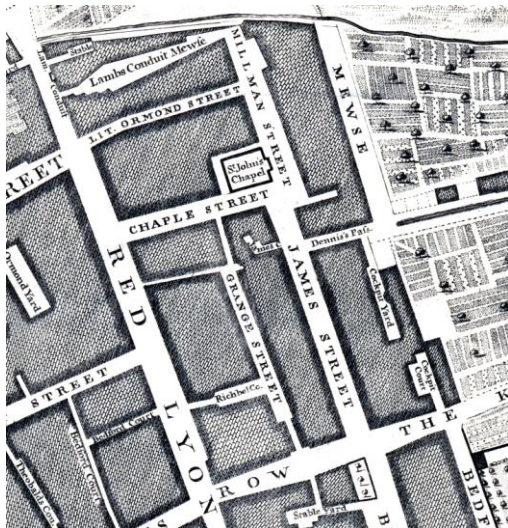


Figure 1: Rocque's map of 1746 showing James Street fully developed

2.4 Today the street forms part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area<sup>2</sup>, Great James Street is built up of terraced townhouses 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.<sup>3</sup>

2.5 Roofs in the street 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.<sup>4</sup> 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'.<sup>5</sup> 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.

2.6 No. 37 is in a separate group of 14 houses also listed at Grade II\*. 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.

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Adopted draft 18 April 2011.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

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





Figures 2: A general view of four-storey buildings at 38-34 Great James Street

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. 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 3). They were still *insitu* 1914 (figure 4).

#### Changes to nos. 37 Great James Street in the 20th and 21st centuries

2.9 The rear annexe structure behind no. 37 was erected between 1901 and 1914. OS Map of 1873 (figure 3) and drainage plans of 1895 (figure 7) shows no detached structure in the rear of no. 37. The 1901 GOAD plan (figure 5) shows a structure in the rear but not the existing building. Similar large structures present at No. 38 and at

the rear of No. 36 by these dates. The existing structure at the rear of the site first appears in the 1914 OS Map (figure 4) that time there appears to be a structure to the rear of no. 37, joined to the main structure by a narrow wing. Its first use is unknown but may have been an office like those in the adjacent properties.

2.10 A high explosive bomb fell between October 1940 and June 1941 to the west of Great James Street. Many of the mews buildings fronting onto Emerald Street were completely destroyed, including those behind no. 37 (figure 6). Bomb damage undoubtedly affected the houses in the southern part of the street, including the site, and is likely to have resulted in large scale rebuilding of the annexe. This is consistent with works to no.37 after the war.

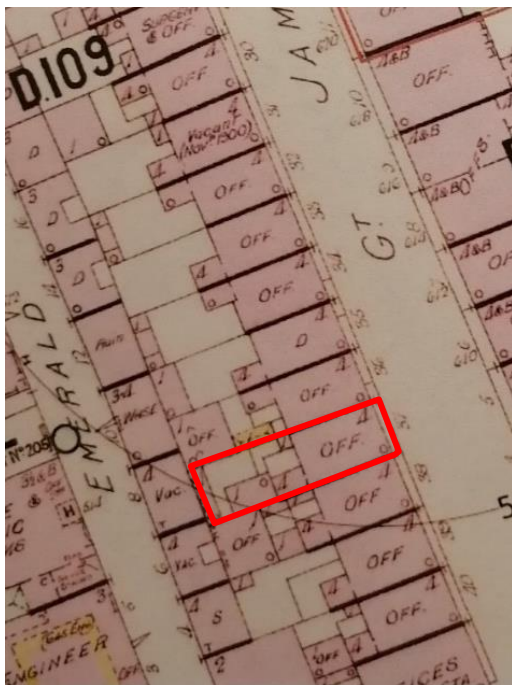
2.11 In 1945, E. & S. Smith, Merrett & Son, chartered surveyors of no. 25 Great James Street undertook repairs to no. 37 Great James Street for the then owner, Mrs Thairwall.<sup>6</sup> Most of the repairs were the result of 'enemy action'. The badly damaged and decayed roof was replaced by a flat roof and the top floor ceiling which was only 6ft. 6ins above the floor level, was increased to 7ft 6ins by utilising a few of the upper brick courses as they were not allowed to increase the height of the parapet.<sup>7</sup> An OS map included with the planning application of 1945 (figure 9), shows that the detached building to the rear of the property was not in situ. The land on which it stands formed part of a site of no. 38 (figure 9). It appears to wrap round behind nos. 37 and 36.

<sup>6</sup> Camden planning online T.P.33268 (1945).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*



Figures 3 & 4: OS maps of 1873(above) and 1914 (right)



Figures 5 & 6: The Goad Insurance map of 1901 (above) and 1914 (right) LCC Bomb damage map (black indicates total destruction)

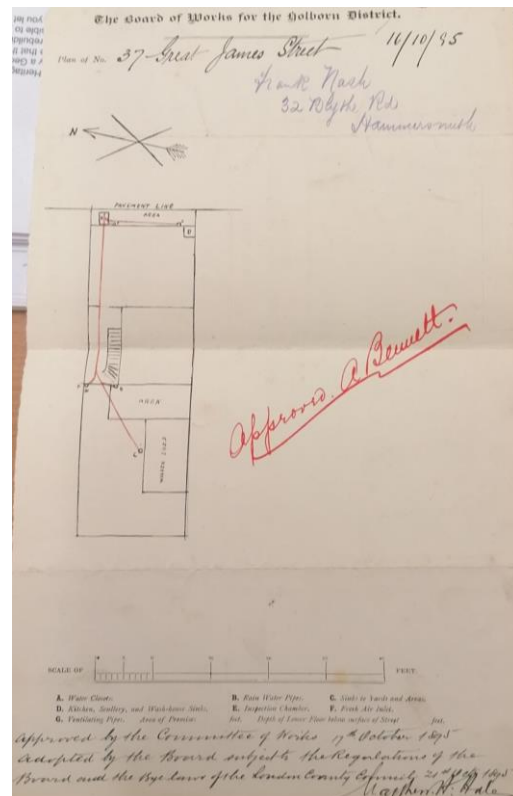


2.12 In 1949 an application was made to reinstate the canopies over the doors at nos. 37 and no. 36 in a 'simplified form' but this was refused.<sup>8</sup> It is evident that other alterations to the property were being made at that time consistent with rebuilding due to bomb damage. Just a few years later there was a proposal to alter 'the cottage' by John Macgregor<sup>9</sup> & Partners in 1952.<sup>10</sup> A drainage plan survives that shows these works (figure 8), plus a site plan.<sup>11</sup> Although a outbuilding of a similar type and form existed in the Edwardian period the existing outbuilding is largely post war.

2.13 In 1975, part of the front elevation of no. 37 was rebuilt above the first-floor window heads, with the bricks approved by the GLC Historic Buildings Division.<sup>12</sup> The existing windows and frames were reset.

2.14 In 1993, Johnson & Mather, architects obtained permission to demolish infill development in the central courtyard at basement, ground and first-floor levels and to reconstruct the courtyard floor and link between the front and rear buildings.<sup>13</sup> The works also included the restoration of a former opening at half landing level on the rear elevation, and the installation of a timber sash window to match those existing and the installation of roof light at ground floor level.<sup>14</sup> There were alterations in 2004 for Bromhead & Co., by Johnson & Mather relating to properties change of use from office to residential.<sup>15</sup> In the same year it was proposed to

add a two-storey glazed conservatory to the rear courtyard; a new infill flat roof to the rear courtyard and a glazed roof over the enlarged front area. It also proposed the removal of basement 'ground floor structure to rear open area'.<sup>16</sup> In 2005, the same architects undertook alterations to the internal staircase between the basement and third floor levels.<sup>17</sup>



Figures 7: 1895: Drainage plan from Camden Archives showing no structure at the rear of no. 37, just a wooden shed.

<sup>8</sup> Camden planning online TP33268/SR49/5049 (1949)

<sup>9</sup> John Eric Miers Macgregor (1890-1984), was a conservation architect with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. He was one of the most important conservation architects of the first half of the 20th century but also designed modern buildings to sit comfortably alongside historic houses such as the Squash Court at Rivercourt House, Upper Mall, Hammersmith [and designed a radical ziggurat style social housing block, Lennox House in Bethnal Green, London, in 1934, both of which are now Grade II listed.

<sup>10</sup> LB Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre Drainage plan 1952.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid Both plans are poor quality and the originals need to be seen when the archives re-open.

<sup>12</sup> LB Camden planning online 20622.

<sup>13</sup> LB Camden planning online 9370172.

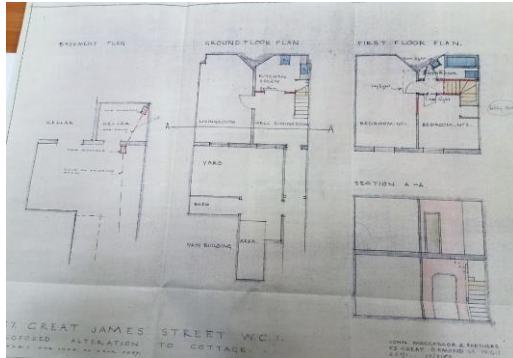
<sup>14</sup> LB Camden planning online 9470237 Grant Approval of Details (Listed Bldg) 30-09-1994.

<sup>15</sup> LB Camden planning online 2004/0158/L.

<sup>16</sup> LB Camden planning online 2004/0157/P.

<sup>17</sup> LB Camden planning online 2005/2888/L.





Figures 8: 1952 Plans. The annexe at the rear of no. 37 Great James Street had a bath, WC, sink and lavatory basin installed as shown on the drainage plan.

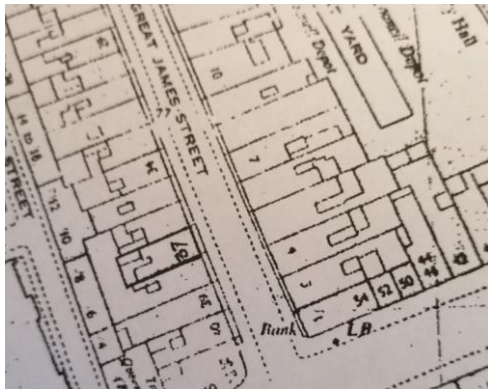


Figure 9: OS Map pre 1945 showing rear of no. 37 before the construction of the detached outbuilding.





### 3. Description & Analysis

3.1 No.37 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-stacks.

#### 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. As set out in 2.13 the front façade was rebuilt above the first-floor window heads in 1975. The windows are all sashes, with the sash-boxes set flush with the façade, a feature of early Georgian properties prior to 1775. The sash boxes of the ground floor have reeded surrounds. All windows are six over six sash windows, these appear to be relatively modern possibly introduced following world war II bomb damage. The closet wing window openings are modern with modern casement units.

#### Roof

3.3 When first built the house would have had an 'M'-shaped roof with two ridges parallel to the street. It presently has a flat roof, which is clearly a twentieth century alteration and may be the result of bomb-damage.

#### Plan form

3.4 The original plan is still clearly evident on all floors except for the modern bathrooms which have been installed in the closet wing.

#### Rear courtyard

3.5 The original basement courtyard has been entirely infilled amalgamating and connecting the rear vaults with the house.

#### Interior

3.6 The interior retains an early eighteenth century character, largely thanks to the remaining panelling which lines the walls of the ground floor vestibule, first floor hallway and principal rooms. The panelling, is made of painted softwood and is of a typical early eighteenth century pattern, with a square-panelled dado beneath a moulded chair-rail and taller panels above the rail rising to a timber box-cornice.

3.7 The upper part of the staircase, ground floor, basement and second and third floor have no visible panelling. The walls are plain plastered, probably on plasterboard. It seems likely that they were reconstructed or overlaid when the front façade wall was rebuilt, perhaps in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the rooms retain their original timber box cornice.

#### Staircase

3.8 The staircase does not retain its original handrail or balustrade at any level. It is likely the treads and risers are early given the work required to shore them up in 2005<sup>18</sup> which included 'replacing the treads and risers, new upright and three of the existing crossbeams were replaced.' (figure 9).

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<sup>18</sup> *Listed building consent 2005/2888/L Retention of internal alterations to staircases between basement and third floor level.*



Figures 9: Photograph of the works carried out to the staircase following the 2004 consent.

#### Basement

3.9 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 original door from the rear room to the closet wing is blocked and access is gained from the dropped flank window. The rear room has no access to light and ventilation. The front room chimney breast is concealed behind built in joinery. The door to the front room may have been relocated and the door to the lightwell removed to allow for fitted cupboards on the partywall adjacent to no. 36 Great James Street. The rear basement vault has been cement rendered to protect the storage area from damp. No historic fireplaces, doors or cornicing exist at this level.

#### Ground

3.10 The ground floor vestibule is fully panelled and retains a high degree of character. The cornice to the front and rear rooms are likely to be original but otherwise the rooms are void of historic character and do not contain features or joinery of interest. Panelling maybe present beneath the existing wall coverings.

3.11 The ground floor of the annexe has modern plaster finishes, fire doors and staircase and has no architectural value internally.

#### First floor

3.12 The first floor front and rear rooms remain intact other than the replacement fireplaces and doors throughout. The closet wing does not contain panelling and in combination with the replacement window and window apertures it lacks the value and cohesion expected.

3.13 The first floor of the annexe has modern plaster finishes, fire doors and staircase and has no architectural value internally.

#### Second Floor

3.14 Panelling exists within the staircase at this level only. Panelling to the rooms is hidden or has been removed. No fireplaces exists and the rooms are plainer then on the floors below. The double opening between front and rear room has been infilled (figure 11).



Figure 10: Photograph of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor front room showing plain walls and modern glazed doors.



### Third floor

3.15 This floor has undergone considerable change and may have been rebuilt entirely. The walls are plain plastered, probably on plasterboard, and the rooms have no cornices. The roof has been replaced and modern crossbeams are visible at ceiling level. The doors are modern.

### Significance

3.16 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'<sup>19</sup> and newly adopted guidance on conserving Georgian and Victorian terraced housing<sup>20</sup>.

3.17 Statutory designations provide guidance on the importance of historic buildings. No. 37 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.

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

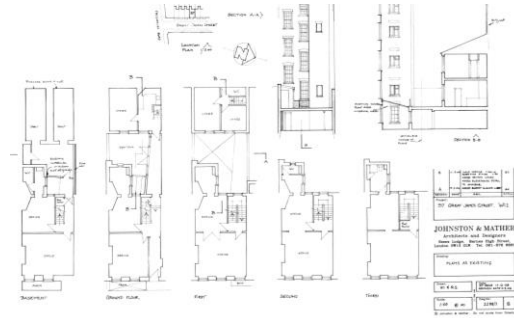


Figure 11: Existing 2004 plans (ref: 2004/0158/) which shows double door opening in the spine wall at second floor level.

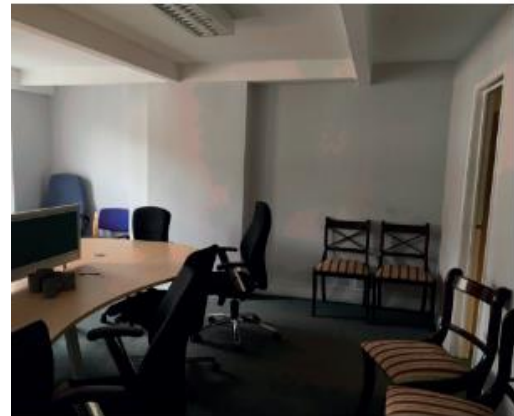


Figure 12: Image showing 3<sup>rd</sup> floor front room with modern ceiling.

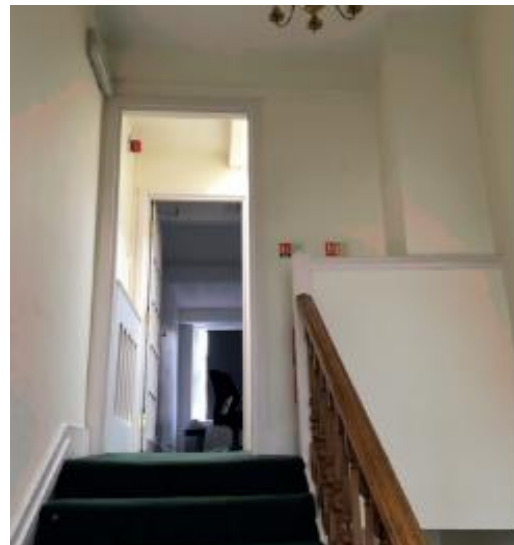


Figure 13: Image showing 3<sup>rd</sup> floor modern staircase and landing at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level.

<sup>19</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/a-z-archived/#atoCL>

<sup>20</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conserving-georgian-victorian-terraced-housing/>



3.19 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.

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

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

3.22 Architecturally no.37 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.

3.24 Internally the building largely retains its plan form and a good amount of historic panelling but has suffered from inappropriate phases of intervention particularly to the staircase and lack of historic detailing on the upper floors.

3.25 The rear outbuilding dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and possibly rebuilt following world war II bomb damage. The interior was heavily altered in the 1950s and the existing glazed link dates from 1993. The annexe shares little relationship to the principal building apart from a spatial relationship, linked to the property by way of a modern link. It has limited architectural and historic interest.

3.24 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. 37 in many

respects is almost unchanged since it was built nearly 300 years ago. For this reason it is of high significance.





## 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 current 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 statement 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 a rear basement courtyard lightwell;
- Reinstatement of the closet wing window openings;
- Provision of front lightwell stairs and associated gate;
- Minor reconfiguration of plan layout to make more authentic;
- Locating with kitchen into the rear annexe;
- 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 all floors.

### Change of Use

4.6 It is good conservation practice for a building to be used for the purpose for which it was originally intended. The original use is almost always the most appropriate for a building and will enhance its character, significance and legibility 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. 37 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 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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 active conservation and restoration through repair and replacement of missing architectural features, such as panelling to ground and second floor level and appropriately styled doors throughout. The more subconscious or intuitive benefits involve the restoration of the building's 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 18<sup>th</sup> century plan form, although this has evolved over time on the lower floors. 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 that of the 14 terraced houses which form part of the grade II\* listed group (nos. 26-37 and 39-40 Great James Street), 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).

4.13 Of the 14 terraced houses which form part of the grade II\* listed terrace to the west of the street (nos. 3-16) 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).

#### External works

4.14 The front elevation of the building will remain unaltered accept for the introduction of the lightwell staircase and associated alterations to form a gate in the railings. Steps are an obvious typical features of the street and the railings can be easily adapted without the loss of historic fabric. An identical scheme was consented at no.31 Great James Street in 2017<sup>21</sup> the decision notice for the works states;

*“The proposed lightwell steps and door would complement the majority of other lightwells in the street...The masonry pier would be removed. This is not typical of front well and its removal, subject to the structural testing would not harm the special interest of the building.”*

<sup>21</sup> Planning permission dated Ref: 2017/1525/p for Addition of an external staircase into the front light well and new door beneath the ground floor.

4.15 There will be similar alterations to the rear façade; chiefly the replacement of all non-original windows openings in the closet wing. This would reinstate a more authentic character and appearance of the rear façade and contribution made by the 18<sup>th</sup> century closet wing.

4.16 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.

#### Rear Annexe

4.17 Positioning the kitchen in the annexe has numerous heritage benefits and allows the house to function for modern day living with a kitchen on a principal floor while allowing the principal rooms in the main house to be retained in their original form and function.

4.18 The first floor of the annexe would be removed to improve the quality of the space natural light to the kitchen. The first floor windows would be replaced with Crittall type frames which would match the ground floor doors. The pane and fenestration pattern would match of the main house and help unify the structure. The ground floor openings would be amalgamated to provide Crittall type doors which better match the age and style of the early-mid century annexe building.

4.19 Similar proposals were approved at no.36 Great James Street in 2017<sup>22</sup> including mezzanine, rooflight and double height windows to the façade (figure 15). The decision notice for the planning application states;

*“The resultant annex building would be more contemporary in character and appearance,*

<sup>22</sup> Planning application 2015/7223/P Replacement windows on front elevation of main building; refurbishment works and alterations to openings on rear annexe building.



*by virtue of the large, double height window opening on the front elevation and the full length skylight in the roof. Nevertheless, the existing annex building does not contribute positively to the setting of the listed building (too domestic in character and does not share characteristics with the main building) and it is considered appropriate for the annex building to have a contrasting, yet nevertheless subservient character and appearance when viewed against the main building.”*

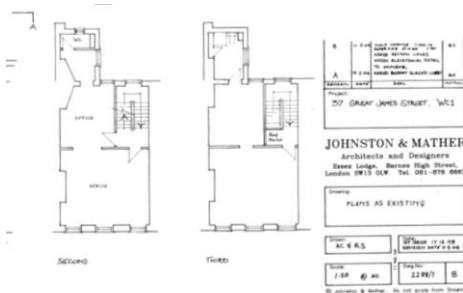


Figure 14: Existing 2nd and 3rd floor layout 2003.



Figure 15: Model showing approved (2015/7223/P) works to the rear annexe at no.36 Great James Street including mezzanine to first floor and large, double height window opening on the front elevation and the full length skylight in the roof

## Internal Works

### Entrance Hall and Staircase

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

### Basement

4.21 The works at this level include the removal of all modern fixtures, fittings and boxed in modern pipework and services. A door to the front lightwell will be restored and the front room door repositioned to aligned with this window to the closet wing would be restored. The modern Wc cubicles would be replaced with a bathroom with direct access to the lightwell.

### Ground floor

4.22 The front and rear rooms will be restored and the panelling uncovered or reinstated to dramatically enhance the character and value of the rooms. Double doors consistent with all other properties on the street would be introduced in the spine wall without harm to the plan form. The kitchen would be located in ‘the rear annexe’ thereby removing any issues of servicing from the main house.

### First floor

4.23 The front and rear rooms will be restored and made good as necessary and largely enhanced by scholarly panelled replacement of the existing doors with scholarly detailed equivalents.

### Second floor

4.24 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 panelling and double door opening in the spine wall would be reinstated reflecting the pre-existing arrangement and ensuring no loss of historic fabric (figure 14) . The modern rear room door would be replaced but fixed shut. The



legibility of front and rear rooms accessed via a stair compartment would be retained.

### Third floor

4.25 The rooms on this floor will form a bedroom and en-suite shower room to the front of the house with the erection of a partition and lobby typically found in this level in this location. The rear room would become a second bedroom at this level with an en-suite shower room to the closet wing. The opening in the spine wall would be closed.

### Flooring

4.26 Historic floorboards would be uncovered, retained and restored. Where non-original floor boards are discovered these would be replaced with reclaimed pine boards to traditional dimensions. All new flooring would be reclaimed and restored pine boards to match as closely as possible the existing floorboards

4.27 At basement level the existing concrete floor Electric under floor heating would to the ground floor entrance; link block and rear annexe. This would not affect the threshold levels or impact the floor structure.

4.28 Bathrooms would have composite 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 specified reusing existing pipe runs, other than the underfloor heating set out above.

## 5 Heritage Impact & Conclusions

5.1 No.37 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. 26-37 and 39-40 (grade II\*) Great James Street.

5.2 Although built as a house, the building has been in office use for a number of decades. Alterations have been made and the level of maintenance generally has been quite low. However, in many respects this has been a relatively benign use and ownership 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 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.

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

5.6 In regard to no. 37 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 not only from restoring the residential dwelling house but also through an appropriate programme of restoration and reinstatement of lost features but also from sensitive layout and design of the internal and external works.

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





dwelling and as part of the development of Great James Street. Although some original character remains legible internally and externally, alterations have been carried unsympathetically. The inevitable changes and long term commercial use do detract from the special character and appearance of the listed building.

5.8 The significance attributed to the building warrants the highest quality restoration and the proposed conversion will result in the enhancement of the building to early 18th century house.

5.9 Terraced house interiors often have a standard vocabulary of typical patterns of panelling, cornices, fireplaces and skirtings. These often reflect the hierarchy of rooms, being simpler in what were seen as less important areas. The lack and loss of these features on the principal floors of no.37 Great James Street has harmed the hierarchy and significance of the house. Their reinstatement, alongside the conservation to a family home, is a substantial benefit.

5.10 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 significant loss of historic fabric, and the special historic and architectural interest of the building would be enhanced overall.

5.11 The majority of the works are focused on the rear annexe which is the least significant element of the site and affords the greatest scope for change particularly when it allows the main house to be 'restored'.

5.13 Originally, the planning of most higher status terraced houses placed secondary or ancillary functions out of sight and distinct from the main living area of the house. In higher status houses service areas we often accommodated outside of the main houses, and the current proposals align with this traditional approach. The alterations to the annexe allow for the kitchen to

be 'out of sight' and distinct from the main living area and reception rooms, in line with that tradition.

5.14 This significantly reduces pressure on the original 18<sup>th</sup> century building to accommodate a modern family kitchen and associated servicing. This locates a function that is inherently contemporary in character in a the part of the site where there is the greatest scope for change and therefore flexibility in adaptation. The proposals involve the increased provision of natural light and level access from the entrance while maintaining this element of the site ancillary, secondary character and contribution.

5.16 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.



## 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.