



# Donald Insall Associates

Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

25 John Street, London

Design & Access Statement

July 2021



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## Revision

2021.07.23 - 00 - Issued for Planning and LBC applications

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## 1 Summary of Report

This Design and Access Statement is part of the information provided for the Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent application.

This application is being made for the **change of use** of this terraced house from office back to residential, its original function.

In conjunction with the change of use, minor internal and external alterations are being proposed in order to address the modern redundant additions that were installed to fulfill office purposes, and update the property to the present day standards of living.



25 John Street (at centre) in the early-mid-20th century (Camden Local Studies & Archives)

2 Introduction

Donald Insall Associates were appointed to develop proposals for minor alterations to No.25 John Street, WC1N 2ES, to return it back to residential use. The property is located on the west side of John Street, in the Borough of Camden, London.

The property is listed at Grade II, forming part of a group listing for Nos.22-28 John Street, and is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

A separate Historic Building Report is enclosed within this Planning and LBC applications.

Please see also the Planning Report which makes the case for the change of use from office use back to residential use and includes evidence of marketing.

In line with Camden’s guidance, the property has been actively marketed for sale or rent as offices for 2 years without success. The owners therefore wish to revert back to residential use - the original use of the building. It is noted that other neighbouring buildings in the street have been granted change of use back to residential use.



Street View of John Street (Donald Insall Associates)

25 John Street

John Street

### 3 Historical Summary

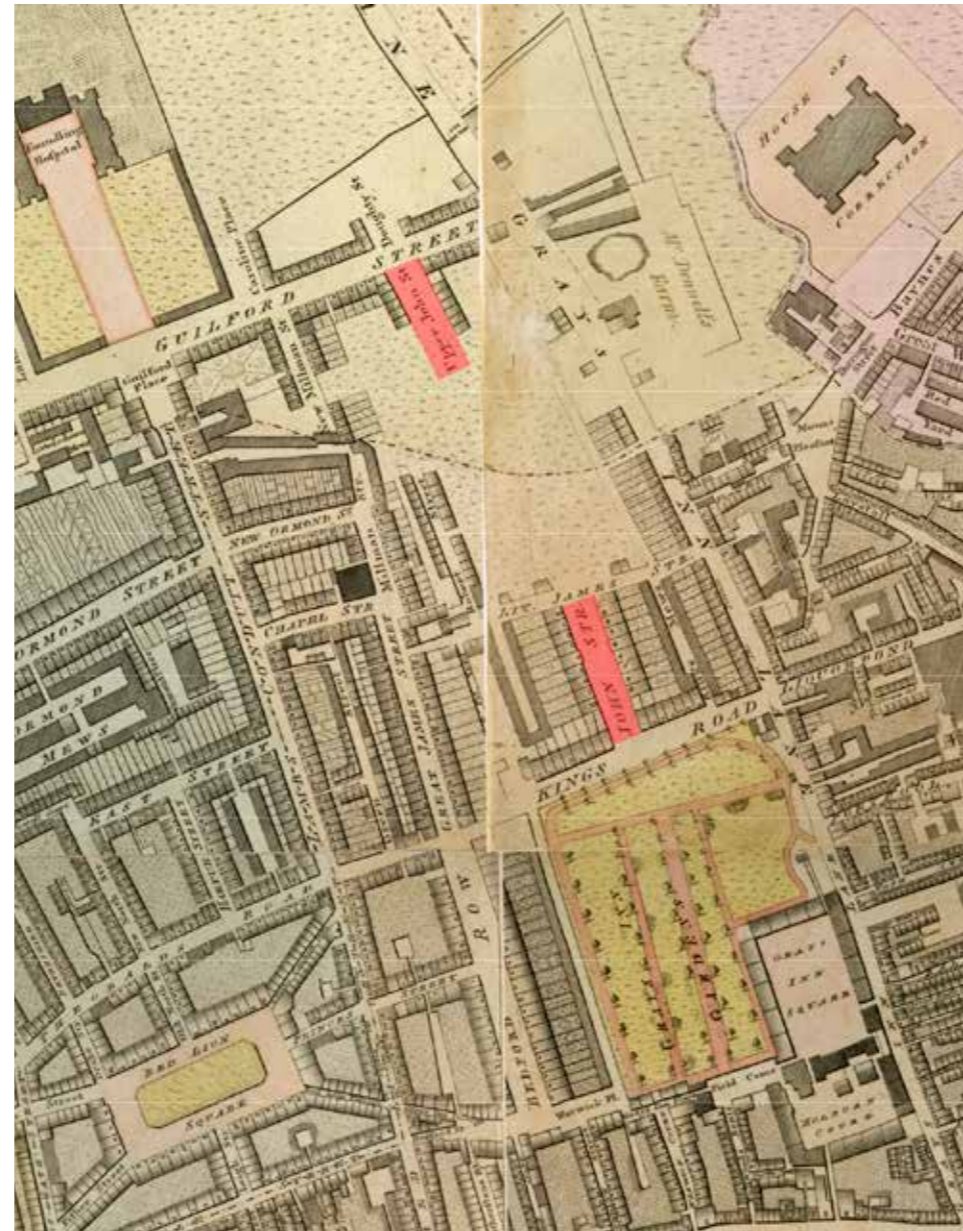
#### 3.1 Area History

More information on the historic background of 25 John Street and surrounding area can be found in the **Heritage Statement**, enclosed within this application.

John Street lies within the Holborn area, which was developed along the 'Houlbourne' (name given to part of the river Fleet), since the middle ages. The area was built following the developments of Covent Garden on one side and Bloomsbury on the other. John Street was laid out from the south as a wide thoroughfare, and built up in 1756-9 by carpenter John Blagrove.

The status and character of the area declined during the 19th century, but the beginning of the 20th century presented substantial improvements of the area from an industrial, commercial and infrastructure point of view.

Holborn suffered extensively during the Second World War; however, it appears that John Street was not substantially affected by bomb damage.



Horwood's Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, 1792-99, John Street marked in red (British Library)



Ordnance Survey map, 1896, site marked in red (National Library of Scotland)

### 3.2 25 John Street

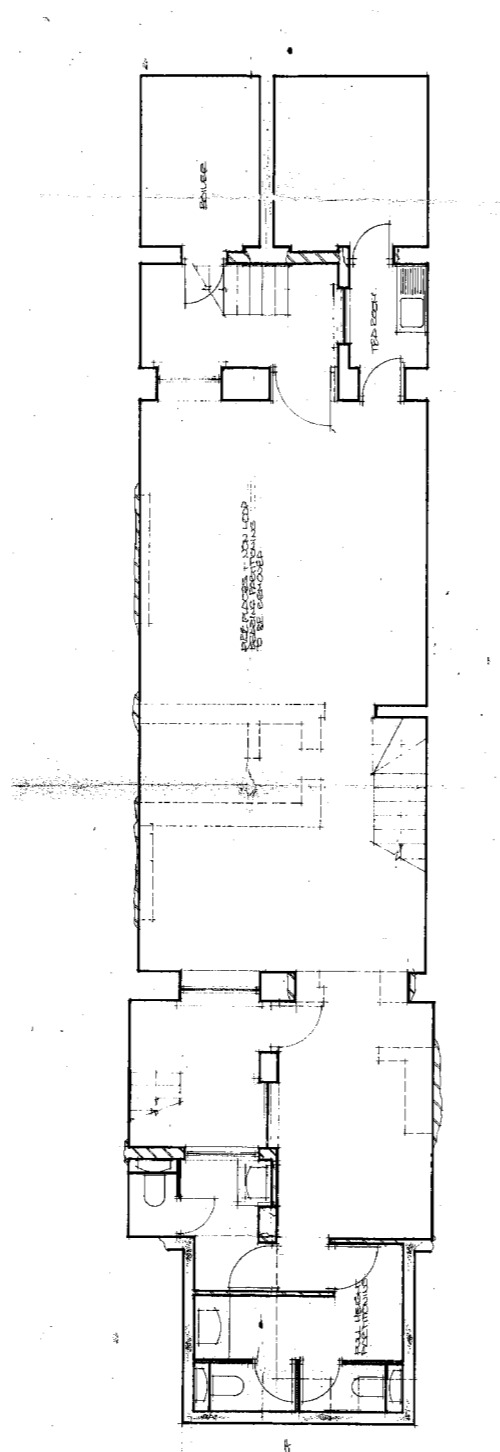
More information on the historic background of 25 John Street and surrounding area can be found in the **Heritage Statement**, enclosed within this application.

According to map evidence, 25 John Street was built between 1800 and 1819 as part of a range of terraced houses along the street's west side. There are no original palm records for the building, though lease records from Camden Local Studies and Archives show that 25 John Street was subdivided and let as offices (possibly with a mix of flats) most likely from 1888, or from 1898 at the latest.

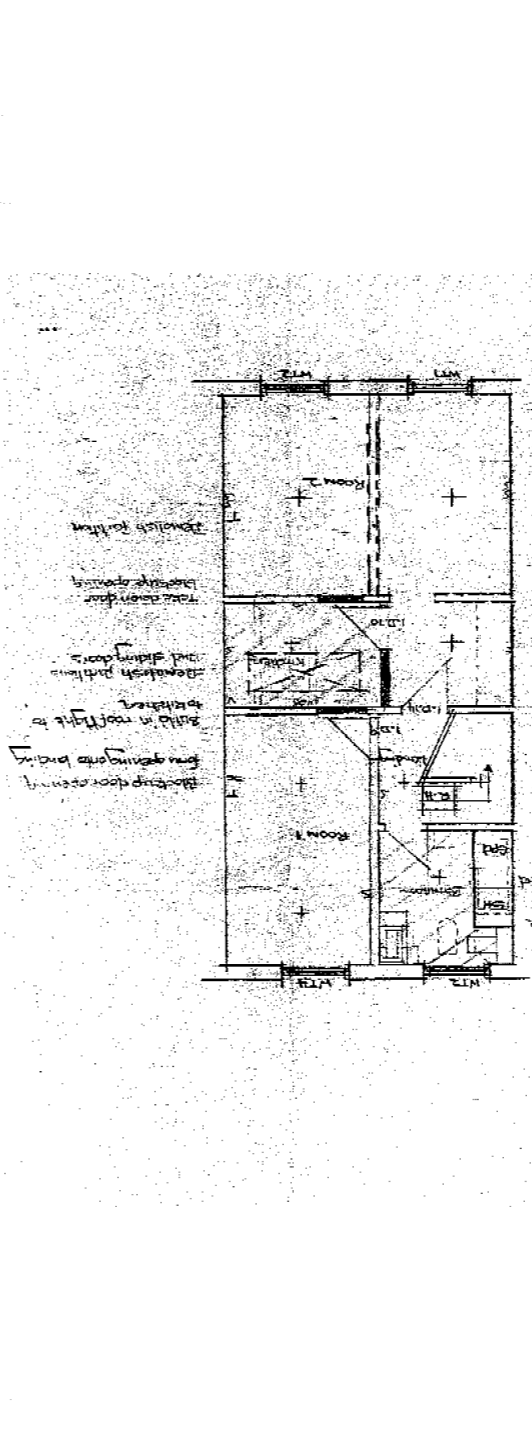
The Ordnance Survey map of 1894-96 illustrates the footprint of the main house and mews at the end of the 19th century, with a long rear closet wing already built along the south wall of the plot. The 1953 Ordnance map shows that the building mostly retained the footprint of that shown in 1915. The earliest available floor plans date from the early/ mid 1970s, and show that the house was in mixed office and residential use at this time.

The Basement, Ground Floor and First Floors were in use as offices in 1975, whereas the Second and Third floor were comprised of a single residential unit. On the Third floor, a small kitchen was located at the centre of the floorplan, with evidence of a rooflight that was to be added here as part of the 1975 proposals.

In 1988, an application was consented to rebuild and enlarge the rear extension, and to add an additional rear conservatory.



1972 Basement Plan (Camden Planning)



1975 Third Floor Plan (Camden Planning)



Rear elevation of 25 John Street, 1975 (London Metropolitan Archives)

## 4 The Existing Property

Access to the property is from John Street, where a few stone steps and landing lead to the front porch and entrance door.

On the Ground Floor, a small lobby and corridor precede the staircase, which retains its historic layout. The Front room and Mid room are part of the original building's footprint and generally retain their historic proportions and joinery, whereas the Back room and Conservatory are part of a later extension. Recent additions, mainly connected to the conversion of the house to office use, such as alarm devices, modern carpet floor, service risers and radiator casings can be found throughout the floor.

The upper floor of the modern rear extension is accessible midway up the stairs, through what was originally a window.

The First Floor also retains the original proportions of the rooms and the historic plan form. However, as on the Ground Floor level, modern additions like service risers, conduits and electric devices have been added over time.

The Second and Third floors follow a similar pattern. Here, only the windows, door architraves and most of the doors appear to be historic. As in the floors below, modern conduits, risers and finishes have been added in recent years.

The Basement floor has been much altered over the years and its historic plan form has been lost. Similar to the Ground Floor, this level has modern office -type suspended ceilings fitted beneath the pre-existing ceiling levels, and modern services - particularly air conditioning and electrical - run above the suspended ceiling within the void.



Basement



Basement front room



Basement middle room



Basement back room

Ground Floor



Ground Floor Stairs



Ground floor mid room

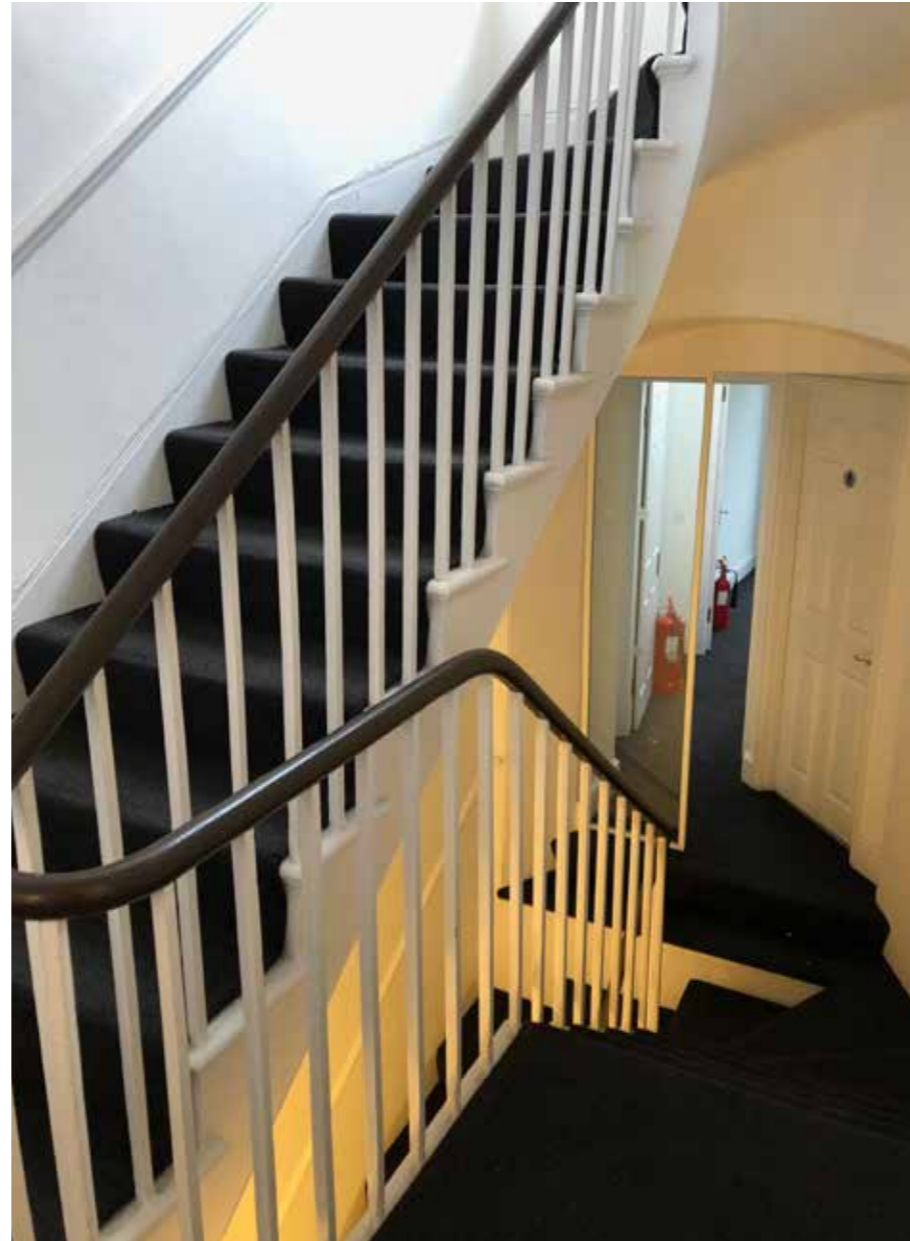


Ground Floor conservatory room

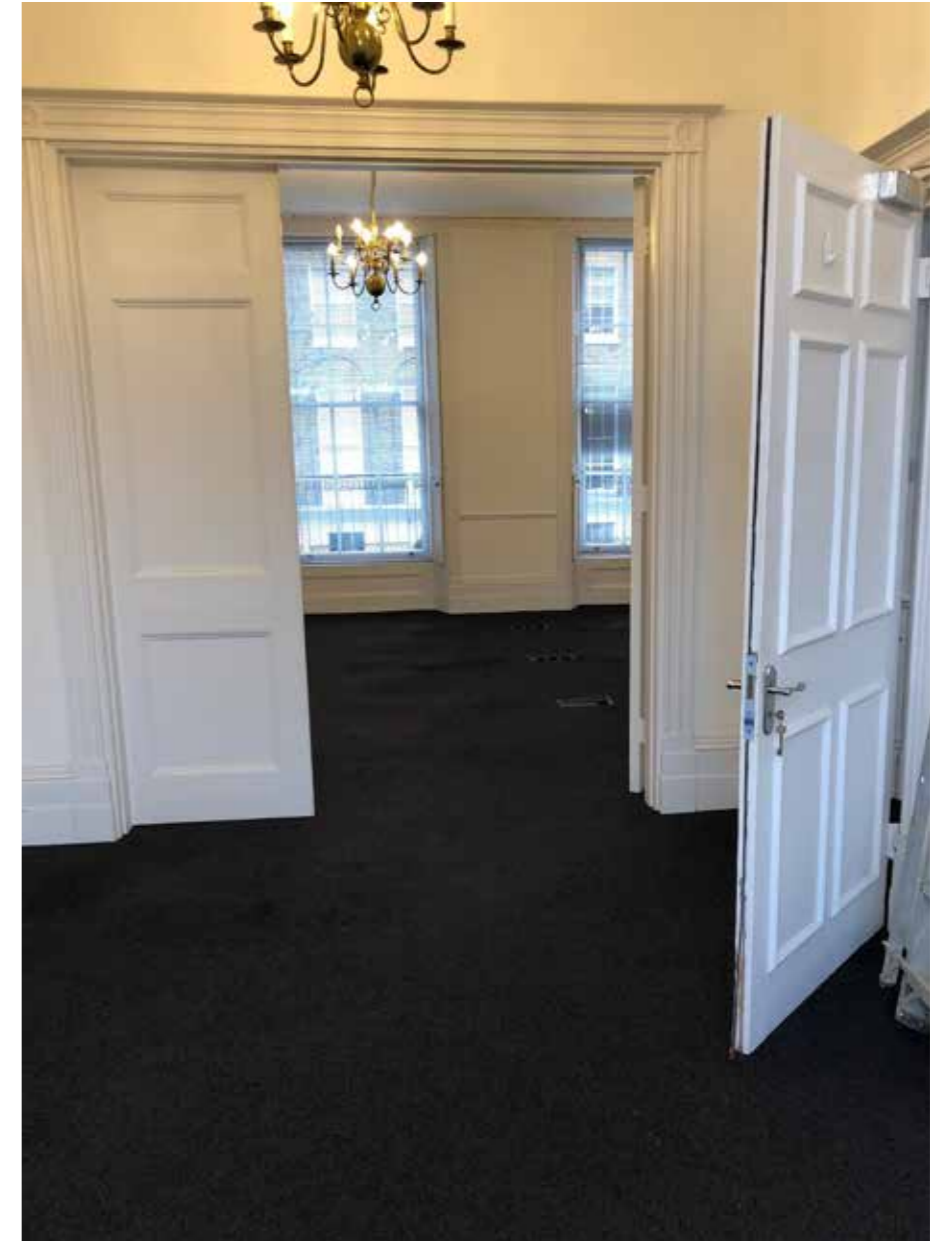
First Floor



First Floor front room



First Floor stairs - looking towards modern extension



First Floor back room - looking towards front room

Second Floor



Second Floor front room



Second Floor to Third Floor stairs

Third Floor



Third Floor front room



Detail of modern boxing and alarm system

## 6 Design Proposals

### 6.1 Generally

In conjunction with the change of use of the property from office to residential, it is proposed to remove those modern additions that were installed when the building was in office use, and to restore the appearance of a residential terraced house.

It is therefore proposed to remove the modern suspended ceilings and modern partitions which are not in original positions, and to rationalise all electric and mechanical services, and remove office related services, which will not be needed for residential use, such as emergency signage, security and fire alarm devices, water pipes, electrical conduits and power points, typical of office spaces and that can be found throughout the building.

New bathroom and kitchen fittings will be introduced, and the office sanitary fittings removed.

### 6.2 Ground Floor and First Floor

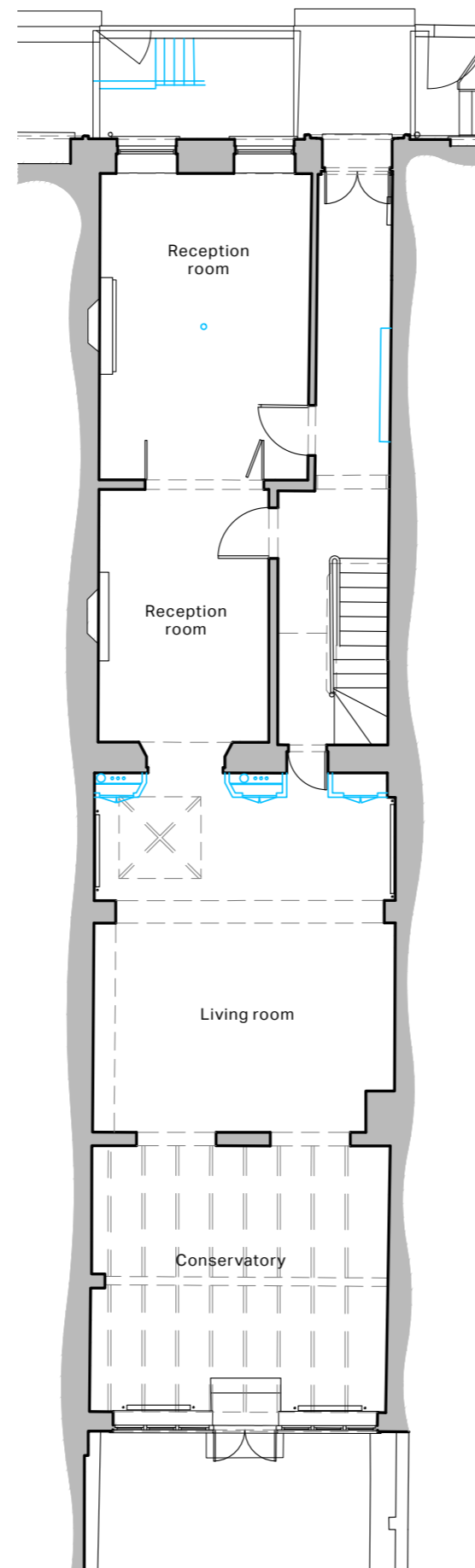
The Ground and First Floor levels still retain the original room proportions and some of the original architectural features, such as architraves, doors and windows.

It is proposed to remove the existing modern office carpet throughout, and to investigate the condition of the floor boards underneath, which would be repaired and made good. The existing modern office wall lights would be replaced and picture lights installed.

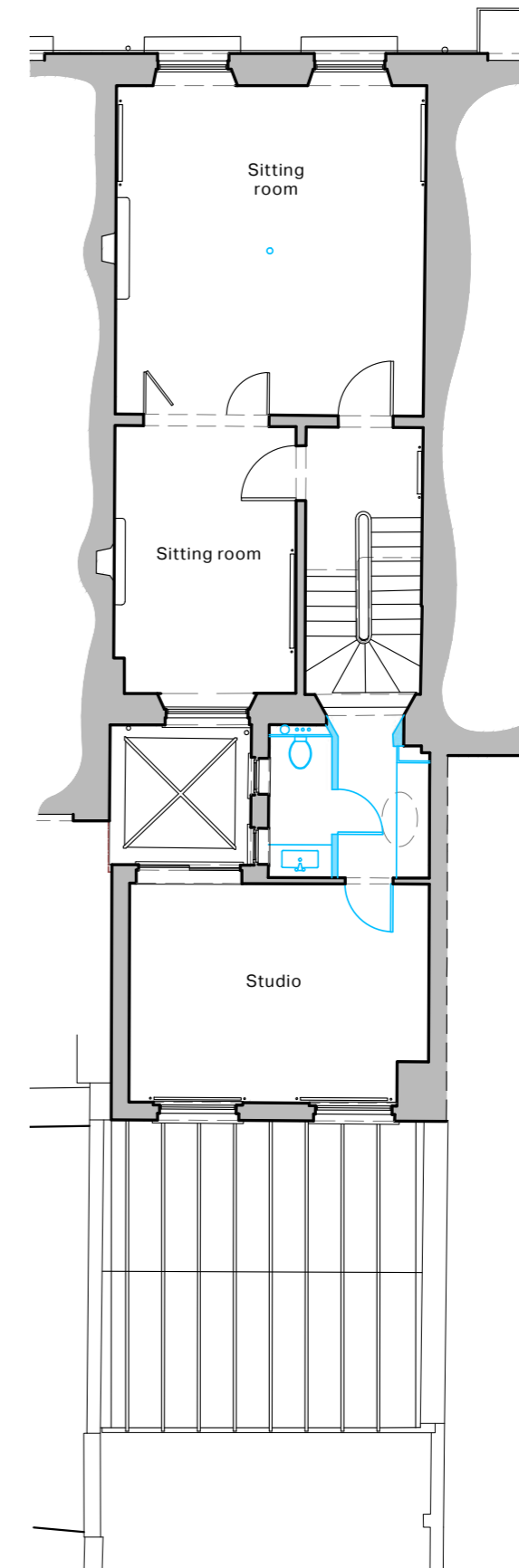
At Ground Floor, it is proposed to rationalise the existing modern service risers which now exist at the rear of the property, within the modern extension.

At First Floor level, the 2no. WCs in the existing modern extension at the rear of the building would be reduced in size to become a single WC, which will improve the relationship of the passageway to the opening from the stairs. A built-in cupboard would be installed on the opposite side of the corridor.

The existing joinery and walls would be repaired and redecorated throughout.



Ground Floor



First Floor

### 6.3 Second and Third Floors

The Second and Third Floor levels have been heavily altered in recent years and have the same office type carpeting with electric floor boxes and ancillary additions found on the floors below. The second floor would become the master bedroom suite - a bedroom at the front and dressing/bathroom to the rear. It is proposed to create a new bathroom and dressing lobby in the rear room of the Second Floor, by installing a new lightweight partition.

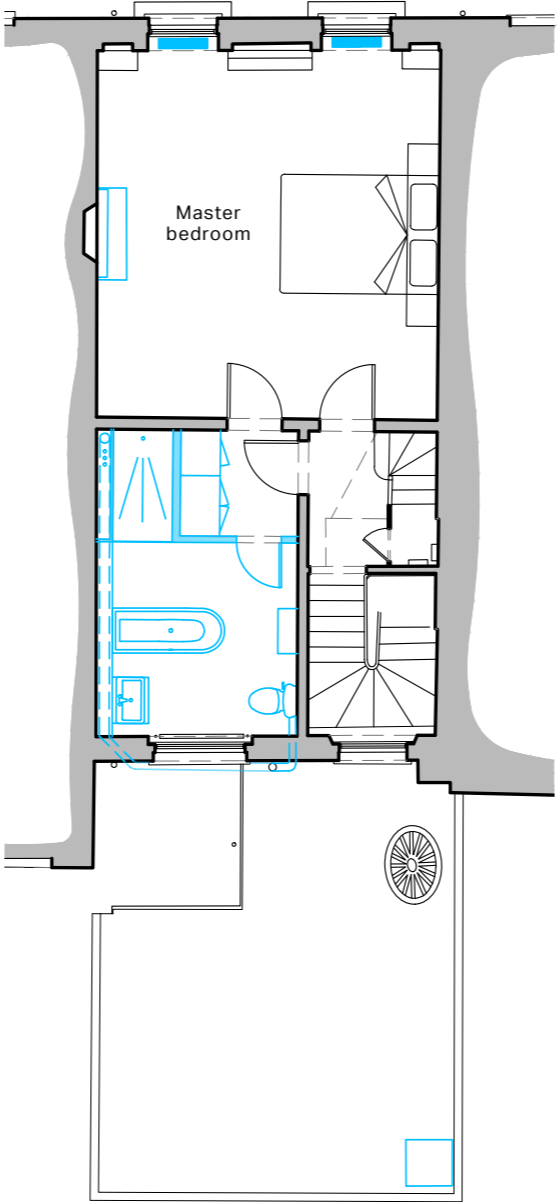
The new skirting, cornice, doors and architrave would match in design of the existing historic.

On the Third floor, it is proposed to create a new en-suite bathroom to the front bedroom, beneath the existing rooflight, so as to be top lit. A new dry-lined riser would rationalise the existing pipes and the new waste pipes, with minimal disruption to the historic fabric.

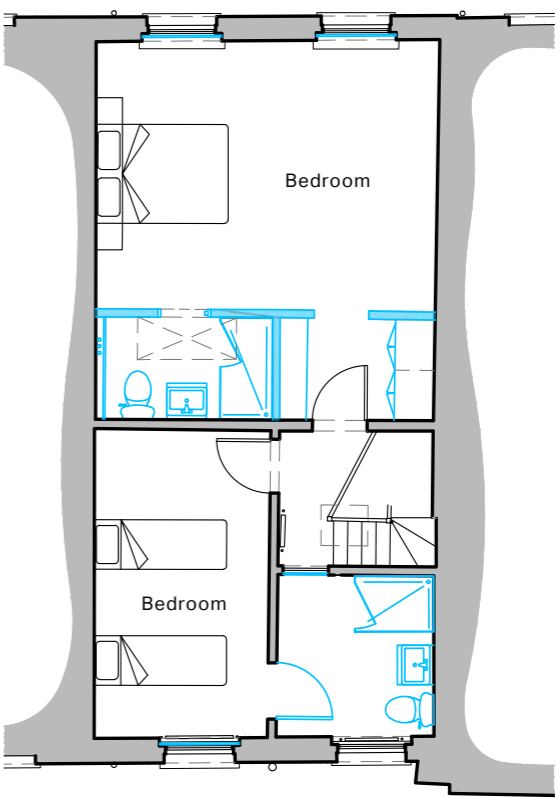
To avoid becoming “L-shaped” the new partition would continue across the room, and built in wardrobes would be created by the door.

The existing WC would become a bathroom to the rear bedroom, by creating a new opening in the internal partition. The existing door off the landing would be kept shut on the landing side, whilst on the bathroom side, the existing architrave would be retained.

The existing joinery and walls would be repaired and redecorated throughout.



Second Floor

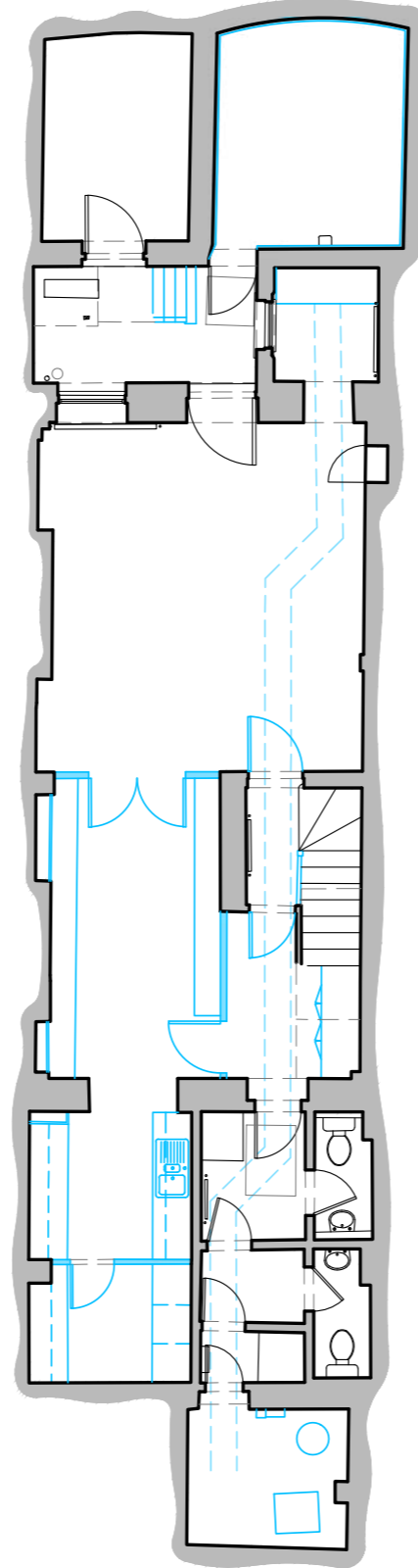


Third Floor

#### 6.4 Basement

At Basement level, the modern suspended grid ceiling would be removed to restore the historic floor to ceiling height. The electric cables and services that now exist within the suspended ceiling void would be rationalised and re-organised in a new services trench in the floor, which would connect the existing plant room at the rear with the incoming power mains at the front of the building. Similarly, the modern office partitions would be removed to restore the historic proportions of the front room, whilst the existing utilitarian office kitchen at the back would be re-organised to provide a layout suitable to residential standards of living. New internal partitions would be lightweight and existing joinery profiles replicated where necessary.

It is proposed to replace the existing 20C timber service stairs at the front of the property with metal stairs of traditional design. The basement would be redecorated throughout and existing modern floor finishes replaced with new.



Basement



Examples of devices that can be found across the property

## 7 Accessibility

The current proposals would not affect the accessibility to the property.

The existing stepped entrance through the front door on John Street would remain unaltered.



# APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Listing Description

Statutory Listing Description:

Statutory Address: NUMBERS 22 TO 28 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 22-28, JOHN STREET

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1379157

Date first listed: 24-Oct-1951

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden (London Borough)

Details:

Terrace of 7 houses. c1800-19. Yellow and multi-coloured stock brick with stucco bands at 1st floor levels. Nos 27 & 28 with slated mansard roofs and dormers. 4 storeys and basements; Nos 27 & 28 with attics. 2 windows each; Nos 26 & 27, 3 windows each; No.28 double fronted with 5 windows. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes, most with glazing bars; 1st floors with cast-iron balconies, except No.28. Parapets. No.22: square-headed, architraved doorway with patterned rectangular fanlight and panelled door. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on ground and 1st floors. Stairs with square balusters. No.23: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain reeded marble fireplaces on 1st and 2nd floors (original centres covered in). No.24: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces with original centres on ground floor. No.25: similar doorway to No.22. INTERIOR: noted to retain marble fireplaces on ground floor. Good marble fireplace 1st floor front room with bas relief on front panel, reeded and with rosettes; original iron centre. Nos 26 & 27: round-arched doorways with reeded doorframes, lion mask stops, mutule cornice-heads, patterned radial fanlights and panelled doors. No.27 with lamp-holder incorporated in fanlight. No.26 with fluted lead rainwater head. No.28: round-arched doorway with attached Doric columns carrying entablature; patterned radial fanlight and panelled door. Cornice and blocking course. Wrought-iron overthrow lamp-holder. Return to Northington Street with 1 window and mid C19 entrance with stucco surround and console-bracketed cornice. Dentilled cornices. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

Listing NGR: TQ3082582055

Legacy:

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 478524

Legacy System: LBS

Legal:

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Donald Insall Associates