

Design and Access Statement

Ground Floor Flat
3 Guilford Street
London
WC1N 1DR

Contents



01 Introduction and Summary

02 Site Location and Context

03 Planning History

04 Heritage Statement

05 Amount and Layout

06 Scale and Height

07 Overlooking

08 Design and Appearance

09 Conclusion

Appendix A

Existing and Proposed Drawings

01 Introduction and Summary



1:1250 OS Map



Site map (NTS)

Site Address

Ground Floor Flat
3 Guilford Street
London
WC1N 1DR

Applicant

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Introduction

The following report and appendices outline the design intentions for the site at 3 Guilford Street, London WC1N 1DR within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Grade II Listed building is located approximately 0.5 miles from Russell Square station, 0.7 miles from Holborn Station, 0.8 miles from Kings Cross- St Pancras station. The area is serviced by several bus stops on Guilford Street, and the A501 main automobile route is 0.7 miles away. Currently there is a four storey building on the site with a lower ground level.

Summary

Inter Urban Studios was approached by our client, Ms Cheng, to seek pre-application advice for internal alterations to the existing ground floor flat; including lower ground infill, incorporating the existing first floor WC into design, and to replace and existing poor-quality first floor rear extension with a high quality modern design that is sympathetic and subservient to the existing listed building and complement the character of the Conservation Area.

02 Site and Context



View taken west of the site on Guilford Street. No 3 is the white stuccoed ground floor



View taken southeast from site roof



Detail southeast of modern dark extension at 42 Doughty Street and site context



View looking down the rear light well with patio from roof



Rear view of the site and immediate context from roof

Site and Context

The site is located at 3 Guilford Street, London WC1N 1DR within Bloomsbury Conservation Area, approximately 0.5 miles from Russell Square station, 0.7 miles from Holborn Station, and 0.8 miles from Kings Cross- St Pancras station. The area is serviced by several bus stops on Guilford Street, and the A501 main automobile route is 0.7 miles away. The PTAL rating of the site is 6a giving an excellent access to public transport services.

The properties along Guilford Street are predominantly of a residential character although there is a hotel next door. Some buildings have ground floor commercial units and there are large offices and restaurants nearby, including behind the application site. The building forms a part of Grade II Listed mid-terrace and comprises five floors including a lower ground with light wells in the front and rear of the building with infill portions to the rear. The fourth floor is within a mansard roof with dormer windows. The rear part of the building has a closet wing extension of part single part two storeys. The existing building is built in brick, with stone cills and slate roof. Windows are mostly single glazed painted timber with rendered reveals, none of which appear to be original.

The property is a ground floor flat with a patio. The ground floor section to the rear is white painted brick. The existing closet wing extension to the ground floor in the rear has a mono pitched roof covered with slates while the corridor has an asphalt-clad flat roof.

The first floor extension is a disused shared WC with an entrance from the hall with a low ceiling and poor construction including asbestos cladding.

03 Planning History

A pre application 2020/3343/NEW was made to the council in July of 2020 with the written response received on 22 December 2020.

In that proposal we proposed an additional floor above the existing bedroom and internal alterations including widening the rear opening from the original house to the corridor of the later closet wing extension and an opening in the curved wall between the reception rooms. We have now removed all three of those items from this application.

The report states that the principle of replacing the poor-quality and dilapidated first floor WC extension with a superior design for a small home office is acceptable in principle but the proposed timber cladding was not acceptable, and that a 'traditional' approach to match the Georgian fabric should be used. However, the NPPF states that councils should not be prescriptive on design or design styles and countless examples of extensions to listed buildings with contrasting and complimentary modern designs exist within Camden and across London. We have completely redesigned this element with a more detailed and robust, modern design as explained in the design and appearance section later in this report. Furthermore we have provided more detail on how this element appears and complements the context to allow a more thorough investigation by the council.

The report mentions that it is unclear if the closet wing ceiling level is the same as the main house and that raising it could alter this relationship. This latter extension is far lower, so low that it forms part of this application so a more acceptable height can be achieved. The main house ceiling height is 3.18m, while the closet wing corridor is a mere 2.045 to 2.125m. Our proposed would not harm any

subservient relationship that currently exists with the listed building. The floor level is nominally level with the main house.

The proposal to move the kitchen to the corridor, raising the roof of the closet wing, and fenestration to the patio remain as the pre application and was positively received by the council. Both the existing and proposed ceiling heights are far below the ground floor ceiling height of the listed host building, thus maintaining the subservient nature of the closet wing.

With the removal of the first floor extension proposal we now propose to raise the existing bedroom roof by the same distance as the corridor to allow the same head height given to the new kitchen area and keep a consistent and buildable roofline.

Finally we have removed the proposal for heritage double glazing and now apply for single glazed timber Georgian style replacement windows in the front elevation and the rear window to the listed building.

There is no other relevant full planning history for the site however; there are some nearby relevant applications as listed below:

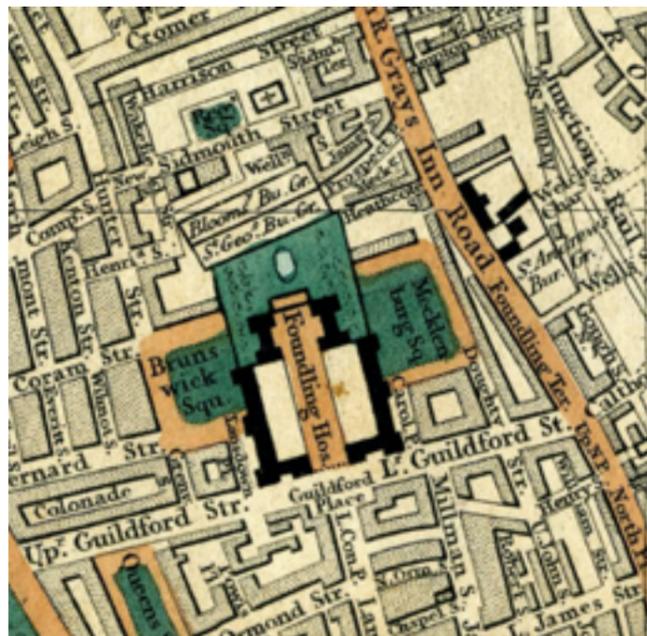
- 42 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LF, Application: 2018/4341/L
Granted: January 2018
Proposal: Demolition of existing closet wing and erection of replacement extension in black brick with black windows
- 107 Guilford Street, London WC1N 1DP, Application: 2003/0738/L
Granted: August 2003
Proposal: Internal alterations and the erection of a single storey rear extension.
- 1 Guilford Street, London WC1N 1DR, Application: 2016/4352/P
Granted: June 2017
Proposal: Demolition of existing rear extensions; erection of new part single storey, part 3 storey rear extension with roof terraces at 1st floor level; conversion of existing 6 bedroom dwelling into 1 x 2 bedroom maisonette and 1 x 3 bedroom maisonette; and extension of existing basement level
- 79 Guilford Street, London WC1 1DF, Application: 2019/2546/P
Approved
Proposal: Erection of a single-storey rear extension (following removal of existing); extension of existing basement with associated works.
- 21- 20A Brownlow Mews, London WC1N 2LA, Application: 2020/0141/P, Approved
Proposal: New plant enclosure to flat roof on rear elevation including raising the roof by 150mm

04 Heritage Statement

No. 3 is one of five Grade II listed dwellings (nos. 3-7) along Guilford Street dating from 1792-1800. It represents typical architectural features for a Georgian era townhouse such as: slated mansard roof with dormers, attics and basements, round arched doorways with pilaster jambs, cornice heads, radial patterned fanlights and panelled doors, gauge brick flat arches to recessed sash windows and cast iron railings.

The map below is a detail from 1837 showing upper and lower 'Guilford Street' and the area around as a clear street hierarchy structured on a rough grid layout characteristic of Georgian and Regency periods.

As it was common in the densest areas of Central London the rear yards were gradually infilled over time, many of poor quality. The closet wing extension to the rear is of questionable quality and this proposal seeks to transform the layout and design to create a high quality family dwelling with exceptional design that complements the setting of the listed building.



Cary's New Plan of London and its Vicinity, 1837

A poor-quality first floor landing extension to create a WC was erected in the 20th century and clad in asbestos. It is likely that this was part of a bedsit-style conversion in the past. The proposal seeks to incorporate this room in to the flat to add a home office as well as refurbish the exterior to enhance the appearance of this small room and coordinate the design with the proposed extension. It is viewed that this will greatly improve the relationship between the listed host building and the various existing and proposed extensions and remove the unsightly cladding and poor construction. The proposed replacement extension is cubic in shape and slightly increases the footprint of the existing asbestos-clad WC extension. The direct neighbours will not be affected by the proposed development as it does not increase any overshadowing or increase the sense of enclosure.

The lower ground space is an existing rubble-filled void that would have originally formed the rear of the original yard. The lower ground floor flat below stops at the line of the patio above, and with the large office building behind, hems in this unusual space that was filled with rubble possibly as construction waste during the erection of the closet wings in the Victorian/Edwardian period.

Finally the non-original existing metal railing to the patio is far below safe standards, as it is too low, has large gaps that small children and pets can easily fall through and is damaged. The client is expecting a child and the railing must be made safe. It is proposed that this railing is to be remade in frameless glazing to 1.1m height as is building regulations. It is noted that the patio and extensions are of various ages, none of which are original. It is viewed that a modern but subtle approach is the most appropriate as a traditional cast iron Georgian style would be inauthentic given the far later age of the closet wing.



Some of the remaining decorative heritage elements from top left clockwise:

Shared entrance door fanlight and heavily painted cornices, Shared entrance hall with arch and pilasters, marble hearth roundel (possibly not original), and main reception room with heavily over-painted cornice and curved wall

05, 06, 07 Amount and Layout, Scale and Height, and Overlooking

Amount

Bringing the existing lower ground space in to use will add 11.3 m², and slightly enlarging the first floor existing WC as a home office 1 m² for a new total of 12.3 m².

Layout

The existing ground floor flat is comprised of a living room and kitchen in the front and a bedroom at the rear. In the middle section of the house there is a patio. In the closet wing extension part there is a WC and shower room.

Our proposal creates a usable family bathroom and utility from the existing lower ground floor filled void and alters the internal layout of the existing flat to better accommodate the client's needs. The existing bedroom will have now access to the patio via proposed sliding glazed doors. The existing patio door will be replaced with sliding glazed doors to create a feeling of additional space to the kitchen on summer days. Additionally, the existing WC outbuilding with asbestos cladding and of poor architectural quality will be replaced with a slightly larger cube shaped home office. The proposed home office at the first floor landing level will be accessible by a stair from the kitchen.

The existing kitchen is proposed to be moved to the corridor to allow this generous room to become the second bedroom, while the front room remains as the living and dining space.

This renewed layout will see the creation of a good-sized two bedroom flat with well-proportioned rooms, work from home space, excellent flow and improves access to light, views, and overall habitability.

Scale and Height

The overall massing of the proposed replacement first floor extension with a home office has been carefully designed in size to defer to the context and scale of the surrounding buildings. The proposed extension is clearly subservient to the main building. We believe that it provides an acceptable scale and relation to neighbouring buildings and their uses as offices, flats, and hotels. The rebuilt 1st floor outbuilding accessible from the ground floor flat will remain roughly the same size and form as the existing one, enlarged only by less than 1m².

We have ensured the minimum of impact to neighbouring properties and retains the clear hierarchy of form. With no significant change to the current mass, the proposal does not increase overshadowing or decrease outlook to any neighbouring habitable rooms.

The proposed lower ground bathroom is within the existing footprint of the building utilising an existing rubble-filled void below the rear bedroom. This is completely hidden from view.

Finally, the proposed raised roof structure over the existing hall portion is introduced to achieve comfortable head height that improves the existing ceiling and feeling of the cramped feeling of this part of the house and accommodates the proposed kitchen. We propose to do the same over the existing bedroom for the same reason but to also ensure continuity of the roof line in both design terms and to prevent unnecessary angles and levels that could lead to water ingress. This minor alteration does not unacceptably impact on the rear yard at No 2 Guilford Street but vastly improves on the very low ceilings.

Overlooking

Overlooking has been considered an important element in conjunction with the necessity of providing natural light to the proposed home office and light for the stair down to the new family bathroom.

The proposed rooflight to the new stair will be far from any habitable room and offer no direct views in or out from the stairwell. Overlooking is managed to the side of the proposed home office by the use of a clerestory window at 1.7m high from the finish floor, thus ensuring no overlooking to any nearby property.

08 Design and Appearance: Precedents



Sun Rain Room, Islington, Tonkin Liu



Design and Appearance: Precedents

LB Camden has a strong tradition of championing excellent architecture especially in conjunction with listed buildings. The first precedent is the recently completed Sun Rain Room by Tonkin Liu in Islington on the Camden border. It clearly demonstrates that contrasting arcs and circles, large areas of glazing, and glazed balustrades are all elements that can be considered acceptable to the council for use on extensions to listed buildings.

Dark materials are also part of the modern architectural language as demonstrated in the Sun Rain Room, the large extension to nearby 42 Doughty Street and many other historic and modern examples in the local context. We include some recent images of our extension to a Victorian building where we successfully used dark tinted concrete to provide a complimentary relationship to the historic structure in a residential setting that does not overpower or detract from the host building.

Circles and arcs are a common theme in Georgian architecture, used to enliven and decorate, and endless examples of these shapes are a hallmark of a refined Georgian townhouse. We seek to interpret this in a modern way to run a golden thread of design reference through the centuries to the present day.

08 Design and Appearance: Precedents



Green Lanes N4, residential extension (detail), Inter Urban Studios, 2020



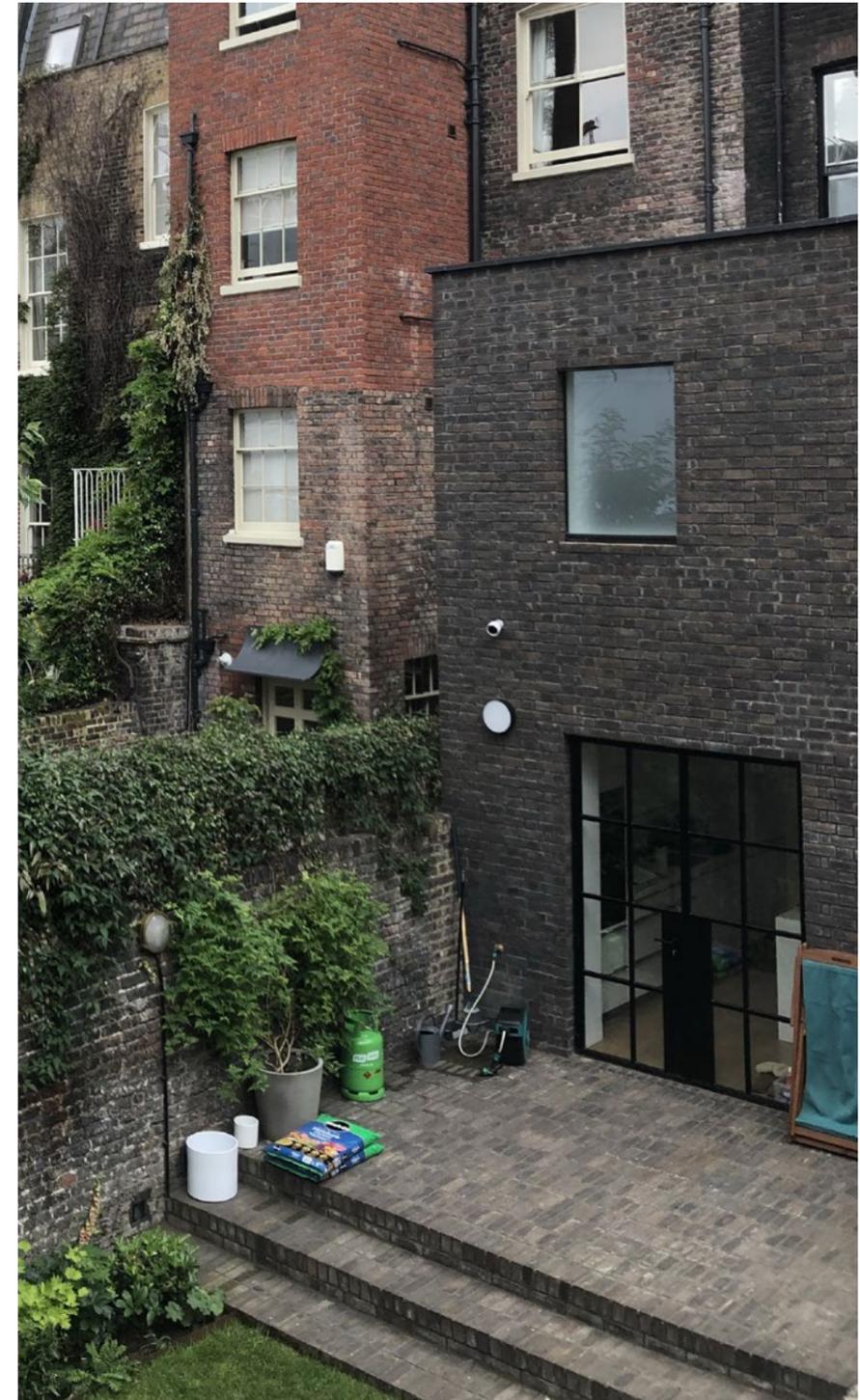
42 Doughty St, Grade-II residential extension in dark brick and aluminium/steel windows



Green Lanes N4, residential extension, Inter Urban Studios, 2020



Charred House, William Tozer Associates, London



42 Doughty St, Grade-II residential extension in dark brick and aluminium/steel windows

08 Design and Appearance: Precedents



Jimi House, Paul Archer Design, London
Above and Top Centre



Bottom Centre: Architect Nick Tobias



Glyn House, Yellow Cloud Studio, London

08 Design and Appearance

Design and Appearance

This proposal has been designed to complement the context without standing out with dominant architectural scale. The rebuilt first floor extension is viewed as a small 'cube' with fair-faced dark-tinted concrete with inset circular articulations and windows. The proposal, although contemporary in form, contrasts and compliments in harmony with the setting of the listed building and respects the Georgian character. The shape evokes the Georgian traditions of decorative roundels and circular windows that can be found throughout the Georgian period in London, notably fashionable areas of Belgravia, Mayfair, Regent's Park and Greenwich Observatory, to name but a few.

The use of smooth shuttering will create a refined and clean finish and the inset articulations reference Georgian roundels and add a further level of refinement to this sculptural element.

The curved windows in this small 'cube' are proposed to be black metal to match, as this will allow the frames to effectively meld in to the dark external material and not call attention to themselves. It is deemed appropriate for this material given the modern approach of this element.

We further seek to create a relationship between the sides of this proposed 'cube' by making a progression from a $1/3$ circle window on the side to create privacy, to a $2/3$ circle to the rear for views, finishing with a full circle to the rooflight. All of these design moves are centred around the proportions of a cube, a traditional approach common in the Classical and Neo-Classical Georgian period.



08 Design and Appearance

Design and Appearance: Materials

The use of dark fair-faced concrete is meant as a robust, high quality material that complements the various brick and other materials extant to the rear of the listed building. Concrete can have added colour and texture (not just grey and rough), and this very small architectural 'sculpture' will in no way adversely affect the listed building nor the setting. It is viewed that such an architectural move will allow the original building to be better differentiated and read more clearly between the ages.

The dark colour is to reduce its visibility and allow a more subtle transition to the brick. It further references the tradition of painting brick dark black to hide coal soot and the dark patina of unpainted Georgian brick with centuries of coal use. This can be seen on nearby modern extensions and original host buildings as shown in the site photos.

Inter Urban Studios has recently completed a larger extension to a flat in London where we used a similar approach. The dark concrete demonstrates a relationship with the host building that is not dominant, and the relative smooth uniformity and dark colour very much complements the varied texture and patina of the London stock brick, the same in use on the listed building in this application.

We propose to replace the three existing windows of the host building with Georgian-style sash timber windows with single glazing to restore the original appearance of the listed building.

The proposed windows and doors to the closet wing are painted timber as requested by LB Camden in the pre-application report.



Dark stained fair-faced concrete



Black metal window frames



09 Conclusion

This Design and Access Statement and accompanying drawings have been prepared on behalf of the applicant, Ms Cheng, to seek planning and listed building consent for internal alterations to the existing ground floor flat, including lower ground infill and incorporation of existing first floor landing extension with a high quality and sensitive design that is sympathetic and subservient to the existing listed building and complement the character of the conservation area.

This submission will respect the original character of the listed building and conservation area and will be significantly enhanced. As supported by the previous sections, it is considered that this comprehensive report has sufficiently complied with national, London, and local Camden policies.

Our proposal is considered completely site specific and conscious of the context, taking into consideration the surrounding buildings. The proposed replacement extension has been carefully designed to preserve and enhance the existing urban grain whilst providing an outstanding piece of modern architecture.

Finally, it is considered that there is no adverse effect to any neighbouring residential accommodation by any measure, with no overshadowing, loss of light or outlook, or sense of enclosure.

We believe our proposal complies with all the relevant policies and would indeed enhance the setting of the listed building and the conservation area as a whole. We look forward to hearing a positive response to this proposal.