

22nd July 2021

HERITAGE STATEMENT: 85 GRAYS INN ROAD, CAMDEN

Savills Heritage and Townscape has been commissioned by Clearbell Capital (hereafter 'the client') to provide a Heritage Statement to accompany a planning application for the refurbishment of 85 Grays Inn Road, London, WC1X 8TX (hereafter 'the Site'). This report will provide a brief overview of the historic background of the Site; it will also assess the significance of relevant heritage assets and potential impacts of the proposals upon these assets, in line with policy and guidance as set out in the NPPF.

The Site is located within the London Borough of Camden, on the eastern side of Grays Inn Road at its junction with Roger Street. 85 Grays Inn Road is not statutorily or locally designated as a heritage asset, but it does lie at the eastern edge of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is in the vicinity of the Grade II listed Nos. 75-81 Grays Inn Road. The Site also lies within the Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Area: London Suburbs; this not will form part of this assessment however, as the proposals are limited to alterations to the existing building. As such the scope of this assessment will be the potential impact of the proposals on the significance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and Nos. 75-81 Grays Inn Road, by way of a change in their setting. This will be informed by a brief overview of the Site's historic background and the significance of these relevant heritage assets as below.

Historic background:

During the late Medieval period, as can be seen on reconstructed mapping of London (c. 1270-1300), the land upon which 85 Grays Inn Road currently sits was defined only by 'Purtepolestrate', one of the roads leading north of the Medieval city, with Grays Inn later established to the south in the fourteenth century. The entirety of the land surrounding the site at this time was pasture, often referred to as 'waste' as it was typically negated. The name 'Purtepolsetrate' is closely associated with the manor of Portpool, the late Medieval landowners. Reconstructed mapping of Tudor London (c. 1520) shows that the context at the site remained static, with little to no development along the roadside, although it was by this time known as 'Greysynne Lane'; with Grays Inn now constituting a well-established set of buildings, including a small chapel, south of the present day site location (**Figure 1**). The Agas Map of London (1562), made only forty years later, shows continual built development at the foot of Grays Inn Lane centring around the Inn itself, whereas the site location appears to have constituted open pasture interspersed with small lanes and roads (**Figure 2**).

The context of the built environment at the site, as seen on Moore's 1662 map of London, as well as the William Morgan map of 1682, remained largely the same during the seventeenth century, with the site location situated marginally outside the expanding city. However, the William Morgan map of London does illustrate in closer detail, showing a number of buildings lining the east of the street (**Figure 3**). The first period of tangible development at the site location is shown on the John Rocque map of London (c.1746) and illustrates a cluster of buildings as well as similar clusters to the north and south. The site appears to have constituted a stable yard at this time, likely to have served an inn complex to the south. Furthermore, this group of buildings appears to have fronted a large orchard and gardens situated to the west (**Figure 4**). By 1799 however, as suburban London continued to expand, the composition of the built environment at the site appeared to have changed dramatically, with the location now almost entirely typified by groups of terraced houses (**Figure 5**).

The Greenwood map of 1828 shows this pattern of development to have progressed significantly, with the site now firmly integrated into the expanding city, showing large numbers of terraced housing spreading to the north (**Figure 6**). Between 1870 and 1930, the aforementioned residential land use characterised the site location, which remained hosting a number of terraced houses (**Figure 7**). However this group of buildings sustained significant bomb damage during the Second World War and Ordnance Survey mapping dating to 1950 shows these as having been largely demolished, with the only remaining building being No. 87 Grays Inn Road (**Figure 8**). By 1960, No. 87 had been removed entirely and substituted with a 83-88 Grays Inn Road, which is labelled on Ordnance Survey mapping between 1960 and 1980 as forming part of a garage (**Figure 9**). The building which currently occupies the site was constructed in 1992, subsequently replacing this later building.

Significance of relevant heritage assets:

Assessment of the significance of relevant heritage assets is included below; the scope and detail of this assessment is considered to be proportionate to the limited nature of the proposals and their potential impact on relevant heritage assets.

The Grade II listed terrace at Nos. 75-81 Grays Inn Road dates to c. 1791 and is comprised of four houses, which are three storeys in height plus basements and slate mansard roofs. All four are in yellow stock brick and are almost identical architecturally, including features such as arched doorways with patterned fanlights and a stuccoed first floor sill band. The first floor windows are the focal point architecturally, featuring recessed sash windows with decorative brick headers, set within gauged brick arches. No. 81 differs from its counterparts due to the conversion of the ground floor into a pharmacy, with the original architectural features of this corner unit having been lost through its transformation into a shopfront during the 20th century. Whilst this terrace also demonstrates a pattern of historic residential development in this area during the late 18th century, it is considered that its heritage significance is primarily derived from the **architectural interest** of its facades, and the contribution these make to the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area itself is primarily designated due to the way in which it illustrates the historical development of this part of London throughout the 17th-19th centuries and the noteworthy act of town planning this involved, which can still be appreciated through many of the original street layouts. The area is characterised by a mixture of interrelated street grids and landscaped squares, with residential and institutional uses originally dominating the built form here. This is less apparent in the vicinity of the Site, being at the edge of the conservation area, but the characteristic combination of brick townhouses and mews is appreciable here, as demonstrated by Brownlow Mews to the west of the site and the listed Nos. 75-81 Grays Inn Road described above.

Though there is a mix of architectural styles to be found throughout the conservation area due to the period over which it developed, these are predominantly classically derived and provide a varied yet cohesive architectural character to the conservation area. Larger scale office buildings developed in the 20th century can also be found along the arterial routes within the conservation area, as demonstrated on the eastern side of Grays Inn Road in the vicinity of the site, just outside the conservation area. Overall the heritage significance of the Bloomsbury Conservation is considered to be derived equally from both its **architectural and historic interest**.

Assessment of potential impacts:

The proposals for No. 85 Grays Inn Road comprise internal and external works to convert the adapt the current building for laboratory use and provide a roof terrace, as well as a number of other reconfigurations, for use by the building's future occupants. Full details of these works can be found in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and Schedule of Works. An overview of the proposals is included below:

- Reconfiguration and augmentation of existing roof space to provide:
 - a. A new roof terrace;
 - b. fire escape walkway;
 - c. reconfiguration of existing plant enclosure, to be set back from the main façade and encased within acoustic louvres;
 - d. future tenant plant space within the new enclosure;
 - e. reconfiguration and subdivision of existing lift space to allow access to plant enclosure, service riser and storage spaces, while retaining circulation space between the east stair core and fire escape walkway;
 - f. a new LV switch room;
 - g. extension of east stair core;
 - h. minor reconfigurations to access points within the west stair-core.
- Infill rear courtyard above ground level to provide:
 - a. First floor: Plant Room
 - b. Second, third and fourth floors: Additional tenant space; plant room heating and cooling
- Overall rejuvenation of existing building
- Internal reconfigurations to tenant space

These works represent an effort to reconfigure, refurbish and extend the current building, with the overall purpose being to appropriately adapt it. The design of the new plant enclosure is indicative of a proactive effort to reduce any adverse effect upon the historic environment surrounding the building, by both recessing and concealing the new plant through the design of the rooftop and louvres. This equally applies to the new roof terrace in relation to the Grade II listed buildings to the south, as it will occupy a position setback from the street on the eastern façade of the building, utilising the existing roof space and will not be visually intrusive. Furthermore the proposed plant enclosure, with the exception of the raised flue, is of a similar scale to the existing rooftop arrangement and therefore any change to the wider setting will be reduced. At street level any changes to the building are minimal and chiefly relate to the addition of a new canopy, signage and minor amendments to the main entrance, all of which would have no detrimental effect upon the conservation area or listed terraces to the south.

In terms of the heightening of the east stair core, this is a contextually appropriate approach in relation to the identified heritage assets. Any change to the setting is mitigated by this extension occupying a setback position, located to the east of the building and of a similar height to the existing roof features. In relation to the proposed infill above ground floor level, this will be of equal proportion to the existing roof height and, owing to its containment within the site boundaries, will have no material impact upon the historic built environment of the surrounding area. Furthermore, the orientation of the infilled section of the building means that it will be largely concealed at street level and therefore any impact upon the identified heritage assets is mitigated.

The proposed changes to 85 Grays Inn Road overall constitute a number of alterations as well as additions to the interior and exterior of the building, most notably in relation to the reconfiguration of the rooftop area and the addition of the terrace, flue extension and east stair-core extension. Regarding these changes and any effect upon the identified heritage assets, namely the Grade II listed terraces at Nos. 75-81 Grays Inn Road and the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area, the proposed works will have a **minor and neutral impact**, as they are not considered to affect these heritage assets – their architectural and historic legibility – within their setting. As such it is not considered that any of the proposed works to 85 Grays Inn Road would cause any harm to the overall significance of the Grade II listed terraces or wider setting of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Conclusion:

It is the conclusion of this Heritage Statement that the proposals will cause **no harm** to the significance of either the Bloomsbury Conservation Area or the Grade II listed Nos. 75-81 Grays Inn Road by way of a change in their setting, and will preserve the character and appearance of both designated heritage assets. This is due to the proposals being both limited to site of the building itself, as well as contextually non-intrusive in relation to the Grade II listed terraces and Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The changes to the current configuration of the rooftop will not result in any detrimental conflict in scale, or affect the architectural and historic legibility of, the Grade II listed terraces, factoring in their current streetscape arrangement in relation to the building. Any potential adverse effect impact upon the conservation area is furthermore mitigated by the peripheral position of 85 Grays Inn Road within its current

boundaries. As a further consideration, the historic-architectural character of the setting has also already been somewhat eroded by later developments and as such it is considered that this further mitigates any adverse effect posed by the proposed changes.

This Heritage Statement is in accordance with Historic England Guidance, meets the requirements of the NPPF and provides sufficient information in regards to the heritage considerations relating to the proposals, as currently known.

References:

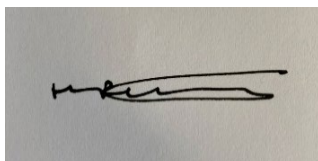
- *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy*, London Borough of Camden (April 2011)
- *London Borough of Camden: Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal*, Historic England (October 2018)
- National Heritage List for England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>
- Layers of London: <https://www.layersoflondon.org/map>
- London Picture Archive: <https://www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk/>

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Figure 1: Reconstructed map of Tudor London with approximate site location (red).



Figure 2: Agas map of London (1562) with approximate site location (red).



Figure 3: William Morgan's map of London (1682) with approximate site location (red).

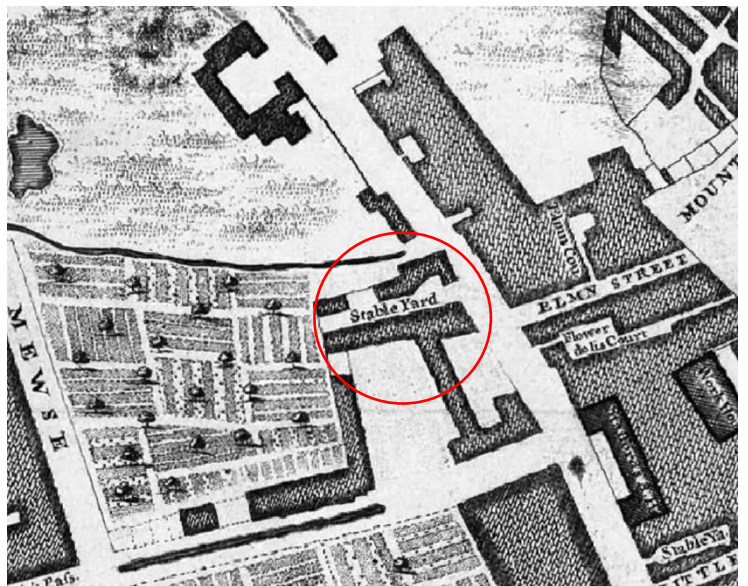


Figure 4: John Rocque's map of London (1746) with approximate site location (red).



Figure 5: Horwood's map of London (1799) with approximate site location (red).

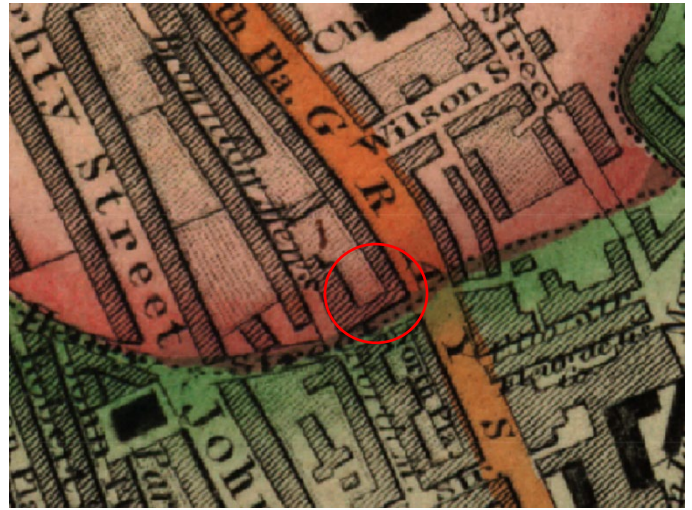


Figure 6: Greenwood's map of London (1828) with approximate site location (red).



Figure 7: Ordnance Survey mapping (1950) with site location (red).

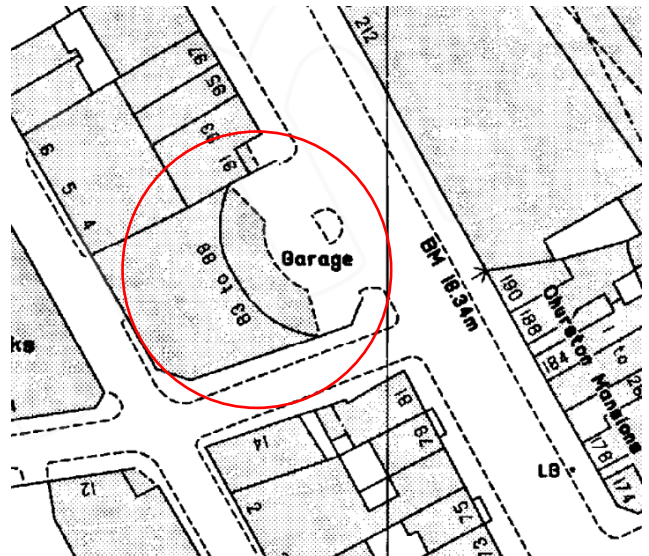


Figure 8: Ordnance Survey mapping (1950) with site location (red).