

# Design & Access Statement 37 Doughty Street, London, WC1N 2AA January 2021



Fig 1: Front Façade

On behalf of 37 Doughty Street Limited

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## 1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Claire Humphreys of Shu Architects, an RIBA Conservation Registrant.

The Statement is to support the Planning Application for the proposed internal and external alterations to 37 Doughty Street.

No. 37 was purchased by the applicant in December 2020. The residential units are at present of poor quality and have poor internal layouts. The new owners' wish is to improve the quality of the accommodation throughout.

The proposals are aimed to achieve the following;

- improve the external appearance of the building as a heritage asset.
- improve the design of the apartments by reducing the number to one per floor, and by rearrangement to more conventional layouts with the kitchen close to the living room / dining spaces.
- restore the internal heritage features by the rationalisation of service runs including the introduction of combined plant rooms.
- improve the fire separation including through the upgrading or replacement of modern interventions and the introduction of a laundry and cleaners cupboard away from the communal staircase.
- improve the acoustic separation between the flats.
- improve the ventilation from kitchens and bathrooms.
- · improve the thermal performance of the building.

This Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Planning Drawings and Details by Shu Architects

Heritage Statement by Shu Architects

Appendix A : Photographic Audit and Heritage Survey

Planning Statement prepared by CSJ Planning

Sustainability Statement & Energy Strategy by JMDC Services

Construction Management Plan by Urban Creation

# 2.0 Use, Amount, Layout & Design

#### **Use and Amount**

The property is currently arranged as seven C3 residential apartments and bedsits over five floors. Overall the accommodation is of a low quality and requires significant improvement and financial investment. It is the intention to amalgamate the bedsits and improve the layouts to provide five properties, one to each of the five floors. The number of residents will remain the same.

#### Layout (Fig 2)

Floor by floor the proposed alteration to the layout is as follows;

- The lower ground floor is currently arranged as two bedsits and these will be combined to form a two bedroom apartment with a separate kitchen and a dedicated living /dining room.
- The lower ground floor also currently has the laundry to the base of the communal stairs. This is currently a fire risk and increases internal moisture levels to the communal areas and historic fabric. It is proposed there is a new dedicated laundry to a new rear extension. This will incorporate 2no. washing machines & 2 no. tumble dryers.
- The upper ground floor will remain as a one bedroom apartment, although currently the kitchen is accessed through the bedroom. The layout will be improved with the kitchen located within the existing living / dining room.
- The first floor will remain as a one bedroom apartment. The layout will be improved through the relocation of the kitchen away from the historic fire place. There will be an enlargement of the bedroom and reduction in the size of the existing shower room.
- The second floor is currently arranged as two bedsits and these will be combine to form a two bedroom apartment with a dedicated living / kitchen / dining room.
- The third floor will remain as a two bedroom apartment although the bathroom will be relocated to an alternative location to form a small shower room which will allow the apartment to have a small living room.

It is our belief that the proposed layouts will improve the planform of the building in heritage terms, particularly to the second floor. It will also improve the functionality of each of the apartments thereby improving the long term viability of the property.

#### **External Design - Main entrance**

In order to improve the appearance of the entrance (fig 3) it is proposed many of the features are restored to match the neighbouring properties (figs 4 & 5). This includes;

• The replacement of the tiles to the entrance steps to black and white and in an orthogonal arrangement.





## 2.0 Use, Amount, Layout & Design (contd.)

- The replacement of the fanlight
- · The replacement of the decorate entablature above the door

All these alterations will improve the heritage setting of the building as part of a Listed Group of buildings within the Conservation Area.

#### **External Design - Windows**

In order to improve the appearance of the elevations it is proposed the modern steel and timber casement windows are removed and replaced with white painted timber sash windows in a style to reflect the adjacent buildings. The modern windows are located to the lower ground floor and the mansard to the front elevation and within the apartments to the rear elevation (fig 6). These existing modern windows have no heritage value and they are also in locations less visible within the Conservation Area. It is therefore proposed the sashes incorporate slimline double glazing (fig 7). Slimline double glazed units would not be appropriate for the original heritage windows within the property. However we believe that thermal improvement to replacement windows where appropriate and when incorporated in a sensitive manner ensures the viability and sustainability of heritage homes.

#### **External Design - Extension**

The rear garden is on two levels, the lower ground and upper ground floors. At present there is an existing timber walkway which connects the upper ground floor to the rear garden (fig 8). There is also a large shed to the lower ground floor below this walkway. The proposal is to remove the shed and walkway and replace with a walk-on extension that would house a dedicated laundry and boiler room. The surface finish of this would be paving slabs. The external walls would be white render to match the adjacent lower ground floor courtyard and the perimeter would have black painted railings (fig 9). The flue to the boiler room would be black metal.

#### **Internal Design**

The appearance of the existing entrance hall at present is underwhelming and disjointed caused by the excessive amount of services together with the loss of the timber paneling to the front areas (fig 10). It is proposed that with the creation of the plant rooms and relocation of the energy meters together with the reinstatement of the painted timber panelling it will bring more unity to the space.

Elsewhere in the building the rationalisation of services will also allow for the restoration of the heritage features. Details on the integration of services are discussed in more detail below.

The design of the internal layouts have taken into consideration the retention of the original internal heritage features where possible. Refer to the planning drawings and details for further information.



Fig 3: Existing Main Entrance



Fig 6: Existing rear elevation



Fig 4: Existing entablature to no.36



Fig 5: Existing steps to no.35



Fig 7: Example of slimline double glazing in a heritage building

# 2.0 Use, Amount, Layout & Design (contd.)

All new internal doors will be bespoke to match the style of existing.

The use of CNC technology will allow the replication of the missing architraves to windows and doors based on existing profiles.

All repairs and replacements to the cornice and cornice work will be undertaken by a professional with experience in working with ornamental plaster work.

The upgrading of the internal face of the external wall will be discussed in Section 3.

#### **Design of Services Overall**

Shu Architects have had considerable experience in converting Grade II and II\* listed residential properties in a sensitive manner to ensure that the accommodation meets the standard required for modern living while protecting and preserving the heritage assets. To successfully achieve this there needs the careful consideration in the integration of the services.

The majority of the current harm to the property in heritage terms is from the illconsidered location of the many services and service runs throughout the building externally and internally (fig 6 & 12). This includes the inappropriate positions of the kitchens and bathrooms.

By having a centralised system for hot water and electricity within the building together with dedicated service runs it will allow for the restoration of many of the internal features as well as the provision of more sensible layouts.

It is proposed there is an electrical plant room to the front of the lower ground floor where there is a separate external access for maintenance with a communal boiler located to the rear of the lower ground floor. This will allow the external flue to be located in a more discreet location.

#### **Ventilation Design**

Good mechanical ventilation to internal areas is essential to ensure the long term protection of the historic building fabric and provide a healthy internal environment for residents. High moisture levels are increased by kitchens, showers, and drying clothes inside. At present there is a poor mechanical ventilation system to the seven kitchens and seven bathrooms within the property. The current ventilation strategy also impacts in a negative way on the aesthetics of the rear elevation (fig 6).

The alterations to the layouts will not create any additional bedrooms and it is proposed there will be five kitchens and seven shower rooms.

It is proposed that for kitchens and bathrooms there is a ventilation strategy using several centralised mechanical extract ventilation (MEV) systems. This will provide simultaneous low level extraction from kitchens and shower rooms. Replacement air is then supplied to habitable rooms by low levels of natural air





Fig 8: Existing walkway with shed below

Fig 9: Example of painted flat top railings



Fig 10: Existing entrance hall



Fig 11: Example of painted timber paneling to the entrance hall of a Georgian property

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# 2.0 Use, Amount, Layout & Design

leakage to the single glazed heritage windows and concealed vents to the heads of new replacement windows to the rear (fig12). As the MEV units have a single outlet this will minimise the impact to both the internal and external heritage fabric.

The internal moisture levels will also be dramatically improved through the provision of a dedicated laundry with tumble dryers to the proposed rear extension at lower ground floor. This will remove the need for residents to dry clothes within their apartments.

#### Foul Drainage Design

The building has an existing foul drainage system for the kitchens and bathrooms which has been developed ad hoc over the centuries and currently has a negative impact on the historic building both internally and externally.

The proposed internal runs of the foul drainage has been shown on the proposed planning drawings. It is proposed that the drainage is rationalised with pipe runs located between joists or to less sensitive locations. This allows the removal of the majority of the soil vent pipes to the rear elevation.

#### Fire & Acoustic Design

The design of both the fire and acoustic strategy has been considered from the outset to protect residents as well as the heritage property.

Most of the existing doors have already been upgraded for fire. Where they have not they will be upgraded using a specific paint system designed for panelled doors.

The existing lath and plaster ceilings and walls with associated ornamental cornices can also be upgraded in a sensitive manner with the use of intumescent paints meant for heritage applications.

It is proposed where there are plasterboard ceilings these will be replaced with acoustic fire rated plasterboard incorporating acoustic resilient bars where possible. Particular acoustic consideration has been taken to rooms above bedrooms.

It is proposed that the existing floor boards are overlaid with an acoustic floating floor to reduce the impact of impact noise to the apartments below.

It is proposed that all apartments have a ceiling mounted mist system compliant with BS8458:2015 with a pump to plant room.

Also that all electric cookers & hobs to incorporate a Stoveguard SGK510 by Innohome which is a cooker shut off switch and is compliant with BS EN 50615.



Fig 11: Ceiling to existing stairwell at upper ground floor



Fig 12: Example of an overhead concealed vent to a new timber window

### 3.0 Sustainability Statement

#### Services

The current services provision for the property varies on an apartment by apartment basis. The property is Grade II Listed so the intention is to improve its sustainability in an appropriate manner.

It is the intention that there is a communal hot water system for the property with two small plant rooms located to the lower ground floor. This will have gas powered hot water system. The heating will be through the use of smart electric panel heaters.

6 no. 340W PV panels will be fitted to the upper front SW facing roof to generate renewable energy if required by the Local Planning Authority.

An efficient MEV continuous ventilation system will improve internal moisture levels and this is discussed in greater detail in Section 2, page 7.

#### **Thermal Design**

We believe a significant way of improving the sustainability of a building is through a fabric first approach. With a listed building this must be done in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

As discussed in Appendix A page 12 there is a void to the front wall between the brickwork and the internal modern lining paper of approximately 60mm. This is at both upper ground and first floor. It is proposed this is an appropriate location to improve the thermal fabric to the existing external walls through the replacement of this lining with a 40mm breathable woodfibre board with lime plaster finish (fig 13). This will allow an improvement in U-value from approximately 1.28W/m<sup>2</sup>K to 0.55W/m<sup>2</sup>K. This U-Value although low compared to the high levels for modern dwellings will still be below 0.5W/m<sup>2</sup>K, the point when the risk of interstitial condensation can be increased.

We would propose this insulation system is also used to the internal face of the rear elevation within the apartments where almost all of the architraves and heritage features have been lost. Replica architraves and cornice will be reinstated afterwards. We would propose the communal stair will remain uninsulated as the heritage features here are more significant.

It is proposed this wood fibre insulation system would be used to the upper ground, first and second floors. To the lower ground floor this system would not be appropriate.

As discussion in Section 2 page 5 it is proposed the replacement windows incorporate slimline double glazing. For slim window mullions this would have a thermal performance of 1.9 W/m2K (fig 14).

The retained original heritage sash windows at upper ground, first and second floor will be refurbished and draft proofed. All existing shutters will be brought back to use and heavy curtains incorporated to improve thermal comfort at night.





Fig 13: Example of a wood fibre internal insulation board

Fig 14: Detail of a slimline double glazed window mullion

It is proposed the mansard roof is insulated between and under the rafters and within the loft space to bring it up to the requirement of building regulations Part L1B.

The new proposed extension to the lower ground floor at the rear will be fully insulated to meet building regulations.

### 4.0 Accessibility Statement

#### **Pedestrian access**

The residential apartments are all accessed from the main entrance to Doughty Street at the upper ground floor level. There are two low steps, 6cm & 15.5cm high, from the pavement to an external tiled landing. The landing is 183cm wide & 155cm long. There is then another addition 11cm high step into the property. The main entrance door has a clear width of 96 cm.

The entrance has no external light although there is good illumination from the street lamps.

There is a secondary entrance at the front of the property via the steps and lightwell to the lower ground floor. However this is will only be used for maintenance access to the plantroom.

The rear garden is accessed via the communal hallway at the upper ground floor level. There is a single step to the garden.

The residential apartments are existing and the building is Grade II listed within a wider Conservation Area. Due to the historic nature of the property the existing pedestrian access strategy will remain the same.

#### **Public Transport & Amenities**

The neighbourhood is well connected and walkable. There are many shops, services and amenities in the immediate location including to Grays Inn Rd 70m away or Brunswick Centre 400m away

There are several parks nearby including Micklenburgh Square gardens, 80m away.

Russell Square Tube Station is 500m and the route nos. 17, 45 & 46 buses run along the nearby Grays Inn Road.

#### Vehicles

There is no private parking to the property although there is on street parking with permit parking directly outside the property.

#### **Bike Storage**

At present there is no bike storage to the property. It is the intention to improve the onsite cycle storage through the installation of 4no. post cycle hoops to the rear garden. The access to the garden is a relatively straight line from the entrance door at the upper ground floor level.



Fig x: Main entrance steps



FigX : Post Hoop Bike Stand

### 5.0 Waste & Recycling

There are currently seven apartments and bedsits to the property for seven residents. The proposal is to combine the four sets of bedsits to form two bedroom apartments. The numbers occupying these apartments will therefore remain the same at seven and the generation of refuse will likewise remain the same.

At present the refuse is collected regularly by Camden Council. General waste and recycling collection days are every Monday, Wednesday & Friday. Domestic food collection is weekly on Mondays.

Residents do not have communal wheelie bins but keep their waste and recycling in their apartments until they are placed out for collection day. The refuse is left for collection on the external landing by the main entrance so as to avoid blocking the pavement. This is wide enough to ensure residents can still enter and leave the property. Residents are required to bring their empty containers in within 24 hours. This will continue to be the strategy for the building. However, the redesign of the apartments will ensure all kitchens are sufficiently large enough to have a dedicated cupboard for internal storage of refuse and recycling.