



Listed Building Application

12 March 2021

LBC - DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Blue plaque: Helena Normanton (1882-1957)
at 22 Mecklenburgh Square, Bloomsbury, WC1N 2AD
in the London Borough of Camden.**

Site Analysis

Number 22 Mecklenburgh Square is in Bloomsbury Conservation Area sub area 12, and Grade II* listed (entry ref.1113118).

The current building history:

Number 22 Mecklenburgh Square is part of the distinctive east side of the square, the full terrace numbered 11-26 (consecutive), built on land originally owned by the Foundling Hospital, which they released for house building development in 1790. Mecklenburgh Square was laid out by Joseph Kay the Surveyor to the Foundling Estate, the south side completed (1808-1810), and the east side of the square built by developer builders (numbered south to north), Thomas Penthrin (nos.11-19, 30-34) and George Payne (Nos. 20-29) from around 1810-1820. Mecklenburgh Square is shown laid out on the Horwood map of 1819, the long east terrace of houses a continuation of Doughty Street, shown as part-plot numbered, (No.11 up to No. 29), with the remaining run of houses on the east side laid out but not yet marked as numbered, nor those of the returning north side, which was not completed until 1825.

The square by 1889 in Booth's Poverty Map, is coloured Red and therefore marked as 'well-to-do'. Suffering bomb damage during the Blitz, in around 1950, the north end of the east terrace was rebuilt (Nos. 27-34), the ground floor entrance doors removed except for number 26, and the upper floors rebuilt in facsimile, now numbered as single 26 Mecklenburgh Square, the rebuilding maintained the full terrace unified elevation designed on a grand classically inspired, palatial composition. Built of stock brick and stucco, of four storeys, plus basement, visually the full east side of the square is compositionally decorated with end elevations of full stucco, each with a pair of engaged Ionic columns rising through the first and second floors and a central pavilion section with central four engaged Ionic columns, flanked by stucco facades decorated with pilasters, inset swags; the houses between these stucco façade blocks are of brick, with stucco rendering to the ground floor.

Number 22 Mecklenburgh Square is one of the five houses located within the central pavilion section of the terrace, (Nos. 21-25), an entrance door to the right, in an arched recess with fanlight; two ground floor sash windows to the left, the ground floor channelled stucco, the full basement stucco of plain render; the first floor has three long sash windows, one above the entrance door and set within two pilasters,

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the two long sash windows to the left are located inset between the engaged Ionic columns; with cast-iron balconies; a running stucco decorative panel of swag wreaths above the second floor with projecting cornice, and upper attic storey.

The many varied and remarkable past residents of the Bloomsbury and Holborn area, commemorated by plaques, complement the historical narrative, and are noted to raise the cultural significance of the area. Number 21 Mecklenburgh Square has two plaques – that commemorate R. H. Tawney, historian, teacher and political writer; and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Muslim reformer and scholar. From when first completed the Square has had residents connected to the legal profession, and a plaque here to Helena Normanton would be a popular addition to the blue plaques scheme.

Design Process Components

Positioning of blue plaque demonstrated through measured survey data capture - orthophotos and perspective views

It is proposed that English Heritage erect a blue ceramic inset mounted plaque, of 19.5-inch diameter, inset into the stucco and brickwork by a depth of 50mm. To be located on the ground floor, to the left of No. 22 entrance door fanlight, the plaque symmetrically centred to straddle the stucco channel; the context height line determined by the two plaques on the neighbouring house, No. 21, – and positioned as shown on the attached Surveyor orthophotos; these orthophotos and perspective views are geometrically correct orthophotos derived from accurate photogrammetric models recorded using a professional DSLR camera fitted with a high quality lens with a suitable focal length, and telescopic mast. The surveyor DSLR imagery recorded and controlled using total station coordinated targets/architectural features. The specialist photogrammetric processing software generates the square-on orthophoto scaled 1:50 (a scale bar is included on the positioning image sheet). The detail view with annotated dimensions and the perspective views showing the proposed plaque placed in accurate scale and positioning (accuracy within maximum 0.5mm) are completed using Adobe Photoshop; **these orthophotos take the role of architect drawings.**

The decision to locate the plaque here is so as to be as appropriate as possible to the design of the façade of the building, to align with the earlier blue plaques at number 21 Mecklenburgh Square; and to be easily visible to the average passer-by.

The exterior elevation of the building will be slightly adapted to accommodate the blue plaque (please also see separate Installation note). The Conservation Architect from Historic England has confirmed that the solid brick masonry of this building should well be able to carry a recessed plaque.

There will be no change to the use of the building, no floor space will be added or subtracted, and no new homes will be built on the site. The layout of the building will



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not be changed, nor will the scale of the building be affected. There will be no landscaping undertaken.

Access

No new access points and routes are proposed. No changes are proposed in relation to pedestrian and cycle routes, road layout, local services and public transport provision. The blue plaque will be visible from the public highway and therefore no new access is required. There is no new need for provision of access for emergency services.

Design Solution

The above information has explained and justified the proposed development, and the lack of necessity for good access into and through the site in relation to the proposed works. The English Heritage blue plaque design has been developed over 150 years in sympathy with the character of London buildings. The plaque is hand crafted and is thought to respond positively to most local contexts. The freehold owners of the building, Goodenough College, has approved the project, and given their consent to the design and positioning of the plaque as shown in attached documents. The architectural character of this listed building will only be affected in a minor way, and the historical and cultural interest of the property and area will be enhanced within the local and wider community.

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