

21-24 Russell Square,  
London, WC1

## Heritage Statement



April 2021

Consultancy for the  
Historic Built Environment

KMHHeritage

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Purpose.....	2
Authorship and contributors .....	2
2 The site and its surroundings.....	3
General History.....	3
3 Nos. 21-24 Russell Square .....	9
4 The heritage significance of the site and its context .....	22
The heritage context of 21-24 Russell Square .....	22
<i>Unlisted buildings of merit</i> .....	22
The heritage significance of the site and its context .....	22
<i>The relevant heritage assets</i> .....	22
<i>Assessing heritage significance</i> .....	23
<i>'Historic interest', 'Historical value' and 'Evidential value'</i> .....	23
<i>'Architectural interest', 'artistic interest' or 'aesthetic value'</i> .....	24
Summary .....	26
5 The policy context .....	27
The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.....	27
The National Planning Policy Framework .....	27
Camden Council's Local Development Framework .....	31
6 The proposed scheme and its effect .....	35
The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance .....	35
<i>The effect on the conservation area and other listed buildings</i> .....	39
7 Compliance with policy and guidance .....	41
The level of 'harm' caused by the proposed scheme .....	41
The National Planning Policy Framework .....	41
Camden's Local Development Framework.....	42
8 Summary and conclusions .....	43
Appendix A: List description .....	44

## Introduction

- 1.1 This Assessment has been prepared by KMHeritage to support the planning application submitted to the London Borough of Camden.
- 1.2 The application relates to 21-24 Russell Square, London, WC1.

### Purpose

- 1.3 The purpose of the report is to provide a background understanding of the heritage context of the site.

### Authorship and contributors

- 1.4 The author of this report is Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC. Nick has twenty years' experience in the property sector, including most recently as a Director of the Conservation Team at integrated design consultants, Alan Baxter & Associates. Nick spent nine years at English Heritage as Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas where he led a specialist team of historic building inspectors, architects, and archaeologists on a wide range of heritage projects in East & South London. Previously Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Bromley, Nick began his career at international real estate consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle as a Chartered Surveyor. This experience has given Nick an in-depth understanding of the property industry, listed building and planning process, heritage policy and guidance and funding bodies.
- 1.5 Historical research for this report was undertaken by Jonathan Clarke, a conservation and heritage professional with many years experience. Formerly a Senior Investigator in the Conservation & Protection Department at English Heritage and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME), Jonathan recently authored 'A Discreet Revolution: Early Structural Steel in London Buildings' (English Heritage, 2013).

## 2 The site and its surroundings

- 2.1 This section of the report describes the history and context for the development of 21-24 Russell Square.

### General History

- 2.2 Larger than any previous London square, and still one of the largest, Russell Square was laid out in 1800 by the renowned landscape designer Humphrey Repton (1752-1818) and developed by James Burton (1761 – 1837), ‘probably the most significant builder of Georgian London’.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.3 It was promoted and named after the ground landlords, the Russells, Earls and Dukes of Bedford. Much of Bloomsbury, including Bloomsbury Square and Bedford House, had been part of the Russell family’s metropolitan estate since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, but in 1799 Francis Russell, 5th Duke of Bedford (1765–1802) contracted the property developer James Bruton to ‘pull down Bedford House offering 5,000 guineas for the materials and furniture’.<sup>2</sup> An extravagant gambler, Francis Russell was disinterested in the ancestral metropolitan mansion (originally named Southampton House, and described by Samuel Pepys as ‘a very great and noble work’),<sup>3</sup> instead living in the fashionable West End.
- 2.4 Before Burton could commence redevelopment of this part of the Bedford estate, Francis had to obtain an Act of Parliament since the Crown had first granted the land on which Russell Square lay.<sup>4</sup> This was on 20 June 1800, and stated that ‘a square was to be built of houses of considerable value and that a garden was to be included ... railed off and maintained by the residents of the square’.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.5 On 24 June 1800 Burton was contracted to build the south side of Russell Square, both sides of Bedford Place, the north side of Bloomsbury Square, and the southern portion of the west side of Russell Square, from Montague Place south. The north side

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.burtonsstleonardssociety.co.uk/who-were-the-burtons/>

<sup>2</sup> Donald Olsen, *Town Planning in London: The Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries* (1982), 52

<sup>3</sup> <https://bloomsburyconservation.org.uk/conservation-areas/bloomsbury-conservation-area/history/>

<sup>4</sup> Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (1995), 103

<sup>5</sup> Lorelei Sterling, ‘The Greening of Russell Square: Russell Square as a Lens on the historical development of Early Nineteenth Century London’ (Unpublished MA dissertation, Washington State University, 2009), 55

of the square was developed by and Henry Scrimshaw, Thomas Lewis, David Alston Jnr, albeit working to an Estate Plan of 1800 (**Fig. 1**) drawn up by James Gubbins, the Duke of Bedford's surveyor, and using the contractual agreements developed by James Burton and John Russell.<sup>6</sup>

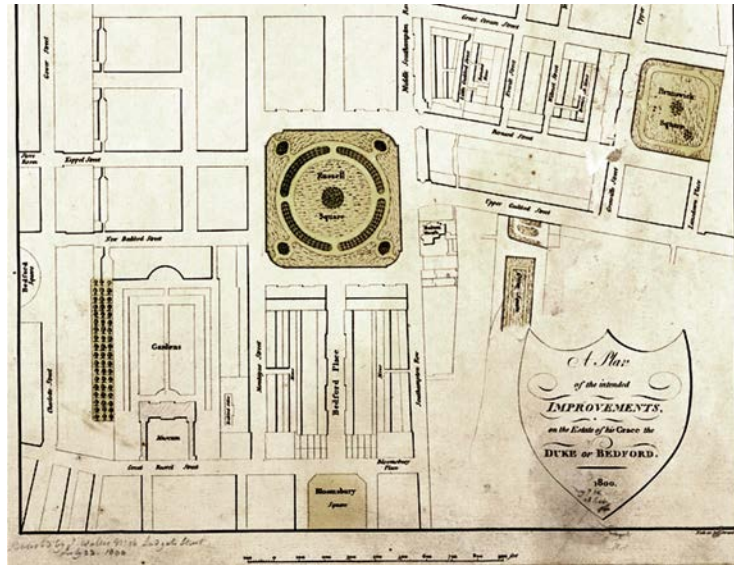


Figure 1 Extract from *A plan of the intended improvements, on the estate of His Grace the Duke of Bedford*, dated 1800. By this date Bedford House had been demolished, and would soon be replaced by Bedford Place, constructed in 1801-5 by James Burton. (British Library)

- 2.6 Repton laid out the gardens in the new Picturesque landscape style, with a horseshoe of paths. This was probably completed by 1801 or 1802, although the terrace houses facing the square were not completed until 1815 – mostly by Burton (see Figs 2-4).
- 2.7 The houses on the north side of the square were the first to be built; those by Henry Scrimshaw were completed by June 1801, and like all those subsequently built, had to meet the construction standards of the Buildings Act of 1744. Under this Act, all the houses were categorised as being ‘first class’ (at least 900 ft sq, and valued at least 850 pounds),<sup>7</sup> although some were hastily built using poor or adulterated materials which caused at least one collapse.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 57, 60; Clarke, R, McKellar, E and Symes, M ‘Russell Square: a lifelong resource for teaching and learning’. Birkbeck, University of London Discussion Paper (2004), 15

<sup>7</sup> Lorelei Sterling, op. cit., 23

<sup>8</sup> See R, McKellar, E and Symes, ibid, 20

- 2.8 Although not as fashionable or aristocratic as other squares, from the outset Russell Square was favoured by upper middle-class professionals, especially lawyers. By 1830 one writer could note that it was 'a favourite residence of the highest legal characters; and here merchants and bankers have seated themselves and their families, the air and situation uniting to render it a pleasant retreat from their cares of business'.<sup>9</sup> However, that marked a high point, and thereafter the square's social and economic standing declined.

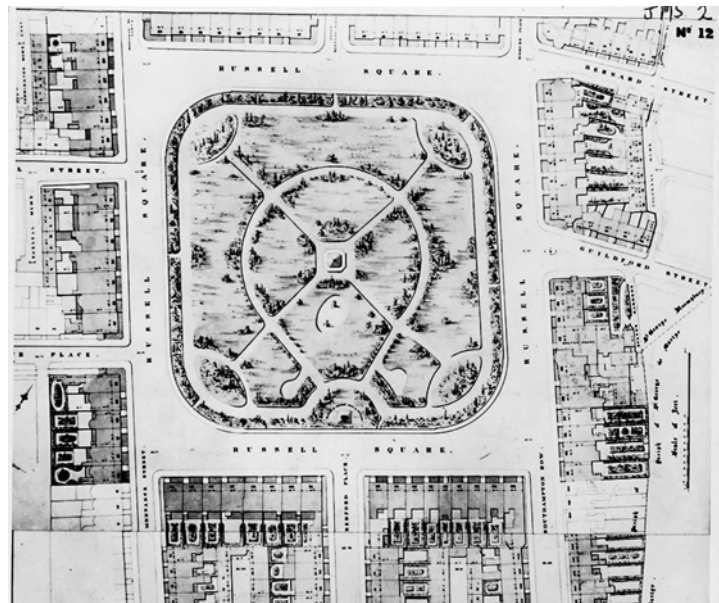


Figure 2 Extract from an undated plan showing the completed Russell Square, with those houses built by Burton shown shaded and in greater detail (English Heritage Archive, Red Box collection, photo 26).

<sup>9</sup> As quoted in Donald Olsen, *Town Planning in London: The Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries* (1982), 110

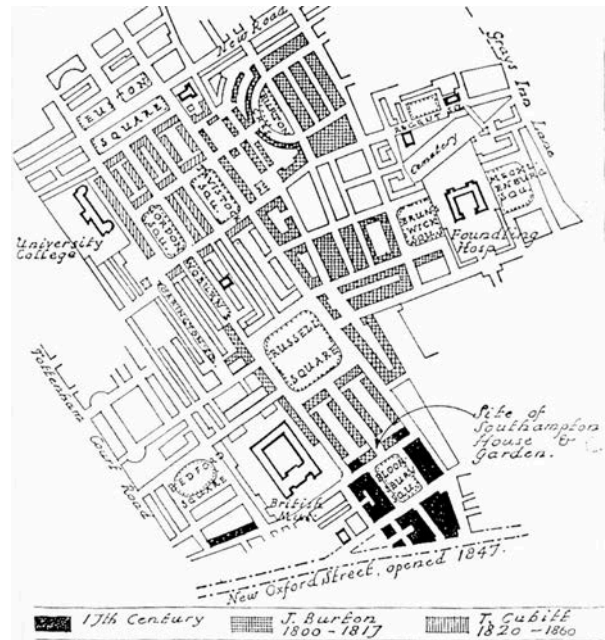


Figure 3 Sketch-map of Bloomsbury by Alison Shepherd showing the areas developed by Burton and Cubitt. Extract from an undated plan showing the completed Russell Square, with those houses built by Burton shown shaded and in greater detail (Summerson, Georgian London, 1945).

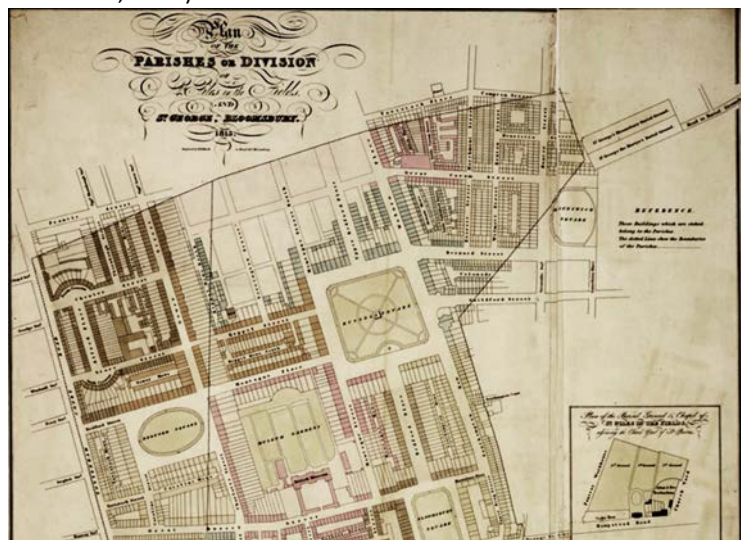


Figure 4 Extract from a Plan of the parishes or division of St. Giles in the Fields and St. George, Bloomsbury, showing the extent of the Bedford Estate in 1815 – including the completed Russell Square. (British Library).

- 2.9 Lodging-houses began appearing in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in the 1880s the Bedford Estate took steps to smarten and improve the area. As the original leases of Russell Square fell in,



an attempt was made to 'Victorianise' the façades of the houses on the north and south sides through fancy ironwork and terracotta ornaments.<sup>10</sup>

- 2.10 In the 1890s and early 1900s the east side was wholly transformed by the construction of two enormous buildings, the Hotel Russell and the Imperial Hotel, both to flamboyant designs by Charles Fitzroy Doll (Fig. 5). The Edwardian era also saw the area become noted for its literary and intellectual associations, especially with the rise of the 'Bloomsbury Group' of writers from 1904. This period also saw many of the private residences converted into hotels, offices and later, university departments, following the construction of Senate House.
- 2.11 Large, purpose-built offices began to be built in Bloomsbury in the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century, including Russell Square House, Nos 10-12 (1939-41; Richardson & Gill)(Fig. 6), and in the 1960s the east side of the square was transformed again with the construction of two hotels that replaced Doll's Imperial Hotel – 'tawdry affairs with sawtooth fronts, entirely unworthy of their position'.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 5 Aerial view of Russell Square in 1921, showing the Hotel Russell and the Imperial Hotel dominating the square's eastern side. (Historic England Archive, EPW005967)

<sup>10</sup> R, McKellar, E and Symes, *ibid*, 40-41

<sup>11</sup> Bridget Cherry & Nikolaus Pevsner *The Buildings of England. London 3: North West*, 326





Figure 6 Russell Square House, Nos 10-12 Russell Square (1939-41; Richardson & Gill), which replaced some of the earliest houses on the square

### 3 Nos. 21-24 Russell Square

- 3.1 Nos 21-24 Russell Square survive in altered form as part of a terrace of eight houses built in c1800-3 by one or more the developer-builders Henry Scimshaw, Thomas Lewis, and David Alston. This terrace, Nos 17-24, extended from Upper Bedford Place (now Bedford Way) to Montague Street North (now Thornhaugh Street) and most of its houses are shown as having had gardens and outbuildings in the 1815 Estate Plan and Horwood's map of 1819 (Figs 7 & 8).

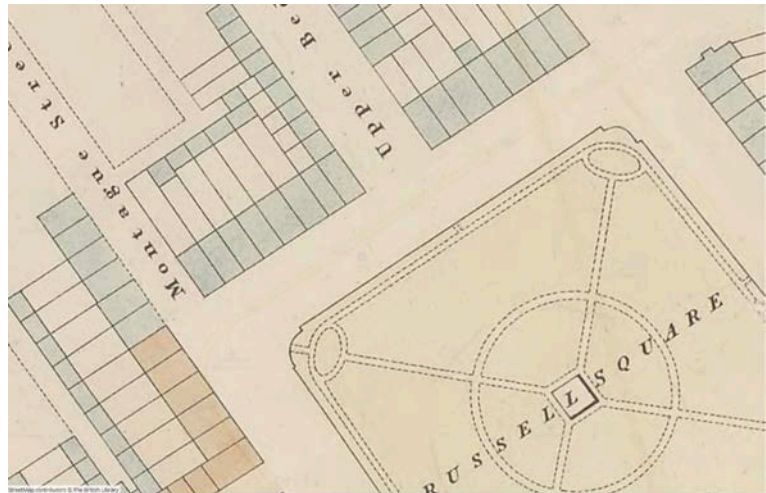


Figure 7 Extract from a *Plan of the parishes or division of St. Giles in the Fields and St. George, Bloomsbury*, showing Nos 17 – 24 Russell Square with outbuildings



Figure 8 Extract William Faden's 4th ed. of Horwood's Plan (1819) showing Nos 17 – 24 Russell Square with ornamental gardens and outbuildings

- 3.2 This terrace of eight houses seems to have been built as an ensemble with the end and central properties stepping forward and rising to three storeys with flat parapet walls (Figs 9 & 10). This mirrored another terrace of eight houses to the east of Upper Bedford Place (Nos 9-16) which was replaced by Russell Square House (1939-41).

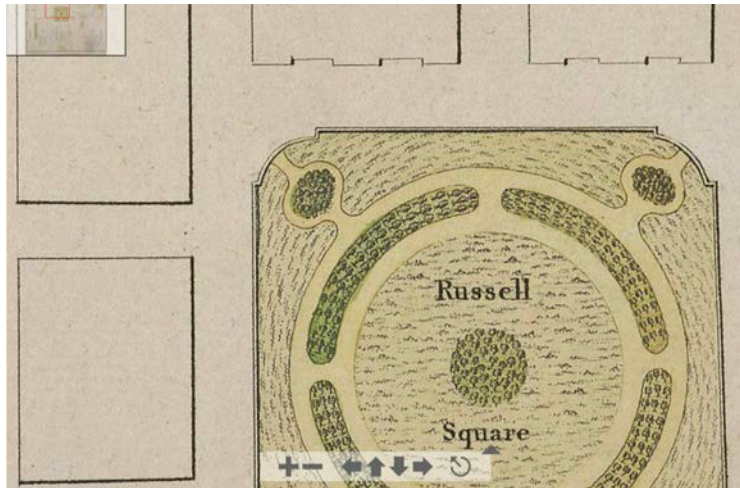


Figure 9 Extract from *A plan of the intended improvements, on the estate of His Grace the Duke of Bedford*, dated 1800



Figure 10 Sketch by Philip Pilditch showing Nos 21-24 Russell Square as they looked in c1897, shortly before his alterations were undertaken. *The Builder*, 3 April 1897

- 3.3 The sale of No. 22 in 1820 gives an indication of the interior arrangement and type of outbuildings of the residence, and perhaps its immediate neighbours, a description noting that it comprised:

on the upper story [sic], a large nursery, four sleeping rooms, housemaid's closet ... on the second floor, a bed chamber in front ...

and small bed chamber adjoining; at the back, a capital bowed bed chamber and closet, and a housemaid's closet; on the principal floor, a noble lofty drawing room, fitted up in a very elegant manner, three windows in front, opening to a balcony of the front, communicating with a back drawing room bowed at both ends, and commanding a delightful view of Highgate and Hampstead hills; ground floor, entrance hall, vestibule, and excellent stone staircase to the second floor, a capital eating-room, library, water closet, and gentleman's dressing room; in the basement, an excellent range of domestic offices, areas, wine, coal, and beer cellars, wash-house, and laundry; a spacious garden at the back, planted; detached coach-house, harness room, three stall stable, with loft and man's room over.<sup>12</sup>

- 3.4 Little change seems to have taken place to Nos 17-24 Russell Square through most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the rearward extension of No. 24 along Upper Montague Street, and the loss of the ornamental gardens in the latter part of the century being perhaps the most apparent (Fig. 11).
- 3.5 The most significant change came in c.1897, when Pilditch, surveyor to the Bedford Estate, introduced terracotta embellishments, including door and window surrounds, and decorative iron balconies (Fig. 12).



Figure 12 Nos 21-24 Russell Square, showing the terracotta and decorative iron embellishments added by Philip Pilditch in c1897

- 3.6 Although visually arresting, these changes (which formed part of wider scheme of modernising the estate, and were contemporarily decried as 'the vulgarisation of the houses of the Duke of Bedford's estate'<sup>13</sup> and later denounced as 'Mr Pilditch's terracottification of Russell Square')<sup>14</sup> were of a less ambitious character than those originally proposed (Fig. 13).

<sup>12</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 June 1820, 4

<sup>13</sup> *RIBA Journal*, v5 (1897-8), 359

<sup>14</sup> *RIBA Journal*, v45 (1937-8), 448



Possibly the expense of this earlier scheme prevented it from being realised.

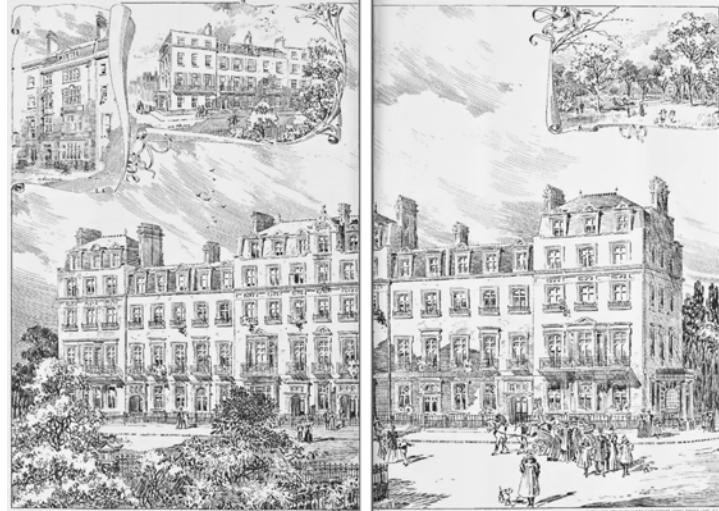


Figure 13 Philip Pilditch's unrealised scheme for the north side of Russell Square. *The Builder*, 3 April 1897

- 3.7 The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw changes to the internal structure and character of some of the houses, and the loss of others. A change in function from residential to institutional and commercial office use demanded internal alterations to some properties. By 1915, No. 19 was the headquarters of the World' Evangelical Alliance ('Alliance House'); No. 21 the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen & Clerks, and No. 22 the Historical Association's headquarters.<sup>15</sup>
- 3.8 By 1921, the residential occupants were in further retreat, with Nos 17 & 18 occupied by the Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society and No. 23 by the British Dental Association.<sup>16</sup> By 1933, the last two residents, Mrs Wolfe (at No. 20), and Sir Frederick Morris Fry (1851-1943) (at No. 24) had relocated, replaced, respectively, by Pitman's College and Faber and Faber, Ltd.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, other businesses and institutions had crowded into the neighbouring buildings, presumably taking individual rooms, floors or outbuildings.
- 3.9 Alterations to No. 23 for the British Dental Association seemingly included the removal of walls and insertion of rolled steel beams to create larger spaces, including a Member's

<sup>15</sup> Post Office Directory (1915), 584

<sup>16</sup> Ibid (1921), 589

<sup>17</sup> Ibid (1933), 611

Room, and a Boardroom. These were given historicised decoration (Figs 14 and 15).

- 3.10 In c1935, further alterations that also encompassed No. 24 were made to designs by local architects Lander, Bedells and Crompton.<sup>18</sup> Possibly this work included removal of parts of the party wall, to enable interconnection of the two buildings on one or more floors.



Figure 14 The boardroom of the British Dental Association as photographed in 1919 or 1920. (Historic England Archive, BL24799)



Figure 15 The Members' Room of the British Dental Association as photographed in 1919 or 1920. (Historic England Archive, BL24797)

<sup>18</sup> Based at No. 6 John Street, Bedford Row. *The Builder* 12 July 1935, 78. The builders were also local: W T Lawrence and Sons, 12 Tavistock Place. *The Builder*, 23 August 1935, 337.

- 3.11 By 1939 a large covered garage had replaced the outbuildings, and much of the remaining gardens, to the rear of Nos 20-24 Russell Square (Fig. 16). This hipped-roof structure was accessed from Montague Street North (Thornhaugh Street) and Upper Montague Street (Thornhaugh Mews).



Figure 16 Detail from an aerial view north-eastwards in 1939, showing the large garage to the rear of Nos 21-24 Russell Square. (Historic England Archive, EPW060554)

- 3.12 On 23 June 1944 a flying bomb hit Russell Square, seriously damaging No. 19 (Alliance House)<sup>19</sup> and causing irreparable damage to Nos 17 and 18 (**Fig. 17**).

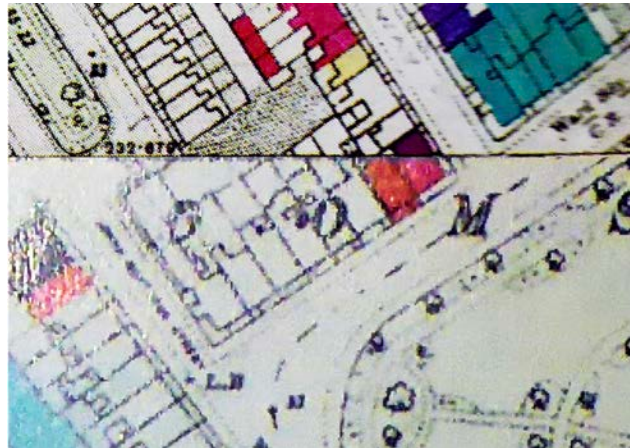


Figure 17 Bomb damage map showing extensive damage to Nos 17 and 18 Russell Square.

- 3.13 By the early 1950s, Nos 17 and 18 lay in ruin, and Nos 22 and 23 were being used as a Register Office (Fig. 18). The construction of Denys Lasdun's powerfully sculptural range for the Institutes

---

<sup>19</sup> The World's Evangelical Alliance subsequently relocated to No. 30 Bedford Place, taking 'vital documents and records' that 'escaped damage'. *Ecclesiastical News*, 31 October 1944, 6



of Education and Advanced Legal Studies (planned 1965; completed 1976) saw the demolition of No. 19 (by 1969 the University of London Computer Centre)<sup>20</sup> and No.20 Russell Square (Fig. 19).



Figure 18 Extract from the 1953 (published date) and 1977 (published date) OS maps (Digimap).



Figure 19 An undated view southwards during the construction of the Institutes of Education and Advanced Legal Studies, showing the rear of Nos 19 – 23 Russell Square, shortly before Nos 19 and 20 were demolished. (Nd, c. early 1970s; Historic England Archive, UXC01/01/02/122/04)

- 3.14 The surviving range, Nos 21-24, was propped with a series of reinforced-concrete buttresses whose stepped form, consciously or otherwise, echoed that of Lasdun's buildings (Fig. 20). Probably in response to these losses, Nos 21-24 was listed grade II in May 1974, although the interiors were not inspected.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *The Times*, 4 March 1969, 19

<sup>21</sup> List Entry Number 1246375 (14 May 1974).



Figure 20 Reinforced concrete buttresses propping the party wall of No. 21 Russell Square. (Nick Collins).

- 3.15 In 1995, SOAS acquired Nos 23-24 Russell Square,<sup>22</sup> and in the late 1990s the building was converted to educational use to designs by Philip Vernon.<sup>23</sup> The work included: structural strengthening, renewal of all services, including energy saving controls and the of original 1810 ceilings, along with upgrading the rear courtyard garden. ... the creation of new offices, lecture rooms and service facilities for University use. Existing internal timber columns were removed and existing timber beams were strengthening [sic] while original and unique 1810 ceilings and other conservation details were restored.<sup>24</sup>
- 3.16 Nos 23-24 Russell Square was renamed the Faber Building, on account of its former occupation by the famous Bloomsbury publisher. Nos 21 and 22, which had been occupied by the

---

<sup>22</sup> <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/13ee671c-b6be-38fb-b81d-50ccde1512ac>

<sup>23</sup> [Vernonarchitects.com](https://www.vernonarchitects.com)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.circmanagement.com/soas-russel-square-1>

University of London since at least the 1970s,<sup>25</sup> was also acquired by SOAS, and is known as '21-22 Russell Square'.<sup>26</sup>

- 3.17 In c2007, alterations were made to 21-22 Russell Square, including structural strengthening to enable the reinstatement of key rooms, alterations to room layout and lighting and other minor works.<sup>27</sup>
- 3.18 In c2009 a new reception area on the ground floor of Faber Building was created, and a disabled toilet and kitchenette was introduced in the basement.<sup>28</sup> In c2015 alterations of a more extensive nature were undertaken in the same buildings, comprising:
- the replacement of two 3-over-3 sash windows within the rear lightwell with larger 6-over-6 timber sash windows, the removal of two external walls within the front lightwell beneath the stair, the installation of secondary glazing to the front windows at lower ground level, and minor alterations to internal partitions at lower ground level.<sup>29</sup>
- 3.19 In April 2020 SOAS 'announced it the had sold its Russell Square Terraces, including the Grade 2-listed Faber Building, to raise cash'.<sup>30</sup> Despite the alterations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and recent damage caused by water ingress (see Figs 21-26), Nos 21-24 retain some original/early 19<sup>th</sup>-century features, fixtures and fittings, including flagstones, door and window surrounds, windows, fireplaces with carved marble surrounds, and panelled doors (see Nick Collins' photographs, December 2020).

---

<sup>25</sup> The Times, 5 May 1976, 31

<sup>26</sup> SOAS website

<sup>27</sup> Camden Planning, application no. 2007/0770/L & 2007/4059/L

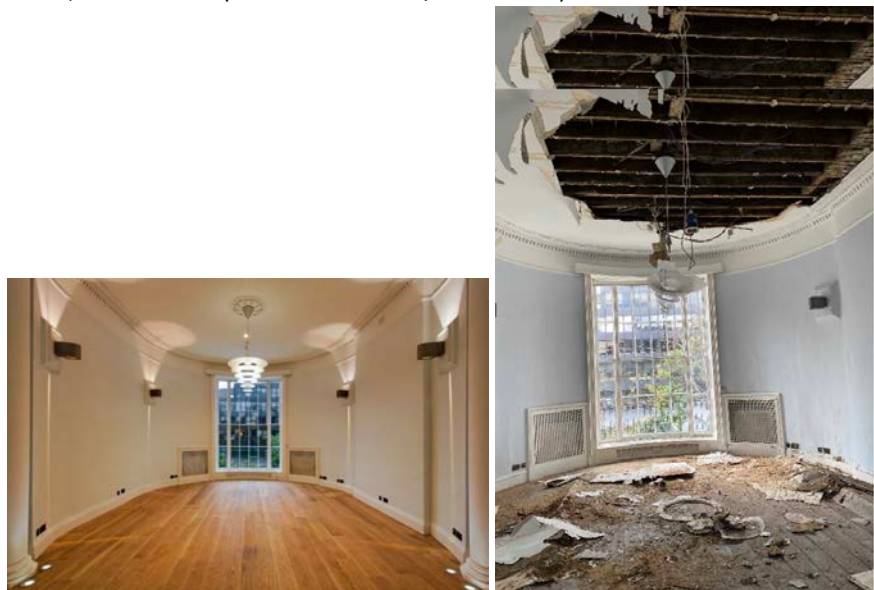
<sup>28</sup> Ibid, no. 2009/2828/L

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, no. 2015/1270/L

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/soas-faces-viability-problems-amid-pandemic-crisis-director-warns>



Figures 21 & 22 A principal office in No. 24 as restored and altered in the late 1990s, and in 2020. (Vernon Architects/Nick Collins).



Figures 23 & 24 A rear office with bow front in No. 24 as restored and altered in the late 1990s, and in 2020. ([www.circmanagement.com](http://www.circmanagement.com)/Nick Collins).



Figures 25 & 26 An office in No. 24 as restored and altered in the late 1990s, and in 2020. The slender square-section columns were probably introduced in the 1990s, although conceivably they date from c1935, when Lander, Bedells and Crompton made alterations to the building. ([www.circmanagement.com/Nick Collins](http://www.circmanagement.com/Nick%20Collins)).

- 3.20 Nearby Context
- 3.21 To the east and south the context of the buildings is dominated by Sir Denys Lasdun's Institute of Education building – built between 1970-76 and extended in 1990-93.
- 3.22 Built with in-situ reinforced concrete and precast mullions with a cladding of prefabricated bronze-anodised aluminium panels and window sections, the elevational treatment is in Lasdun's mature language of strata and towers, a grid of aluminium panels and glazing set over a concrete plinth on the western elevation, with massively over-scaled concrete staircase towers.





Figure 27: Institute of Education, Bedford Way 2021

- 3.23 On the eastern elevation to Bedford Way, the entrance floors are set back behind exposed frame, and has cut-back corners which demonstrate the smooth sharp concrete particularly forcefully.
- 3.24 The quality of finishes is recognised as being exceptional, and the contrasting texture of materials unique in Lasdun's surviving work.
- 3.25 The single spur that was built – directly behind the site - is highly sculptural, with a striking silhouette of angular concrete escape stairs rising above the floor levels and curtain walling.

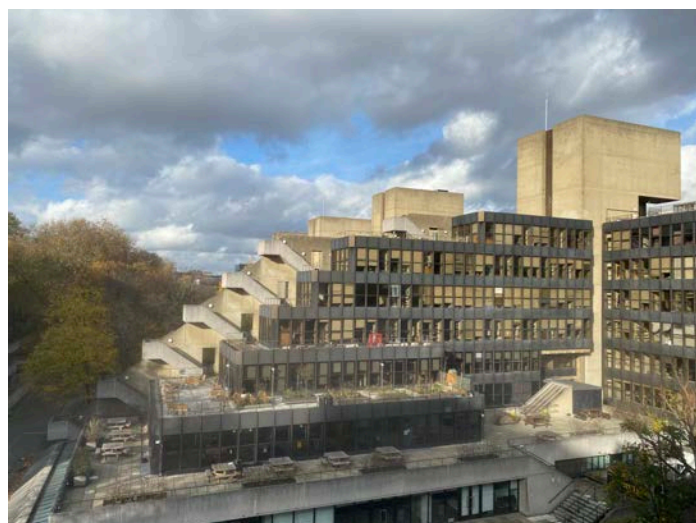


Figure 28: the single spur from 21-24 Russell Square

- 3.26 Opposite to the east (on Thornhaugh Street) the library for the School of Oriental and African Studies – also by Lasdun and completed in 1973. As well as its own architectural significance, it also forms a group with the Grade II listed Holden Building it was built to serve, the Grade II late-18<sup>th</sup> century terraces of Woburn Square and Lasdun's own Grade II\* Institute of Education, the striking massing and materials of which it emulates.
- 3.27 Nos. 25-29 Russell Square form part of the set piece of Russell Square, in a similar way to Nos. 21-24, and are a terrace of 5 houses built c. 1814 by James Burton.



## 4 The heritage significance of the site and its context

- 4.1 This section of the report describes the heritage significance of 21-24 Russell Square and their surroundings.

The heritage context of 21-24 Russell Square

- 4.2 52-53 Russell Square were listed Grade II in May 1974 as well as their attached railings. The list description is contained in Appendix A. The listed buildings are located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area on the southern side of Russell Square. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was first designated in 1984 and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy was adopted in April 2011. Russell Square is within Sub Area 6 – which notably excludes the Institute of Education building to the north.

- 4.3 In the vicinity of 21-24 Russell Square are a number of other listed buildings, including Grade II listed 25-29 Russell Square; Grade II\* listed Institute of Education and Grade II\* Library to the SOAS. Russell Square Garden is a Grade II Registered Park & Garden. The Cabman's Shelter in front of the buildings is listed Grade II, as is the nearby K6 telephone kiosk.

*Unlisted buildings of merit*

- 4.4 The conservation area appraisal for the Bloomsbury Conservation Area identifies a number of buildings in the vicinity as being 'positive contributors' to the conservation area, the mature trees within the central open space, granite kerbs, coal holes, York stone paving on Thornough Street are also noted as being 'Elements of Streetscape Interest'.

The heritage significance of the site and its context

*The relevant heritage assets*

- 4.5 In terms of the assessment of the proposals for 21-24 Russell Square, the heritage assets within Camden most relevant to considering the effect of the scheme are the listed buildings themselves, nearby listed buildings, and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 4.6 The effect of the proposed scheme on these assets will be first and foremost on the special architectural and historic interest of 21-24 Russell Square and their setting, and then secondly on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of other listed buildings.

*Assessing heritage significance*

- 4.7 21-24 Russell Square, the listed buildings in the vicinity and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and are 'designated heritage assets', as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF). Other buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the conservation area - such as unlisted buildings of merit - can be considered as 'non-designated heritage assets'.
- 4.8 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic'. The Historic England 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' puts it slightly differently – as 'the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest'.
- 4.9 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (Historic England, April 2008) describes a number of 'heritage values' that may be present in a 'significant place'. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.
- 4.10 Historical value is described as being illustrative or associative. 'Conservation Principles' says that:

*Illustration depends on visibility in a way that evidential value (for example, of buried remains) does not. Places with illustrative value will normally also have evidential value, but it may be of a different order of importance... The illustrative value of places tends to be greater if they incorporate the first, or only surviving, example of an innovation of consequence, whether related to design, technology or social organisation.*

*'Historic interest', 'Historical value' and 'Evidential value'*

- 4.11 21-24 Russell Square, the listed and unlisted buildings nearby, and their relationship to one another and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area collectively illustrate the development of this part of London. They tell us about the nature of the expansion of London in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the suburbanisation of previously open land by means of estate development to the west of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century development around Covent Garden, the nature of society at the time and the market for such residential development, and about how the housing built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was adapted and changed to suit occupation in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. They tell us also about

social and commercial transformations during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and about the dynamics of post-war change and its effect on older buildings. The area and its buildings are a record of social and economic change and lifestyles in various periods, and illustrate the effect these things had on the historic building stock and urban grain – physically this change brought about by fashion is best illustrated externally through the ‘terracottification’ of the exterior by Pilditch in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- 4.12 The much-varied uses of the buildings, particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is also an important element of their historical significance -from the occupation by publishers Faber of 23-24 Russell Square, and the British Dental Association in the adjacent building, to their current educational uses. The last residential occupation ended towards the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are a number of blue plaques of the buildings that record some of the historic associations with the buildings – perhaps most notably TS Eliot who was a writer, publisher and director of Faber & Faber and had an office on No.24 Russell Square.
- 4.13 In terms of Historic England’s ‘Conservation Principles’ the listed buildings and conservation area provide us with ‘evidence about past human activity’ and, by means of their fabric, design and appearance, communicate information about its past. Subsequent alteration, demolition and redevelopment has not entirely removed the ability of the older townscape and intact historic buildings to do this; the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and its listed buildings clearly retains sufficient historic character and appearance to convey the area’s historical ethos. Despite the many changes that are described earlier in this report, 21-24 Russell Square, externally and internally, retain their ability to convey their historical value and particularly their contribution to the overall status of Russell Square.
- ‘Architectural interest’, ‘artistic interest’ or ‘aesthetic value’*
- 4.14 It is clear that the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and 21-24 Russell Square referred to above have ‘architectural’ and ‘artistic interest’ (NPPF) or ‘aesthetic value’ (‘Conservation Principles’). In respect of design, ‘Conservation Principles’ says that ‘design value... embraces composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) and usually materials or planting, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship’.

- 4.15 The part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in the vicinity of 21-24 Russell Square possesses these heritage values to a considerable degree. The contributing elements of the aesthetic significance of the area as a piece of historic townscape are the nature of older (listed and unlisted) structures and their contribution to the historic streetscape, including Russell Square Gardens, and that streetscape itself.
- 4.16 The special architectural and historic interest of 21-24 Russell Square as listed buildings lies principally in their Georgian architectural style as updated and 'smartened up' in the 1890s with the addition of the terracotta ornaments and fancy ironwork, as well as new windows on the front elevations.
- 4.17 Externally, the elevation facing Russell Square remains largely unaltered from this period other than variation in window detail, however the loss of the eastern end of the terrace has left them looking and feeling 'unbalanced' in the wider form townscape and Square. To the rear there has been considerable alteration not least to the main rear elevations but also the former print works behind Nos. 22-24.
- 4.18 The loss of the majority of the rear gardens and subsidiary structures took place during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the construction of the large garage that stretched the length of Nos. 21-24 – as shown in Figure 16. This has subsequently been replaced with part of the Institute of Education.
- 4.19 Internally, whilst there is some vestige of plan form remaining, the reality is that very little 'original' historic detailing remains in the buildings. The majority have been refurbished and altered with changing styles, changing uses and also through structural requirements. This also included the insertion of lifts, reconfiguration of floor plans and interconnection between buildings.
- 4.20 The main staircases remain in each of the buildings, although, again, most have had their balustrades changed with changing fashions.
- 4.21 Major floor strengthening works resulted in the insertion of additional joists and columns to ensure the stability of the properties – which is particularly apparent in No.21 Russell Square.
- 4.22 Floor plans provided in the Design & Access Statement show the extent of alteration – and particularly show how the lower ground and ground floors of Nos. 22&23 have been altered for the former print works.

- 4.23 As a consequence the special interest of the interior of the buildings has been considerably reduced.
- 4.24 The listed buildings near 21-24 Russell Square have, by definition, special architectural and historic interest and in respect of proposals on the site of 21-24 Russell Square that might affect their setting, that special interest has to do with their external architectural design, their scale, massing and roof profiles. Their internal special interest would clearly not be affected by adjacent development.
- 4.25 Of most relevance in this respect is the Grade II\* listed Institute of Education which sits behind the site. However, its striking form and 'variance' from the 18<sup>th</sup> century nature of much of the rest of the area means that it is perhaps less sensitive to change in its setting.

#### Summary

- 4.26 21-24 Russell Square have clear historical and evidential value, and this value is expressed in the narrative of the building's history and how it has changed - this is set out earlier.
- 4.27 In terms of architectural or aesthetic value, one of the most important contributions that the buildings make is to the set piece townscape of Russell Square.
- 4.28 The buildings do all retain key elements of the original plan form, including the vestiges of their principle rooms and their main staircases, but this has been much altered over the past century as new uses and occupiers have adapted the buildings, and new trends and fashions have led to differing schemes of refurbishment. The physical impact and effect of the second world war has also had an impact on their structural integrity.

## 5 The policy context

- 5.1 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the built environment.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 5.2 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Section 66(1) of the Act requires decision makers to 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' when determining applications which affect a listed building or its setting. Section 72(1) of the Act requires decision makers with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area to pay 'special attention... to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.3 The revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 19 February 2019.

- 5.4 Chapter 12. of the National Planning Policy Framework deals with design: Achieving well-designed places. It begins

'The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process' (paragraph 124).

- 5.5 Paragraph 127 advises that 'planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 5.6 Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' deals with Heritage Assets describing them as 'an irreplaceable resource' that 'should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.'<sup>31</sup>

#### Proposals affecting heritage assets

- 5.7 Paragraph 189 brings the NPPF in line with statute and case law on listed buildings and conservation areas. It says that:
- 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to 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.'

---

<sup>31</sup> The policies set out in this chapter relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making.



- 5.8 In terms of the local authority, paragraph 190 requires that they 'identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.'
- 5.9 Further, 'Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision (paragraph 191).
- 5.10 Paragraph 192. 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;
  - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
  - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

#### Considering potential impacts

- 5.11 Paragraph 193 advises local planning authorities 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 5.12 Paragraph 194 continues, 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
  - b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and

II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.<sup>32</sup>

- 5.13 In terms of proposed development that will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, paragraph 195 states that ‘local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
  - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
  - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
  - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use’.
- 5.14 It continues ‘where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’ (paragraph 196).
- 5.15 In taking into account the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset the local authority should employ a ‘a balanced judgement’ in regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (paragraph 197).
- 5.16 The NPPF introduces the requirement that ‘Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred (paragraph 198).
- 5.17 Where a heritage asset is to be lost, the developer will be required to ‘record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact,

---

<sup>32</sup> Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible' (paragraph 199).<sup>33</sup>

- 5.18 In terms of enhancing the setting of heritage assets the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. 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. (paragraph 200).

#### Camden Council's Local Development Framework

- 5.19 Camden Council adopted its Local Plan in July 2017. The Plan sets out the Council's planning policies. It replaces Camden's Core Strategy and Development Policies planning documents (adopted in 2010).
- 5.20 Section 7 of the Plan deals with Design and Heritage saying that 'the Council places great importance on preserving the historic environment'.
- 5.21 Policy D1 Design says that:
- 'The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:
  - a. respects local context and character;
  - b. preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with "Policy D2 Heritage";
  - c. is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;
  - d. is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;
  - e. comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;
  - f. integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces, improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;
  - g. is inclusive and accessible for all;

---

<sup>33</sup> Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

- h. promotes health;
- i. is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;
- j. responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;
- k. incorporates high quality landscape design (including public art, where appropriate) and maximises opportunities for greening for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping,
- l. incorporates outdoor amenity space; m. preserves strategic and local views;
- n. for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and
- o. carefully integrates building services equipment. The Council will resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.'

5.22 Policy D1 also addresses Tall Buildings, Public Art and Excellence in Design.

5.23 Policy D2 Heritage deals with Camden's heritage assets. The policy says that:

'The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.'

5.24 In relation to designated heritage assets generally the policy says:

'The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;

- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
  - d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.’
- 5.25 The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm’.
- 5.26 In relation to Conservation Areas the policy says:
  - ‘In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas. The Council will:
    - e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;
    - f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;
    - g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and
    - h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden’s architectural heritage.’
- 5.27 In relation to Listed Buildings the policy says:
  - ‘To preserve or enhance the borough’s listed buildings, the Council will:
    - i. resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;
    - j. 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; and
    - k. resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.’*
- 5.28 In relation to Archaeology:

‘The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.’

- 5.29 In relation to other heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets including those on and off the local list, Registered Parks and Gardens and London Squares the policy states:

‘The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, balancing the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’

- 5.30 Sections 7.42-7.69 discuss the detail of the Council’s approach to implementing Policy D2 under the following headings: Enhancing the historic environment (7.42-7.43); Designated Heritage Assets (7.44-45); Conservation Areas (7.46-7.56); Listed Buildings (7.57-7.62); Archaeology (7.63-7.67); ‘Other’ and Non-designated heritage Assets (7.68-7.69)

## 6 The proposed scheme and its effect

- 6.1 This section of the report briefly describes the proposed scheme and its effect on the heritage significance described earlier. The proposed scheme is described in detail and illustrated in the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by Ellis Williams Architects.

The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance

- 6.2 The proposed scheme is for the refurbishment of the existing buildings to provide classrooms, offices and ancillary accommodation for School use.
- 6.3 The proposals follow the same principles applied to the school's previous two projects – at 43-35 Bedford Square and 52-53 Russell Square. Existing features of note and special interest will be retained in the principal rooms, such as fireplaces, cornices, wall and ceiling mouldings and details and original doors and surrounds where they exist – to ensure that the building's evolved character is retained.
- 6.4 The proposals require the demolition and replacement of the post-war print works/store to the rear of Nos.23&24 Russell Square with a new multi-purpose building that will link to the back of the listed buildings.
- Existing Buildings
- 6.5 At ground and first floor level the proposals seek to preserve the principal rooms to the front, by removing later additions and divisions to reveal their original proportions.
- 6.6 The existing arrangement shows that there is much variety between the division/interconnection between the front and rear rooms on these two levels. Where divisions are proposed they will relate to the historic proportions of the rooms, and where additional division is required to create access this has been designed using a glazed screen - as has been successfully agreed and implemented in the previous buildings for the school and will be entirely reversible in the future.
- 6.7 The removal of masonry walls has been kept to a minimum, but where it is regarded as necessary to provide functional and viable teaching space nibs will be left at either end and a new supporting steel lintel will be introduced to form a bulkhead – allowing the original plan form to be read.
- 6.8 The upper floors have been considerably altered throughout their history, being sub-divided and re-configured for office use.



Also, as to be expected, other than a few remaining fireplaces (which will be retained) they have very little detailing of special interest. No. 24 in particular has been significantly modified to include additional corridors and the lift which rises through the upper floors taking the position of the winder stair that exists in the other houses leading to the top floors.

- 6.9 The opening up of the first floor of No.21 Russell Square will create a single large Staff Room, but it is clear from the extent of structural intervention that little original fabric/structure remains in this location.
- 6.10 The arrangement of subdivision and upper staircases is different in each house, reflecting the layers of change that have occurred over time.
- 6.11 The proposals seek to primarily remove the mostly modern partitions and to open up each front and back room to its maximum original extent. This will allow for the most effective teaching space. Where divisions appear to be original or more historic, nibs and bulkheads will be retained to allow for the reading of historic plan form.
- 6.12 The existing provision of the lift in No.24 is proposed to be kept as it can enable disabled access to the upper floors of the house. To give wheelchair access to each of the four houses, an additional doorway connecting no.22 and 23 is proposed at each level situated at a position sensitive to the position of the existing winder stair and connecting the landing levels between the houses. This will ensure that the connection is discreet and links the circulation space of each building.
- 6.13 On the third floor of No.23 it is proposed to locate a single science laboratory in the front rooms by removing the current subdivisions to form a single -full-width room between the party walls. Above this is a large accessible loft space which can house the ventilation equipment without the need for creating invasive or separate plant rooms – as was successfully agreed and carried out at 52-53 Russell Square. Any extract vents will be located discretely so that they are not visible from Russell Square.
- 6.14 New Building
- 6.15 The footprint of the new building has been designed to sit within the footprint of the existing print workshop. This currently sits behind the rear ‘mews’ to No.24 Russell Square filling the remaining garden space between the back of Nos.23 & 24 and the boundary with the Institute of Education.

- 6.16 The existing structure is utilitarian and functional and of no architectural quality or merit.
- 6.17 The proposed structure will also sit tucked behind the existing rear mews and set back from the rear of Nos. 23 & 24 Russell Square to maintain the space between the rear elevation of the main houses and the mews that has been established already and to preserve the daylight into the rooms to the rear of the existing buildings.
- 6.18 Access to the new building will be through a link using spaces between the main houses and the print workshop which will not alter the historic plan form of the listed buildings.
- 6.19 Access to a roof top external curriculum space will be via a lightweight link from the second floor half-landing and will require the lowering of an existing window to create a door way. Again this will not alter the overall circulation or plan form of the listed building.
- 6.20 The materiality of the proposed new building has been given much consideration with its setting and style recognised as being of a back-site mews building.
- 6.21 The existing buildings are characterised by mostly plain London stock brick with terracotta detailing to the front elevations., but plainer detailing to the side and rear.
- 6.22 The design intent of the new building is to be seen as distinct from the existing buildings, not trying to mimic them in any way but being respectful of the surroundings.
- 6.23 To this end, timber has been chosen to clad the structure following a review of 'softer' materials, that provides a subtle contrast and layering to the building when seen from Thornhaugh Street – emphasising the brick of the original building and contrasting in a subtle and subservient manner.
- 6.24 Views prepared by Ellis Williams show that the proposed structure will sit comfortably, and subserviently behind both the rear mews of No.24 Russell Square and the rest of the listed terrace (figures 20&30 overleaf).
- 6.25 The views also show that in reality the whole context is dwarfed by the monolithic Institute of Education to its east and south.



Figure 29 & 30 CGI views of the proposed new building

- 6.26 The presence of Lasdun's Grade II\* listed building in all of the views of the back of Nos.21-24 Russell Square so fundamentally changes the uniformity of 'Georgian Bloomsbury' in terms of scale materials and form, that it makes the insertion of the new building in complimentary but not identical materials to the host building feel all the more appropriate.

- 6.27 The proposed building also acts to moderate the variance in scale between the surrounding buildings.
  - 6.28 The proposals also include for careful cleaning and repair of the existing facades and roofs and the landscaping of the rear garden and land where No.20 Russell Square once stood. This land is currently abandoned and unkempt.
  - 6.29 Summary
  - 6.30 Overall, the proposed scheme represents a balanced approach to the listed building, taking into account the heritage significance of 21-24 Russell Square and the extent of change that has taken place with the various works to permit suitable educational accommodation for the school. Changes will be made to the listed building to facilitate this, but these are considered to be sensitive, appropriate and, on balance, acceptable.
  - 6.31 The works proposed have been carefully considered to ensure that the most important elements of their significance are retained but also reflects that fact that the buildings have been much-altered throughout their history to accommodate new uses, occupiers and purposes. Evolutionary change has become part of their history, character and significance.
  - 6.32 The buildings have suffered from the harsher treatment of institutional use over the past 70 years and the proposals provide an opportunity to carry out a sensitive refurbishment that, whilst still institutional in purpose, will be implemented in a more sensitive way – reversing some of the negative impact of previous interventions. The proposals are a minimal intervention to allow for the practical and safe use of the building. Where interventions such as the smoke lobbies are required, these have been deemed necessary and their impact has been mitigated through thoughtful design and reversibility
  - 6.33 The proposed new building to the rear replaces an existing utilitarian building of new architectural merit. The new building has been designed to sit comfortably behind the existing rear mews to No.24 in a way that enables an appreciation of rear of the listed terrace but also the much-changed setting of the listed buildings due to the overwhelming presence of Grade II\* Institute of Education. The new extension would not be visible from within Russell Square.
- The effect on the conservation area and other listed buildings*
- 6.34 The effect on the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and on the setting of other listed buildings

will be negligible but positive. The proposed extension has been designed to sit respectfully within its surroundings.

## 7 Compliance with policy and guidance

- 7.1 This report has provided a detailed description and analysis of the significance of 21-24 Russell Square and its heritage context, as required by Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the report also describes how the proposed scheme will affect that heritage significance. The effect is positive, and for that reason, the scheme complies with policy and guidance.

The level of 'harm' caused by the proposed scheme

- 7.2 As outlined in Section 4, the NPPF identifies two levels of potential 'harm' that might be caused to a heritage asset by a development: 'substantial harm...or total loss of significance' or 'less than substantial'. Both levels of harm must be caused to a *designated* heritage asset – in this instance, 21-24 Russell Square, other listed buildings and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and their settings.

- 7.3 The proposed scheme, in our considered view, preserves the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and thus complies with S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It does not lead to 'substantial' harm or any meaningful level of 'less than substantial' harm to the listed buildings, or any other heritage assets.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.4 In respect of Paragraph 192 of the NPPF, the proposed scheme can certainly be described as 'sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'. It secures the 'positive contribution' that 21-24 Russell Square makes to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the setting of other listed buildings, and it preserves the essential elements of its special architectural and historic interest as a listed building.
- 7.5 The proposed scheme complies with Paragraph 195 of the NPPF - it certainly does not lead to 'substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset'. It also complies with Paragraph 196 for the reasons given in detail earlier in this report – the scheme cannot be considered to harm the listed building, but rather alters it in a fashion that gives it a sustainable and active future use. Any 'less than substantial

harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset’ - if any - that can be ascribed to the scheme is outweighed by the benefit of allowing the works to assist in sustaining the life of the listed building. This is a use that will sustain the listed building for the long term and the works are a means of facilitating that use.

7.6 The majority of the interventions proposed are reversible and will have no long term impact on listed building. Nevertheless they have been designed to ensure that the important elements of the remaining heritage significance are still legible and appreciated within the buildings.

7.7 It is our view that none of the individual interventions that make up the overall set of proposals can reasonably be considered to cause harm to the listed building when the cumulative extent and impact of the intervention involved is measured against the overall listed buildings and the relative amount of historic fabric that remains within them. The interventions - individually and taken as a whole – help secure the ‘optimum viable use’ of the listed building. The scheme very definitely strikes the balance suggested by Paragraph 196 of the NPPF – it intervenes in 21-24 Russell Square in a manner commensurate to its significance as a listed building. This balance of intervention versus significance is described in detail earlier.

#### Camden’s Local Development Framework

7.8 In positively addressing the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the works also meet the policy requirements of the London Borough of Camden’s Local Development Framework relevant to the historic built environment.

7.9 In terms of Core Strategy Policy CS14 and its accompanying commentary, and Local Plan Policy DP25, the proposals ‘would not cause harm to the special interest of the building’ or to ‘the setting of a listed building’.

7.10 Equally, the proposals will ‘preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area’.

## 8 Summary and conclusions

- 8.1 Whilst still of great importance, 21-24 Russell Square have seen considerable change – particularly in the last 30 years. This resulted in the considerable re-configuration of the buildings and post-war extension to create the print workshop/store.
- 8.2 As well as much internal decorative and alteration to plan form, the buildings have also had considerable structural intervention – particularly No.21 Russell Square, which will have inevitably led to a loss of historic fabric.
- 8.3 The proposed scheme has been designed to make minimum intervention into the historic buildings whilst providing modern and viable educational accommodation for the future.
- 8.4 The interventions proposed would be made in a sensitive way that ensures the surviving elements of its special architectural and historic interest are protected and enhanced.
- 8.5 The proposed new structure to the rear replaces a building of no architectural merit with one that has been carefully considered to ensure it is both contextual within its wider setting and has a minimal physical impact on the main listed buildings. It sits comfortably to the rear of the listed buildings and in the setting of the surrounding Grade II\* Institute of Education.
- 8.6 The effect of the works on the heritage significance described earlier is therefore positive. The works will preserve and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and its setting – its historic fabric and features are retained, where they remain, and the appearance and layout of the listed building remains legible and appreciable. The proposals will also preserve and enhance the setting of other listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 8.7 For these reasons, the proposed scheme complies with the law, and national and local policy and guidance for listed buildings and conservation areas.



## Appendix A: List description

TQ2982SE RUSSELL SQUARE 798-1/94/1416 (North side) 14/05/74  
Nos.21-24 (Consecutive) and attached railings

GV II

Terrace of 4 houses, formerly a symmetrical terrace similar to Nos 52-60 (qv). One surviving projecting end bay (No.24) and central bay (No.21). c1808. By James Burton, altered c1898 possibly by PE Pilditch. Yellow stock brick with later terracotta dressings. Slate mansard roofs with dormers to Nos 21 and 24. EXTERIOR: 4 storeys, attics and basements. 3 windows each. No.24 with 4-window return, blind except those above portico, to Thornhaugh Street. Round-arched doorways in square-headed terracotta surrounds with fanlights, side-lights and panelled doors, except No.24 with prostyle, rusticated stucco portico with balustrade. Recessed, architraved sash windows; 1st floor, some casements, with cornices and centre windows on projecting bays pedimented. Continuous cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Cornice at 3rd floor level, projecting bays with enriched frieze. Parapets; Nos 22 and 23 with balustraded parapet. Centre dormer to No.24 with terracotta pediment; No.21 with pedimented dormers, the central one semicircular. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached mid C19 cast-iron railings to areas. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.21 was the home of Sir Samuel Romilly, law reformer (plaque). The Duke of Bedford was inspired to add terracotta dressings to these houses following the building of The Russell Hotel (qv).

Listing NGR: TQ2997882025

# KMHeritage

72 Pymer's Mead

London SE21 8NJ

T: 020 8670 9057

F: 0871 750 3557

[mail@kmheritage.com](mailto:mail@kmheritage.com)

[www.kmheritage.com](http://www.kmheritage.com)

© 2021