

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

**26A ARGYLE SQUARE
LONDON WC1H 8AP**

- **Internal alterations to create a conversion of the existing building of 2 no. residential units (1 x 2 bed, 1 x 3 bed) to 4 no. residential units (1 x 1 bed, 1 x 2 bed, 2 x Studio).**
- **Small rear lightwell infill extension at ground and first floors.**

PLANNING APPLICATION

JOB NO: 4258/26A/PL

AUGUST 2021

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This design, access and heritage statement explains the thinking behind the proposed alterations to the existing building at no.26A Argyle Square. The alterations proposed are to alter the arrangement of the residential units in to smaller units that are more suitable to the location. The alterations are all internal and will not affect the external appearance of the building.

2.0 Existing Building & Site

- 2.1 No.26A Argyle Square is a five storey (including lower ground floor) Georgian townhouse building located on the corner of Argyle Square and Loxham Street.
- 2.2 26A Argyle Square was renovated and refurbished to create two residential units under 2014 planning consent references 2014/2594/P and 2014/2769/L.
- 2.3 The building is Grade II listed and is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 2.4 The 2 residential units are accessed via a common ground floor entrance from the flank elevation on Loxham Street.
- 2.5 Flat 1 is a 2 bed maisonette with the living spaces and WC on the ground floor and the bedrooms and en-suites on the lower ground floor. The flat is lit via windows on the Loxham Street and Argyle Walk elevations. The flat can be entered via the lower ground floor lightwell as well as the ground floor main entrance. The internal staircase between lower ground and ground floors is non-original and was added as part of the 2014 consent.
- 2.6 Flat 2 is a 3 bed maisonette with the living spaces and WC on the first floor, the master bedroom suite on the second floor and the second and third bedrooms and en-suites on the third floor. The flat is lit via windows on the Argyle Square, Loxham Street and rear elevations.
- 2.7 The building is a typical Georgian London stock brick townhouse in the two window wide rhythm of the other listed buildings on Argyle Square. The windows are painted timber sashes with moulded architraves on the first floor, and with gauged brick flat arches on the second and third floors. The building entrance is via a painted rendered portico constructed as part of the 2014 consent. New sash windows to the flank, Loxham Street elevation were part of this consent but have not been installed.

3.0 Heritage

3.1 No.26A Argyle Square is a five storey (including lower ground floor) Grade II listed Georgian townhouse building located on the corner of Argyle Square and Loxham Street.

3.2 The listing entry for nos. 26-35 Argyle Square is as follows:

798-1/90/48 ARGYLE SQUARE 14-MAY-1974 (South side) 26-35 Numbers 26-35 and attached railings (Formerly listed as: ARGYLE SQUARE 7-25,26-35 AND 36-47)

II Terrace of 10 houses, forming the south side of Argyle Square. c1840-49, with some alterations. Yellow stock brick with later patching. Nos 29, 31 and 32 have painted ground floors. Each house is of 2-bays, and 4-storeys plus basement, with a raised parapet. The ground floor doors and windows are round-headed and have moulded architraves. Nos 26 and 35, have flat arch ground floor windows. The ground to second floor windows are six-over-six pane sashes, the third floor windows three-over-three pane. The first floor windows have moulded architraves, whilst the second and third floor windows are recessed with gauged brick flat arches. The first floor windows have a cast-iron balcony, missing on No 35, a continuous sill band runs beneath these. The doorways, where unaltered, have pilaster-jambos carrying cornice-heads, with fanlights and panelled doors. The entrance to No 26 is on the left hand return. There are attached cast-iron railings with bud finials to some of the areas. The 1960s extension to the rear of Nos 26 and 27 is not of special interest.

INTERIORS: These have not been inspected.

HISTORY: A church once stood to the east of this terrace, with another terrace (probably also of the 1840s) continuing to the east along what was previously called Manchester Street. The church and section of terrace were damaged in WWII, and a council estate now stands in their place. Nos 7-25 and 26-35 are the western continuation of the terrace (c1840-1849), and are also listed Grade II. No 26 housed St Pancras Conservative club from the early C20 until 2002, with 27 providing staff accommodation.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANCE: Nos 26-35 (consecutive) Argyle Square, are of special interest as part of the remaining 1840s terrace which forms the south side of Argyle Square. Terraces of the same date also survive to the west and east.

3.3 The building is on the edge of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The CA is characterized by four-storey Georgian townhouses, many of which were converted to hotel use in the 20th Century. No.26 Argyle Square is attached to no.26A but is not an original building part of the Georgian townhouse group on Argyle Square being a 1960s extension to the rear of no.26A. To the immediate east and south of the building are groups of postwar housing blocks up to nine-storeys high.

3.4 The documents included within the 2014 planning and listed building consents note that the building has been amended internally over many years and had shown signs of multi residential occupancy. The statements also noted that the buildings retained little of its historic fabric with the exception of the main stair. Internal walls and floors/ceilings have been altered over the years, and there were no original chimney breasts, dados, picture rails or other historic features remaining in the interior of the building. Lightwells to the rear have also been altered and filled in in various iterations over the years, and ceilings and walls removed to suit various users and uses.

- 3.5 As noted above a number of alterations to the building were carried out as part of the 2014 consent, including the current arrangement of residential units, the internal staircase between lower ground and ground floors and the building entrance portico on the Loxham Street elevation.

4.0 Proposals

- 4.1 As noted above the owner of 26A Argyle Square has had difficulties in letting the existing flats in their current arrangement since there is little demand for units of their size in this area, and considers that there is a higher demand for smaller units in this location.
- 4.2 The application proposals are in summary as follows:
- Internal alterations to the existing building to create a conversion from 2 no. residential units (1 x 2 bed, 1 x 3 bed) to 4 no. residential units (1 x 1 bed, 1 x 2 bed, 2 x studio).
 - Small rear lightwell infill extension at ground and first floor levels.
 - No external alterations are proposed to the principal elevations on Argyle Square or Loxham Street.
- 4.3 No changes are proposed to the current function, special interest or setting of the listed building. No changes are proposed to the existing principal entrance from Loxham Street or to the existing staircase between ground and third floors.
- 4.4 It is proposed to remove the non-original staircase between the lower ground and ground floors. It is proposed to retain the original main staircase and to carry out limited alterations to the internal partition layouts for a more sustainable arrangement of residential units as follows:
- 4.5 Flat 1 will be a 1 bed, 2 person flat (56sq.m) at lower ground floor level accessed via the existing lightwell. The flat will be lit via the existing windows on the Loxham Street and Argyle Square elevations.
- 4.6 Flat 2 will be a studio flat (39sq.m) on the ground floor lit via the existing windows on the Argyle Square elevation. A rear infill extension aligned with the existing adjacent rear projection on the Loxham Street elevation is proposed to contain the bathroom for the flat.
- 4.7 Flat 3 will be a studio flat (37sq.m) on the first floor lit via the existing windows on the Argyle Square elevation. A rear infill extension above the equivalent projection described for Flat 2 and aligned with the existing adjacent rear projection on the Loxham Street elevation is proposed to contain the shower room for the flat.
- 4.8 Flat 4 will be a 2 bed, 3 person maisonette flat (75sq.m) on the second and third floors lit via the existing windows on the Argyle Square and rear elevations. The living spaces and shower room will be on the second floor and the bedrooms and en-suite on the third floor.
- 4.9 As noted in the Heritage statement above, the existing building does not contain any original features or detailing apart from the main staircase which will be retained within the proposals.

- 4.10 The proposed rear infill lightwell extension at ground and first floors will be finished in brickwork to match the existing, with a brick on edge parapet and asphalt flat roof to match the existing equivalent projections on the adjoining rear elevations.
- 4.10 All of the proposed flats meet the technical area standards of the London Plan and are dual aspect.
- 4.11 Overall the proposals for the alterations to no.26A Argyle Square represent sensitive modifications to the internal arrangement of the building, none of which will affect original historic fabric or features. The proposed rear infill extension is discretely located and scaled next to similar adjacent projections and will not be visible from the public realm,

The overall function, appearance and legibility of the building will be protected and retained and there will not be any harm caused to the listed building or to the character or appearance of the Conservation area.

5.0 Access Statement

No changes are proposed to the existing entrance from Loxham Street or to the existing internal staircases between ground and third floors.