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20-22 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8PF

## Supporting Statement for the Automatic Suppression (Automist) system

February 2021

### **No's 20-22 Theobalds Road are statutorily listed Grade II as part of the listed terrace No's 12-22.**

Following a grant of latest applications for "*Conversion of a HMO (Class C4) to create 9 self-contained units (Class C3) (7x1-bed; 2x2-bed) with associated refurbishment to the facades and internal alterations*" (Ref. 2019/6020/P and 2020/2318/P) at No's 20 and 22 Theobalds Road a Listed Building Consent is now sought by way of this current application for the Automatic Suppression (Automist) system for the flats on the Ground and First floor only at No's 20 and 22, in order to meet the fire protection requirements by the London Fire Brigade [LFB].

The proposal is to sympathetically install the Automist system, which comprise of a Pump, a Smart Scan wall mounted spray nozzle and a ceiling mounted Detector. All the system components will be installed discreetly to minimise any impact on and avoid as much as possible any significant historic fabric. Refer to the "Automist Design Statement" and architectural drawings by Thirdway Architecture for further details along with spec/technical details about the system and the dimensions of the necessary fixtures.

The team have been liaising and negotiating with the LFB throughout the planning and implementation process and have managed to resolve majority of issues raised, however in this instance they are particularly concerned with the flats on the Ground and First floor only. The alternative solutions have been explored but deemed to be inadequate - the initial proposal by the LFB to introduce protected entrance lobbies to the Ground and First Floor flats was considered not to be acceptable as this would have adversely impact on the plan form, historic building fabric and potentially harm the special interest of the listed buildings. In addition, the sprinklers system, as an alternative to the protected lobbies, was also considered to be harmful and intrusive in terms of their installation, appearance and potential water damage.

Subsequently it has been concluded that the proposed Automist system is the optimal acceptable solution to help balance the occupants of the buildings as well as the LFB requirements, taking also in consideration the heritage sensibilities of the listed buildings. The proposed solution is discreet, causing minimal disruption to the historic fabric and is considered far more sympathetic to the building's special interest than both the traditional sprinkler system or the internal protected lobbies.

In essence the pump is proposed to be housed within a new joinery piece in the alcove next to the fireplace in the main living/dining/kitchen room and the pipes which are 15mm in diameter are run under the floorboards for a very short distance to the wall between the entrance door to the bedroom and the flat. They are then raised through the wall void, using the existing service runs, to the spray-nozzle plates located 1.5m from finished floor (as per a standard light switch height) on both sides of the wall, covering both sides, the bedroom and the living room. Finally, a detector is mounted on the

ceiling, via the floor void above, in a discreet location and with a minimum penetration to avoid any decorative plasterwork.

The previous consents have rectified numerous harmful past alterations and reinstated the original plan form and all missing architectural features throughout. All existing damaged architectural features have also been repaired and refurbished. These works have greatly enhanced the special interest of these listed buildings. The Client and Team are keen to deliver the project and all the benefits as consented and is therefore essential to agree on the appropriate solution.

The proposals have been designed to cause no harm to the significance of the statutorily listed buildings but also to allow their continued use, as without satisfying the current fire safety policies by the LFB the use of these buildings will be compromised.

It is considered that this proposal will not affect the special interest of the Grade II Listed Building and will provide sustainable and viable residential use for the future.

The proposals will have a minimal impact on the significance of the listed building. Whilst there will be some minimum visual impact from the new wall mounted spray-nozzles and ceiling mounted detectors - comparable to the standard light switches and smoke detector alarms - the overall character and appearance of the individual rooms and the buildings will be retained and their special interest will not be adversely impacted.

Therefore, the proposal is considered to sustain the special historic and architectural interest of the statutorily listed buildings and is concluded that the proposed works satisfy the relevant clauses of the NPPF. These are consistent with the spirit of local, regional and national policies and conservation principles.

**Stephen Levrant: Heritage Architecture  
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