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Heritage Appraisal  
29 Great James Street, London WC1N 3EY

October 2021

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 The following Heritage Appraisal has been prepared in support of proposals for a change of use, alterations and extensions to no.29 Great James Street, London WC1N 3EY.

1.2 No.29 Great James Street is Grade II\* listed and situated in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The proposed scheme will reinstate the building as a single family dwelling together with the appropriate and careful adaption of the existing fabric to suit the needs of a modern family.

1.3 This appraisal has been produced using desk based and online research, combined with a visual inspection of the site and wider area. Consideration has been given to the relevant national and local planning policy framework as well as an analysis of the building, its setting and wider context.

1.4 The appraisal should be read in conjunction with the drawings and supporting information prepared by Quinn Architects.

### Research and report structure

1.5 In line with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, the purpose of this statement is to define the significance of the listed building and its contribution to the conservation area. It will also describe the proposed works and assess their impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area.

1.6 This Heritage Appraisal has been prepared by Hannah Walker (BA (Hons) Oxon MSc IHBC) who has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment. She has 15 years of local authority experience, including 10 years as a Principal Conservation & Design Officer at the London Borough of Camden. She also has a wide range

of experience in the private sector, preparing heritage statements and appraising the significance of historic buildings. She has trained as a historian, has a specialist qualification in historic building conservation and is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)

1.7 Historical research for this report was undertaken by Dr Ann Robey FSA, a conservation and heritage professional with over twenty years of experience. She has worked for leading national bodies as well as smaller local organizations and charities. She is a researcher and writer specialising in architectural, social and economic history, with a publication record that includes books, articles, exhibitions and collaborative research.



## 2 Site location and context

2.1 The application site consists of a mid terraced early 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouse, arranged over 5 storeys and including a full basement. The house is constructed of red/brown brick with red brick dressings.

2.2 Nos.26-37 (consecutive) and 39-40 (consecutive) Great James Street and associated railings were Grade II\* listed on 24 October 1957. The description indicates that the buildings were listed for group value.

*14 terraced houses. 1720-24. For J Metcalfe. Brown brick, upper storeys with some refacing in multi-coloured, yellow (Nos 28, 34 & 40) and brown stock brick (1st floor and above of No.30). 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Nos 27-38 and 40, good wood architraved doorcases with enriched, carved brackets carrying hoods with panelled soffits, most with patterned fanlights and panelled doors. No.27, C20 hood with shaped brackets; No.39, architraved doorcase with pilasters, plain cornice, radial fanlight and panelled door. Red segmental arches and dressings to flush framed windows, No.35 upper storeys with glazing bars. Some frames reeded with roundels. Parapets. Some original lead rainwater heads with lion masks. INTERIORS: mostly having fine panelling. Staircases mostly with twisted balusters, column newels and carved brackets to treads. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn or torch flambe finials to areas.*

2.3 Great James Street is located in the eastern section of Bloomsbury and runs in a north-south alignment connecting Theobalds Road in the south with Rugby Street to the north. The street is lined on both sides with early 18<sup>th</sup> century terraced townhouses of four storeys with full basements. These are situated at the back of pavement and create a strong sense of enclosure to the street. The buildings are of a variety of brickwork, mostly plum or multi-stock, with red brick dressings to the windows and a range of attractive timber doorcases. The street has a high degree of architectural unity and

coherence and retains a strong early 18<sup>th</sup> century character.



Figure 1: Historic England's map of the area denoting statutorily listed buildings with blue triangles.

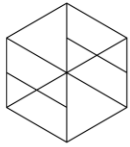
2.4 The area immediately surrounding the application site is rich in heritage and there are a significant number of listed buildings.

- 3-16 (consecutive) Great James Street – Grade II\*
- 20, 21 and 22 Great James Street – Grade II
- 23, 24 and 25 Great James Street – Grade II
- 38 Great James Street – Grade II

2.5 The application site is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area which was first designated in 1968. The conservation area is notable as an exemplary example of Georgian town planning with its layout of garden squares and inter-related streets and mews. Despite its size, it also displays a notable consistency in the street pattern, spatial character and predominant building forms.

2.6 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted on 18 April 2011. Regarding the character and building typologies found within the conservation area, paragraphs 5.175 and 5.176 of the Appraisal explain that:

*The historic built form comprises townhouses built in long terraces with rear mews. This fine*



*grain remains an important characteristic and the continuous building frontage created by the terraces creates a strong sense of enclosure. (Para 5.175)*

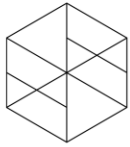
*The townhouses, dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, are either of three or four storeys raised on basements fronted by cast-iron railings. Their vertically proportioned frontages adhere to classical architectural principles; they have three windows per floor establishing a repeated rhythm of window and door openings along each terrace. Common details are wooden architraved door cases, timber panelled doors, fanlights, flat roofed porches or small porticos above. Although the overall perception is one of homogeneity; there is subtle variation in the detailing of the terraces, often derived from the piecemeal nature of the building process. The strong uniformity in appearance is due to the consistency of materials. The prevailing materials are London stock brick with some contrasting red brick detailing (such as segmental red-brick arches). Some stucco is evident at ground floor level. Most frontages are topped by parapets, some with mansard attics and dormer windows behind. (Para 5.176)*

2.7 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area is very large and consequently is divided into 14 separate character areas. Great James Street is located within **Sub Area 10: Great James Street/Bedford Row**. This is located to the west of Gray's Inn Road and includes roads of terraced 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouses, such as the early 18<sup>th</sup> century examples on Rugby Street, Bedford Row and Great Ormond Street, and those from the mid to later 18<sup>th</sup> century on Doughty Street and John Street. In relation to Great James Street the Appraisal notes that:

*"Due to their early construction and fine architectural treatment, there are a large number of listed buildings in the sub area: all the buildings in Great James Street and in the stretch of Great Ormond Street in the sub-area are listed, with a high number at grade II\*. The townhouses in Great James Street are particularly well preserved; the only notable*

*alteration is the loss of glazing bars from some sash windows. Grand, four-storey terraces survive on the south side of Great Ormond Street. The terraces in these streets are constructed from a brown-red brick with red brick dressings, typical of early Georgian building. Other details of their time include decorative iron boundary railings with lampholders over entrance gates, intricately carved wooden doorcases with brackets supporting leaded hoods, and fanlights over entrance doors of varying designs, all of which are evident in Great James Street."*

2.8 With regard to patterns of use within Sub Area 10, the Appraisal confirms that the main and secondary thoroughfares are dominated by offices but retain some residential uses. It is noted though that "Throughout the sub area, there is an increasing trend to return townhouses to their original use as single family dwellings." (Para 5.178)



### 3 Relevant planning history

#### 1995

Planning permission (9500395) was granted on 5 May 1995 for *'Continued use for a limited period of the second and third floors as two one bedroom flats.'*

#### 1993

Planning permission (9301400) was granted on 17 December 1993 for *'Temporary change of use of the second and third floors from B1 offices to provide two one bedroom flats. as shown on drawing numbers SK04A AL20.'*

#### 1989

Listed Building Consent was granted on 19 December 1989 for *'The demolition of an existing two storey rear extension and the erection of a new two storey rear extension as shown on drawings numbered 147:03 04A 05 06 07. and revised by letter dated 20th October 1989 (duplicate application).'*

Planning permission (8900301) and Listed Building Consent 8970103) were granted on 19 December 1989 for *'The demolition of an existing two storey rear extension and the erection of a new two storey rear extension for Class B1 use as shown on drawings numbered 147:03 04A 05 06 07 and revised by letter dated 20th October 1989.'*

#### 1986

Listed Building Consent (8670273) was granted on 3 September 1986 for *'Provision of security bars to front basement windows as shown on drawings numbered 1 2 & 3.'*

### 4 Historic development of the site and area

4.1 Great James Street is an elegant and almost complete street of early Georgian houses dating from the 1720s. It is named after James Burgess who helped George Brownlow Doughty and his wife, Frances, develop the area which became known as the Doughty Estate.<sup>1</sup>

4.2 Widespread development began in the wider Holborn area following the Restoration. Landowners saw the potential for new fashionable suburbs to be developed and took their inspiration from Covent Garden to the south. Development extended northwards from St Giles High Street to Great Russell Street, and between Holborn and Great Ormond Street.

4.3 The extent of development by the mid-18th century can be seen on Rocque's map of London of 1746. Just to the east of James Street (now Great James Street) nearby fields remained open (Figure 2).

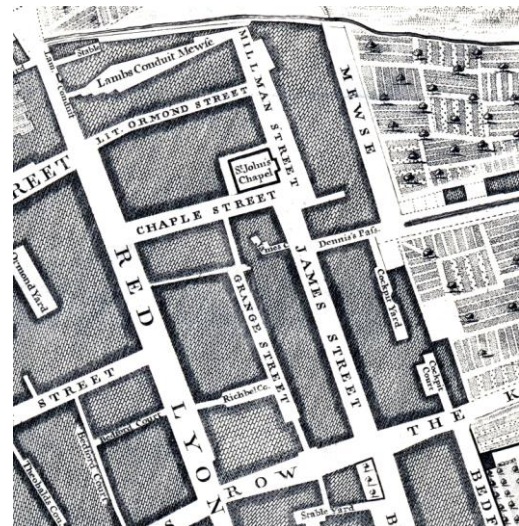


Figure 2: Rocque's map of 1746 showing James Street fully developed

<sup>1</sup> B. Weinrab and Christopher Hibbert, *The London Encyclopaedia*, (1983), p. 335.





4.4 Horwood's map of 1799 shows the individual houses on Great James Street with simple rectangular plans, however this may simply be indicative rather than a true representation of their early layout. Mews properties can be seen to the west on Green Street (later Emerald Street).

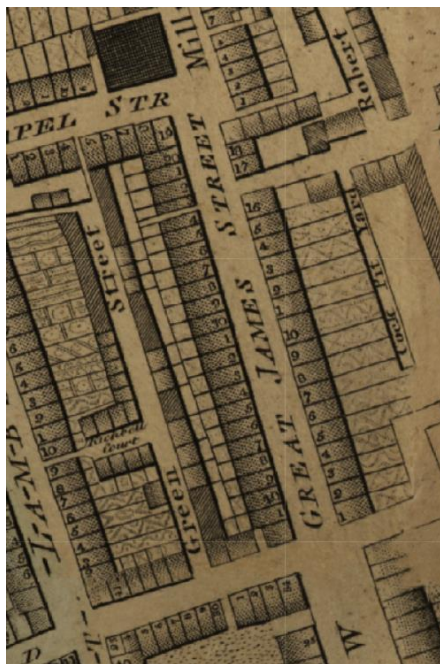


Figure 3: Horwood's map of 1799.

4.5 Many of the properties in Great James Street were both historically, and more recently occupied by legal firms due to their proximity to Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn. The solicitor Robert Maugham, first Secretary of the Law Society, lived and worked at no.17. It was also attractive to the wider middle classes and professionals, with architect William Wood Dean working at no.13 in the 1850s, and census records indicate surgeons and art dealers living on this street.

4.6 However, Booth's poverty map of 1889 shows a more mixed picture to the area. Great James Street itself is marked in pink denoting 'Fairly comfortable. Good ordinary earnings' whilst there are areas of dark blue and black on Emerald Street indicating 'Very poor, casual.'

*Chronic want' and what Booth described as 'Lowest class, vicious. Semi criminal.'*



Figure 4: Booth's poverty map of 1889.

4.7 No.29 was occupied by the National Peace Council during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, an organisation which was founded in 1908 and disbanded in 2000. In recent years there has been an increasing trend to return the townhouses on Great James Street to their original use as single family dwellings.



Figure 5: A view looking south along Great James Street showing nos.25-33, taken in 1960.



Figure 6: A view looking north along Great James Street showing nos.25-33, taken in 1960.



Figure 7: The 1873 Ordnance Survey map.

#### Development of the site

4.8 By the time of the 1873 Ordnance Survey map the property is shown with a projecting rear wing to the north and a shorter projection to the south. A relatively uniform 'L' shaped pattern of development can be seen along the rear of the terrace.

4.9 The 1895 Ordnance Survey map shows the northern projection as shallower and matching that of neighbouring properties, with a small lightwell immediately adjacent to the rear façade. The rear garden is open, although many of the adjacent properties have structures at the western end of their gardens. The layout of the site remained the same on the Ordnance Survey map of 1914.

4.10 The Goad insurance map of 1901 confirms that the building was constructed of brickwork and the site was in use as an office. Most of the other houses on Great James Street were also shown as in office use at this time.



Figure 8: The 1895 Ordnance Survey map.



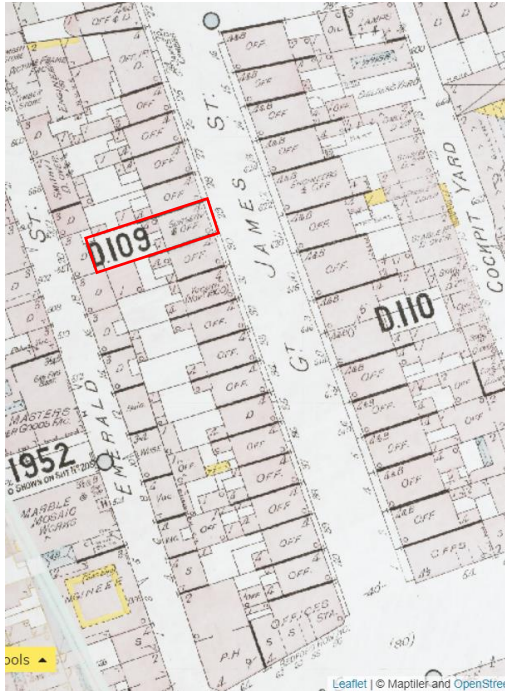


Figure 9: The 1901 Goad insurance map.



Figure 10: The 1895 Ordnance Survey map.

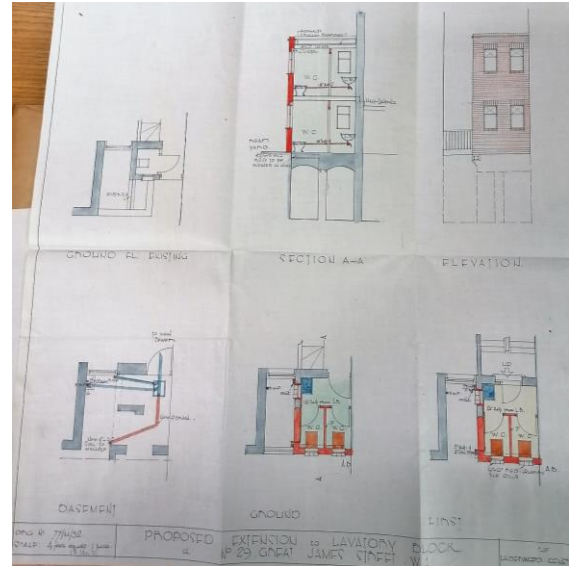


Figure 11: Drainage plans dated May 1952.

4.11 The 1951-52 Ordnance Survey map shows the same pattern of two projections to the rear of the building, the northern one deeper. Drainage plans from 1953 indicate that a two storey extension at ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor level was added to the rear of the building incorporating the existing small WC at ground floor level. There is no evidence of this structure today.



## 5 Significance of the site

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework Annex 2 defines significance 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. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."* A heritage asset is defined as *"A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)."* In this case the heritage assets are the statutorily listed no.29 Great James Street and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

5.2 Historic England's document *'Conservation Principles – Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment'* (2008) identifies a series of values that can be attributed to a heritage asset and which help to appraise and define its significance. Paragraph 3.3 of the document outlines that:

*"In order to identify the significance of a place, it is necessary first to understand its fabric, and how and why it has changed over time; and then to consider:*

- who values the place, and why they do so*
- how those values relate to its fabric*
- their relative importance*
- whether associated objects contribute to them*
- the contribution made by the setting and context of the place*
- how the place compares with others sharing similar values."*

5.3 In assessing the significance of no.29 Great James Street it is therefore necessary to examine its origins, history, form, architectural design, layout, materials and relationship with surrounding buildings. In making this assessment, consideration has been given to its

intrinsic architectural merit, its completeness, the extent of any alterations and their impact, the contribution of the building to the character of the area and the degree to which the building illustrates aspects of local or national history.

5.4 The application site forms part of a terrace of early 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings which line the west side of Great James Street. The building is four storeys in height with a full basement, set back behind a shallow lightwell which is surrounded by painted wrought iron railings.



Figure 12: The front façade of no.29 Great James Street.

5.5 The front façade is constructed of red/brown brick red brick dressings to the windows. The elevation is three window bays wide with the main entrance in the southern bay. Here there is a painted timber panelled front door set beneath a flat projecting timber door hood which is supported by attractive carved brackets and has panelled soffit. The windows have segmental heads and painted timber sash boxes set flush with the brickwork, a feature of early 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings prior to the Building Act of 1775 which required sash boxes to be set back and into the masonry, creating a reveal. The boxes have decorative reeding and roundels to the corners. The sliding sash elements themselves are in a one over one configuration



which are clearly a later addition to the building – the original layout would have been six over six panes.

5.6 The roofscape of the building is concealed behind the brickwork parapet and consists of a pair of shallow hips, with their ridge lines running front to back. Above the parapet are later added metal tubular railings which detract from the quality of the front facade and strike a discordant note within the streetscene.



Figure 13: The front door to no.29 Great James Street photographed in 1960.

5.7 The building shares many common characteristics with the other early Georgian houses which line both sides of Great James Street, providing a strong sense of architectural cohesion and unity. This includes their height, scale and building line, as well as the repetition of features such as arched window heads, 6 over 6 sashes and projecting timber door hoods at ground floor level. The buildings have a strong sense of verticality due to their aligned window bays and the narrow proportions of each individual house, which can be subtly appreciated due to the differing tones to the brickwork. The height of the buildings and their

position at the back of pavement creates a strong sense of enclosure to the street and the narrow plot widths and closely spaced bays of windows contributes to a fine urban grain. Horizontal emphasis is created by the well defined parapet line and aligned fenestration and brick window arches along the terrace. To the ground floor the painted metal railings which bound each lightwell provide a unified and consistent appearance at pavement level.

5.8 Overall the front façade of the building and the wider streetscape along Great James Street is of very high architectural and historic significance. The street retains a strong early 18<sup>th</sup> century character and the extent of survival and completeness to the terraces provides a remarkable sense of architectural unity and coherence.

5.9 The rear façade of the building is constructed of red/brown brickwork with a render finish at basement, ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor level. There are two bays of windows to the main façade, one lighting the stair compartment and offset from the window to the rear room. These have arched window heads and painted timber sashes of varying configurations, including 2 over 2, 4 over 4 and 6 over 6 panes.

5.10 At the northern end of the façade is a narrow closet wing which rises the full height of the building. This is a feature of many of the other properties along the terrace and is likely to be original. The flank elevation of the closet wing has patched brickwork of several different colours and textures, with a rendered finish to the basement, creating a rather mismatched and poor quality appearance.

5.11 At basement level there is a courtyard with a series of open sided brickwork arches adjacent to the southern boundary wall. In the south western corner of the site is a long and narrow vault, with a smaller vault to the side. Whilst there is no access to these vaults from the street, as in the case with under pavement vaults, they would likely have been used for general storage purposes.





Figure 14: The basement vault and brickwork arches.



Figure 15: View looking towards the rear of the site showing the ground floor infill structures.

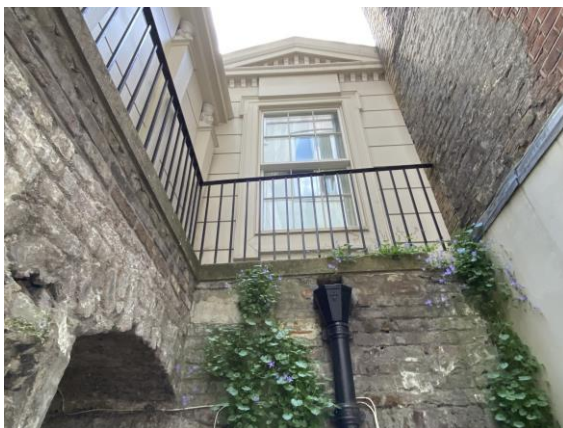


Figure 16: The ground floor structures looking from the basement lightwell.



Figure 17: The flank elevation of the closet wing.

5.12 At ground floor level the courtyard has been infilled with a number of structures, believed to have been added during the last 20 years. These are of no intrinsic architectural or historic merit and detract from the setting of the listed building, by virtue of either their low grade construction or their overly grand and architecturally inappropriate stuccoed Classical treatment.

5.13 Overall, whilst the rear elevation is relatively well balanced and proportioned, it lacks the architectural uniformity of the front façade. The variety of fenestration and the areas of rebuilding to the closet wing reduce its architectural and aesthetic significance. The brickwork arches and original vaults at basement level are of historic interest and are an unusual and interesting feature. The modern additions at ground floor level however strike a highly discordant note and do not relate positively to the age and character of the listed building.

5.14 Views of the rear facades of the house are limited due to the relatively shallow rear garden/courtyard areas. Public realm views are



not possible due to the tightly packed nature of the surrounding townscape and the narrow width of Emerald Street to the west of the site and its tall buildings which block views.

### Interior

5.15 The internal plan form of no.29 Great James Street conforms to an early version of the typical London terraced house typology, a standard format which had been widespread in London since the late 17th century. The house is laid out with two main rooms on each floor with the staircase positioned in the rear corner of the plan, against the party wall. A small closet wing is situated beyond the main envelope of the building, accessed through the rear room. The main chimneystack is on the opposite party wall to the staircase providing heat to the front room, with the rear rooms and closet wing originally heated by a substantial corner stack. The principal rooms of the house are situated at ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor level, with those to the front being of the highest status. Secondary accommodation, for children's and servant's bedrooms, were located over the uppermost floors, with the kitchen, scullery, pantry and storage located in the basement.

5.16 The interior retains a strong sense of its early 18th century character with extensive areas of full height panelling, including to the stair compartment. The panelling is constructed from painted softwood and is of a typical early 18<sup>th</sup> century pattern, with a square-panelled dado beneath a moulded chair-rail and taller panels above the rail rising to a timber box-cornice. The main staircase has an open string from ground floor level up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor landing, with carved tread ends, three barley twist balusters to each tread, a fluted newel and hardwood moulded handrail. The ground to basement staircase and the flight from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level is also relatively ornate, albeit with a closed string and simpler turned balusters. The full height panelling ends at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor landing level, continuing with a simplified mid rail design up to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> floor half landing.

### Basement

5.17 The basement rooms are of the lowest status within the hierarchy of the house. The spaces remain relatively plain, with unadorned walls and a simple cornice to the front room. Partitions have been inserted into the rear room to create a small kitchen area. The doors appear to have been replaced, with a 20<sup>th</sup> century two panelled design.



Figure 18: The front room at basement level.

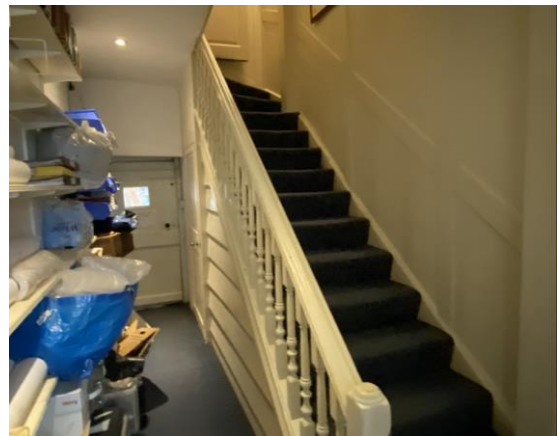


Figure 19: The ground to basement flight.

### Ground Floor

5.18 The ground floor is fully panelled, to the main front and rear rooms and the hallway/stair compartment, with a timber box





cornice and shutter boxes to the front and rear windows. There are non-original grey marble fireplaces to both rooms, with a hob grate to the rear and a roundel design to the front surround. There is a wide opening in the spine wall between the front and rear rooms with a rather incongruous shallow arched opening and arched doors. Elsewhere the doors are 6 panelled with some potentially original architraves surviving.



Figure 20: The ground floor double doors. .



Figure 21: The ground floor hallway and stair compartment.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

5.19 Here the rooms are also fully panelled with shutter boxes to the front and rear windows and a simple plaster cornice. The closet wing also has a simple cornice. The landing side of the doors into the front and rear rooms and the door opening in the spine wall have later added

surrounds, with a reed and roundel pattern to the room side. The front and rear room both have grey marble reed and roundel fireplaces, the former with a cast iron insert typical of the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and the latter with a hob grate.



Figure 22: The front room at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level.



Figure 23: The rear room and corner chimneystack.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

5.20 The rooms at this level are also fully panelled with a timber box cornice. The front room has a grey marble fire surround with an Edwardian insert, whilst the rear room has a very basic timber fire surround with a later cast iron insert.



5.21 The rear room has been subdivided to provide a kitchen area. The closet wing is a featureless space with a modern partition forming a separate WC. The doors here appear to be non-original four panelled items.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

5.22 The rooms here are plainer than those on the floors below, with no panelling or corning. The closet wing is also relatively featureless. Partitions have been installed into the rear room in order to create a WC and a further partition subdivides the closet wing. A very modest timber fire surround can be found to the front room. The doors at this floor level are later replacements with a two panelled design.



Figure 24: The front room at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level.



Figure 25: The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor landing.



Figure 26: The rear room at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level.



Figure 27: The front room at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level.

### Values and significance

5.23 As referenced at paragraph 3.16 above, Historic England's '*Conservation Principles*' identifies four values that can be attributed to a heritage asset. These have been examined in turn below.

#### 5.24 Evidential Value

This value is derived from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity (para 35) and is generally closely associated with archaeological sites and remains, with age being a strong indicator of evidential value.

In this case the building provides us with little in the way of unique evidence about past human experience. The house does reflect middle class



life during the period to a degree, but beyond this it provides little unique insight.

#### 5.25 Historical value

Paragraph 39 of the Conservation Principles document outlines that *"Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative."*

The building forms part of the historic local scene in this part of Bloomsbury and has been a feature of the townscape for around 300 years, thus giving it demonstrable historic interest and age value. The building also has clear historical value in terms of illustrating the transformation of the area from a district of open fields up until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, to a densely covered inner residential suburb by the middle of the same century. The building retains a very strong sense of its original setting and has significant group value along with the other buildings on Great James Street, having an indivisible historic relationship with its immediate context and representing an exceptional survival of early Georgian urban buildings.

The house has no significant association with any local or national figures of note or notable historic events.

#### 5.26 Aesthetic value

Aesthetic value is defined as *"....the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place."*

As described in the paragraphs above, the building is a very attractive early 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouse, forming part of a well-preserved group of houses of high architectural and aesthetic significance.

The building and wider terrace retain many of the typical architectural features of the period and demonstrate building practices and conventions of the time. It is constructed of typical materials of the period such as red/brown brickwork with bright red arched window heads and has a fine

projecting timber doorcase, one of many along Great James Street. Its front elevation has a significant degree of townscape interest and value and contributes to the architectural unity and coherence of Great James Street.

To the rear the building has modest architectural value but this is diminished to a degree by the variety of fenestration and the extent of brickwork renewal to the closet wing. The structures at ground floor level detract from the quality of the building.

Internally the original two storey plan form of the building is legible although partitions have been installed to the rear room at several floor levels in order to create kitchen and WC facilities. The building retains extensive areas of full height panelling and cornicing, as well as some elements of original and historic joinery.

#### 5.27 Communal value

This value is derived from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience of memory. In this case, any communal value would be 'social', defined at paragraph 56 as *".....places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence."*

The building has communal value in so far as it has been part of the local scene for around 300 years and has thus featured in the day to day lives of those who live, work and pass through the area. However, there is little to distinguish this building from other similar buildings of the same age and character and it is its contribution to group value that is most important. This communal value is local in its focus and the building does not have any particular regional or national symbolism or value.

#### Conclusion

5.28 In this case the key significance of the building relates to its historic and architectural contribution to the development of this part of Bloomsbury and it reflects to a small degree its rapid transformation from open fields on the edge



of the city to an inner residential suburb. Due to the completeness of the street, it provides a tangible reminder of the scale and character of early Georgian London and has demonstrable age and historic value. The building has a high degree of architectural and aesthetic value to its front facade and reflects the prevailing style, materials and detailing of the period, making a clear aesthetic contribution to the coherent and harmonious character of Great James Street and the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The building has lesser degrees of evidential and communal value.

5.29 The rear elevation is of moderate significance and retains elements of its original form and profile such as the full height closet wing. The brickwork arches and vaults at basement level have historic and evidential value. Internally the building is of high aesthetic and architectural value.

## 6 Assessment of the proposals

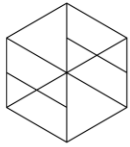
6.1 This section will set out the proposed works to the building and will consider their impact. It will assess this impact in terms of the host building and its special architectural and historic interest as well as the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The proposed works will also be considered against the relevant local and national historic environment policies.

6.2 The proposals are for the restoration and full refurbishment of this fine Grade II\* listed building and conversion works in association with its reinstatement as a single family house. An infill extension at ground and part 1<sup>st</sup> floor level is proposed to the rear courtyard.

6.3 During its time in office use the building has received various modern accretions and any non original fixtures, fittings, floorings and modern mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems will be removed.

### Change of use

6.4 The building's last use was as an office but it is now vacant. It is proposed to restore it as a single family house. It is widely acknowledged that the best use for a historic buildings is the one for which it was designed and constructed. The building is a fine early 18<sup>th</sup> century house and its reinstatement as a residence will significantly enhance its special interest. This will allow its attractive panelled interiors to be appreciated within an authentic domestic context, thus enhancing its historic and architectural integrity. The conversion of this house back to a single dwelling is in line with other conversions on Great James Street and will contribute to the reinstatement of the street's domestic and residential character.



## External alterations

### Rear extension

6.5 In order to provide additional living accommodation with a more contemporary and open plan character, an infill extension is proposed to the rear courtyard. At ground floor level this will be 'L' shaped in form, with a lightwell retained between it and the main rear façade of the house at basement and ground floor level. The elevations facing into the lightwell will be fully glazed. Above the ground floor extension will be a terrace, providing attractive amenity space, with glass balustrading surrounding the lightwell. A modest 1<sup>st</sup> floor pavillion is also proposed, set into the south western corner of the courtyard.



Figure 28: The rear courtyard infill structures.

6.6 The proposed infill will replace the existing modern ground floor structures, which are of an incongruous design and have no historic interest or age value. The existing brickwork vaults and structures at basement level will be retained. The input of a structural

engineer into the design of the proposed extension will ensure that there is no harm to the structural integrity of the historic fabric, arches and vaults at basement level.

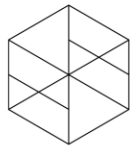
6.7 The proposed extension will be of a contemporary design, with metal framed windows and doors, simple detailing and a flat sedum covered roof to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor pavillion.

6.8 The proposals are considered acceptable in terms of siting, bulk and massing. The extension will be situated at low level in relation to the overall height and scale of the listed building and will be fully subordinate. The extension will replace the existing structures which currently fill the rear courtyard at ground floor level, whilst the proposed element at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level is modestly scaled and situated well away from the main rear façade and closet wing of the listed building. The proposals will be visually contained by the tall western boundary wall, the existing trellis line to no.30 and the proposed reconstructed party boundary wall with no.28. This will ensure that the extension sits comfortably within its context and responds positively to the surrounding built environment.

6.9 The footprint of the proposed ground floor addition will follow that of the recently permitted and constructed infill extension at no.30, directly to the south of the application site (2014/1571/P & 2014/1664/L) and approved on 25 March 2014.

6.10 A number of applications for similar development have been approved on Great James Street. An almost identical scheme for a a ground floor infill and 1<sup>st</sup> floor garden room/pavillion was approved at no.34 (2013/4419/P & 2013/4498/L) also Grade II\* listed, on 26 September 2013. This building forms part of the same terrace as the application site. The Council's delegated report in relation to this permission confirms that the 1<sup>st</sup> floor element "...would have double glazed sliding doors with minimal metal framing and of light-weight appearance and in terms of scale and





*proportion (would be) subordinate to the main building and is satisfactory."*

6.11 A ground floor infill and a 1<sup>st</sup> floor pavillion, this time the full width of the site were permitted at no.14 Great James Street (2015/3046/P & 2015/3185/L) on 14 August 2015. The Council's delegated report in relation to this permission is clear that *"The small glazed pod at first floor level is set sufficiently away from the rear of the building and is not considered to harm its special interest, nor the setting of the rear of the adjoining buildings in the terrace."*

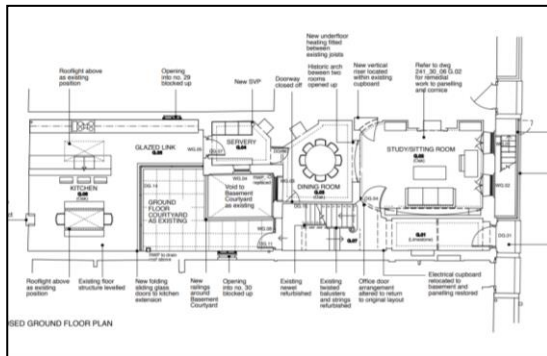


Figure 29: Proposed ground floor plan of the permitted infill extension at no.30 Great James Street.

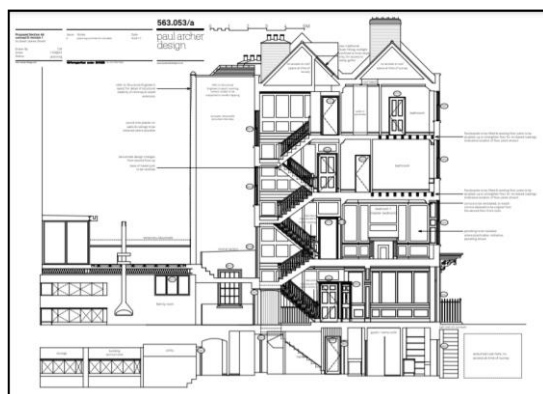


Figure 30: Proposed 1st floor plan of the permitted infill extension at no.30 Great James Street.

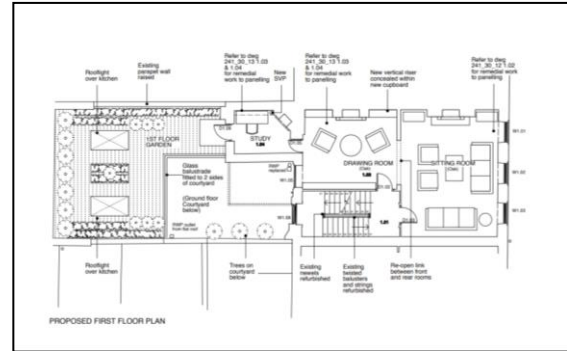


Figure 31: Proposed section of the permitted infill extension at no.34 Great James Street showing the 1st floor pavillion.

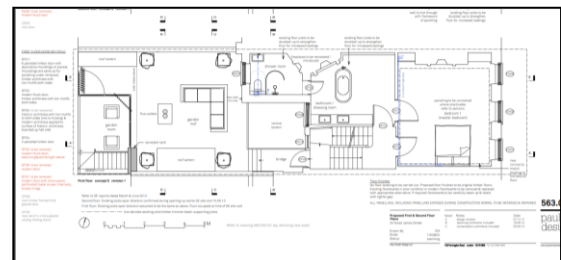


Figure 32: Proposed 1st floor plan of the permitted infill extension at no.34 Great James Street.

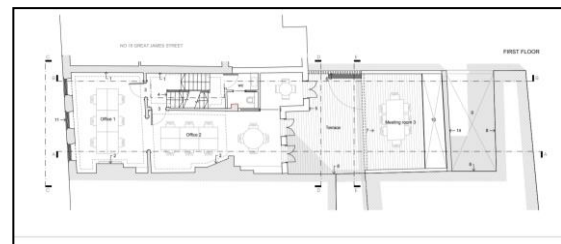


Figure 33: Proposed 1st floor plan of the permitted infill extension at no.14 Great James Street.

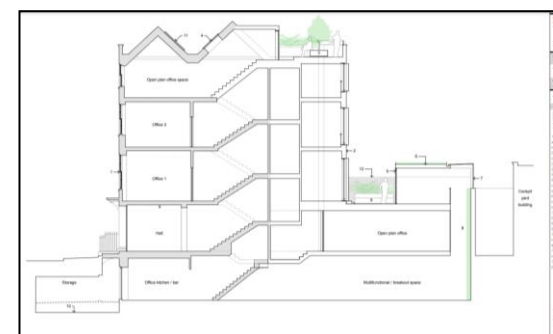


Figure 34: Proposed section of the permitted infill extension at no.14 Great James Street.



6.12 Due to the scale and position of the surrounding buildings there will be no public realm views of the proposed infill extension. Nonetheless, the proposed extension will be of a simple, high quality design which provides a subtle, contemporary juxtaposition with the historic fabric and architectural detailing of the main listed house.

### Front façade

6.13 The existing non-original metal ladder which currently provides access into the front lightwell is to be removed. This is very steep and impractical for use and the gate is located in an awkward position on the entrance landing. The new staircase will be in broadly the same position but will rise in the opposite direction towards the north. A new gate will be created within the front section of the railings allowing easier access from the lightwell to the pavement and the existing gate will be retained and welded shut. The new gate will be carefully created using the existing uprights, top rail and finials from the railings so as to avoid the loss of any historic fabric.

6.14 The existing metal tubular railings which are fixed to the top of the parapet will be removed. These are highly visible within the streetscene and their removal will significantly enhance the high significance front façade of the listed building and reinforce the well defined and consistent parapet line along the terrace. A discreet retractable handrail will be installed instead which will not be visible but will allow for safe access to the front part of the roof.

6.15 The existing downpipes and SVP at the rear of the building will be replaced with cast iron style fittings. The decorative hopper and associated downpipe to the front façade will be retained.

### Brickwork

6.16 Helifix style repairs will be undertaken to the brickwork where required, as well as small

scale like for like repairs and localised re-pointing as necessary.

6.17 Subject to the condition of the brickwork beneath it, the existing non-original render finish will be removed from the lower parts of the rear façade in order to re-expose the brickwork finish. If the brickwork is damaged then the render will be retained and redecorated. If removed, these works will enhance the appearance of the rear elevation, returning it closer to its original condition.

### Windows

6.18 New window openings are proposed within the side of the closet wing at ground to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor levels. These will have arched window heads to match those on the main building. The new windows will have either a 4 over 4 or a 2 over 2 configuration to suit the proportions of the openings and will consist of painted timber single glazed sashes with detailing that is appropriate for the early 18<sup>th</sup> century character of the listed building.

6.19 The new openings in the side of the closet wing will be created in an elevation which has already been highly patched and rebuilt. Nonetheless, they will be appropriately detailed and scaled, with a sense of diminishing fenestration, thus responding positively to the original character of the listed building.

6.20 Within the main envelope of the listed building the existing sashes will be replaced with new, painted timber units with detailing that is appropriate for the early 18<sup>th</sup> century character of the listed building. Where any assumed original windows exist, these will be retained (see A903 Window Schedule). These will have no sash horns and chunky glazing bars. The boxes to the front elevation, with their reed and roundel detailing, will be retained as well as the shutters and architraves internally. The original design of early 18<sup>th</sup> century windows, with subdivided sashes and chunky glazing bars is a key part of the character of buildings of this period, adding



visual interest and intricacy to their otherwise relatively plain and unadorned facades. Their replacement, most often during the Victorian period, with 1 over 1 or 2 over 2 sashes, detracts from this original early Georgian character. The proposed reinstatement of the original fenestration pattern of the house will significantly enhance the architectural character and integrity of the building.

6.21 In describing Great James Street, the Council's Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal refers to the level of preservation apparent on the street indicating that "... The only notable alteration is the loss of glazing bars from some sash windows." Thus, the proposed reinstatement of appropriate early 18<sup>th</sup> century style windows is considered to demonstrably enhance the architectural coherence of the wider group of buildings along Great James Street, where the repetition of features and detailing contributes to the unified character of the streetscene.

6.22 It is proposed to install Fineo vacuum insulated glazing into the new sashes. This is an ultra slim but highly effective product which will allow for improved thermal efficiency and noise reduction to the listed building and will enhance the internal quality of the accommodation. Due to its detailing, the Fineo glazing has no perimeter spacer bars to identify it as modern product. There is the opportunity here to improve the thermal performance and comfort of the property in a manner which has a negligible visual impact upon the exterior of the listed building. Given the current climate crisis it is more important than ever that historic buildings are sensitively upgraded to improve their thermal performance and reduce energy consumption.

6.23 The existing unattractive and visually intrusive security bars to the front basement windows will be removed. This will enhance the external appearance of the listed building in public views from the street.

6.24 Slimlite double glazing was allowed to all ground, first, second and third floor level front

elevation windows of existing dwelling on appeal at no.12 Great James Street in 2013.<sup>2</sup> The inspector comments include the following paragraphs;

*"15. The main changes are the provision of the timber bead externally, removing the need for putty, the increased size of the internal rebate to cater for the width of double glazing, with the consequent flattened section of the moulding, and the introduction of double glazing. I acknowledge that all of these are not features that would have been found in the original windows.*

*16. In my view, the main benefit to the significance of the listed building of replicating the windows relates to the effect they would have on the appearance of the building, particularly in relation to their proportions when seen from the rooms and from the street. They cannot add or reproduce historical significance as they are new, other than in their contribution to the continuing history and change to the building. The exact detailing is not going to be beneficial in terms of historical dating of the building or historical accuracy, as the windows are of the current age and should be identifiable as such. In this particular situation, I therefore do not accept that the minor changes to the joinery detailing, such as occurs with the glazing bars and the angle of meeting rails, is overriding. Externally the appearance and proportions of the joinery and overall size is generally correct and the hornless 6/6 windows positively enhance the appearance of the building at the front. While horns have not been removed from the top sashes*

<sup>2</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/F/13/2193605 dated October 2013



*at the rear, this would be reasonable to be achieved by imposition of appropriate conditions.*

*17. While the outside of the glazing beads is now wood and not putty, the profile is very similar, but I accept is more regular and identifiable at close range. The fixing internally with a removable timber moulded bead is not traditional, but to my mind is a practical and effective solution to the fixing of the glazing units. The moulding, while being of a flatter proportion, provides a strong feature around the glazing, effectively mimicking the deeper moulding that would have been provided, such as at Bedford Row. Double glazed units do affect the appearance of the rebates, with, at close inspection, the depth of the units being discernible, and some of the reflections from the units are 'doubled'.*

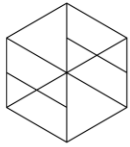
*18. Drawings indicated that the frame box sections had been reduced. However, it was clear from the site visit that the box sections had to fit within a space between the outer wall and internal window shutter box, which the replacement windows do, so there could actually be no change to the width of the boxes of the sash windows. It appears that some of the drawings have not been accurately completed, in this and other respects and that made it difficult for the council to understand and assess what changes were being made. While I have taken into consideration the drawings, I make my assessment on the basis of what has been installed. Overall, I accept that the changes, including removal of the Victorian windows, affect the character and appearance and significance of the listed building and cause harm, but because the overall proportions of*

*sections and frames is good, the harm would be minimal and in terms of The Framework 'less than substantial'.*

*19. In my view, reinstating the 6/6 windows considerably improves the appearance of the windows and elevation generally. The 12 panes give varied reflections of the street and this adds to benefit and counters to some extent the change in reflection created by the double glazed units. There is also benefit in securing the future of the building by replacing rotted windows and some benefit in terms of sustainability from the improved thermal performance of the building. Overall, as I have found the impact on significance and on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building to be minimal, I conclude that the public benefit far outweighs the harm."*

6.24 That scheme has many similarities to the proposed scheme other than the fact that the window details proposed in this scheme are more scholarly. However, the inspector remained of the opinion that the replacement double glazed windows resulted in public benefit in themselves and found the impact on significance and on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building to be minimal.

6.25 There is currently a plain glazed fanlight above the main entrance door into the house. This will be replaced with a new decorative fanlight. These are a feature along Great James Street and will enhance the external appearance of the building and its contribution to the architectural quality of the terrace.



## Internal alterations

### Layout and plan form changes

6.25 The basement accommodation will be used as a gym within the rear room and the existing kitchenette area will be reprovided as a bathroom. A partition is to be installed to the front room in order to create an entrance lobby and shower room for the adjacent basement front bedroom. In 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced townhouses there is often a partition in broadly this position, creating a hallway and an adjacent room at the front of the property. The proposals will create a large front room, lit by both of the windows in the main façade of the building, with a secondary space for the entrance lobby and shower room. The balance of space will remain authentic for a building of this age and character and ultimately the proposed partition is fully reversible. The basement is an area of lower significance and lacks the high quality panelling and decorative features of the upper floors of the house. This minor intervention is considered acceptable within the overall positive context of the reversion of the building to a single family house and the extensive works of repair and refurbishment which will be undertaken.

6.27 Within the rear courtyard are a series of vaults and brick arched structures. These will be reused as a plant room, storage and a wine cellar. A Newton 500 membrane or similar will be installed within these spaces in order for them to be dry and useable, with a sump pump to remove accumulated moisture. This will ensure that the underlying brickwork of the structures will be preserved.

6.28 It is also proposed to lower the floor level of the rear vaults by approximately 600mm in order for them to be more practical and useable. This will see a modest increase in their height and volume. However, the arched profile of the vaults will be retained and they will remain fully subordinate to the rooms within the main envelope of the listed building in terms of their scale, preserving their secondary and ancillary character. The existing floors are of no inherent

interest and no fabric of demonstrable value will be lost due to the lowering of the vault floors. Further information regarding the methodology for lowering the vault floors and the required underpinning is contained within the Structural Method Statement and Basement Impact Assessment by Structural Design Studio.

6.29 Beneath the main ground to basement stair flight the existing WC and modern ship lap timber cladding will be removed and new cupboards will be installed below the original string of the staircase.

### Ground Floor

6.30 The existing layout and plan form will be used to create a reception and dining room area, maintaining the building's existing spatial quality. Within the closet wing the existing partitions will be replaced to re-provide a WC. The panelling will be retained and redecorated, ensuring the original grandeur of the ground floor accommodation is preserved.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

6.31 The 1<sup>st</sup> floor will be used as a living room and home office, with a bar situated in the closet wing. In order to provide enhanced connectivity between the spaces, a new set of double doors will be installed into the spine wall. There is already a single leaf door opening in this location which is likely to be a modern intervention by the previous occupier of the building. The panelling also appears to have been modified between the door and the party wall, with three narrower panels. The proposed double doors will be proportionate in scale to the spine wall and the adjacent rooms, maintaining a sense of their separate spatial quality. Double doors are a common feature at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level in Georgian townhouses and the proposals will sit comfortably within the reinstated domestic context of the house.





6.32 The existing window in the rear elevation of the closet wing will be replaced with a door to provide access out onto the new rear terrace. This is a 19<sup>th</sup> century window which does not complement the original character of the listed building. The new door will be formed beneath the retained brick arch with a traditional design consisting of a subdivided glazed upper section above a solid stallriser.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

6.33 The layout of the rear room will remain broadly the same, with a WC and shower room created where the current kitchenette is located. Within the closet wing the bathroom will be re-fitted and the partition which forms the separate WC space will be removed, improving the layout and spatial quality of this part of the building.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

6.34 The existing toilet, storage and small lobby will be removed from the rear room, reinstating its original spatial quality. Fitted wardrobes will be installed along the spine and party walls but these will still allow for a better appreciation of the original layout of the room.

6.35 Within the front room a partition will be installed in order to create a wardrobe area and ensuite for the front bedroom. This will have a minor impact upon the plan form of the listed building however the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is an area of lower significance within the overall hierarchy of the house. It is not uncommon for the front room to be divided into two smaller rooms over the uppermost floors of an 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouse, reflecting the use of these spaces for children's or servant's bedrooms. The existing fire surround in this room will be relocated to the front room at basement level where it will be of an appropriate scale and level of grandeur. Overall, the works to create the new wardrobe/ensuite is considered acceptable within the wider context of the reversion of the house to a single

family dwelling and the significant benefits to its character which will result.

6.36 The bathroom within the closet wing will be re-fitted and the the partition which forms the separate WC space will be removed, improving the layout and spatial quality of this part of the building.

## Structural works

6.37 The timber bressumer beams within the building will be strengthened if required, taking care to avoid any harm to historic fabric.

6.38 The floors are currently very sloping and the existing modern floor finishes will be removed. If any historic floorboards survive beneath, then they will be numbered and set aside for reuse. The floors will be levelled, either through the doubling up of existing joists or the installation of wedges on top of them. This will preserve historic fabric whilst allowing for a more practical, level finish.

6.39 As part of the works to the floors the existing skirtings will be carefully removed, repaired, redecorated and then re-installed, with any new sections to match the existing profiles.

6.40 The treads to the main staircase will be levelled and strengthened, with the works taking place from below so as to avoid any harmful impact upon the appearance of the listed building. These works will allow for the safe use of the main staircase.

## Floors

6.41 Over the upper levels of the house, insulation will be installed between the floor joists. Within the bathrooms underfloor heating will be introduced using an electric heating mat system, installed onto plywood and then tiled over. Within the basement and the rear extension, a wet underfloor heating system will also be installed over the existing slab.



6.42 Existing historic boards will be revealed, if they survive. Salvaged floorboards will be used to augment the existing boards, or if there are no historic boards beneath the modern floor finishes. Bathrooms will have a tiled or stone floor finish, with a carpet runner to the stairs.

### Joinery and fireplaces

6.43 The internal doors within the building will be replaced (see A902 Door Schedule) and the new doors will have appropriate panelled detailing for their position within the house.

6.44 Non original radiator housings will be removed and any affected panelling behind them will be restored and refurbished to its original detailing. Panelling will be redecorated and repaired as required.

6.45 The non-original columns which have been installed around the stair and which protrude into a number of the rear rooms are to be removed. This will remove an inoongruous feature and enhance the internal appearance of the listed building.



Figure 35: Non original column to the right hand side of the door to be removed.

6.46 Various works to the fireplaces are proposed and these are detailed in A904 Fireplace Schedule.

### Ceilings

6.47 At basement level there will be localised repair to the ceilings in order to allow for new services to be routed into the building. Any repairs will be undertaken on a like for like basis.

6.48 The ceilings at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level are exceptionally bowed and this will be replaced on a like for like basis with traditional lath and plaster. The joists will be retained and levelled with plywood wedges to form a level substrate for the new ceilings. The valley beam to the main roof has sunk in the past and been, retained repaired, fixing it in position. The beam will be retained. This sinking accounts for the deflection of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor ceilings.

6.49 All existing cornices are to be refurbished and redecorated with any new sections pieced in to match existing. Where necessary, ceilings are to be locally repaired and plastered on a like for like basis. The works will stabilise the structure retain the historic timber and replace the plaster ceiling using traditional methods.

### Servicing

6.50 A new plumbing system will be installed throughout, including a new boiler and cast iron radiators. The pipework will utilise an existing riser within the house and a new riser within the closet wing. A water misting system will also be installed which will protect the fabric of the listed building in case of fire. The outlet nozzle for the system is small, sits flush with the ceiling and will be colour coated to match the surrounding finishes.



6.51 Two new SVPs will vent through the existing roof, connected to in line slate vents which will match the surrounding roof covering.

6.52 The house will be rewired and a new electrical system installed, including lighting, sockets, smoke alarms and detectors.

### Roof

6.53 Small scale, like for like repairs will take place to the tiled finish. If required, small scale repointing and haunching repairs will take place to the chimney stacks and any defective lead flashings will be replaced on a like for like basis. Internally, insulation and the vapour barrier within the roof space will be replaced.

### Policy compliance

#### Statutory duties – The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

6.54 The main issues for consideration in relation to this application are the effect of the proposals on no.29 Great James Street as a listed building and the impact of external changes to the building on the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

6.55 The relevant statutory provisions in relation to these matters are contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at sections 16 and 72. This appraisal has shown that the proposals will have no harmful impact upon the defined significance of the listed building, indeed it will be enhanced by its conversion to a single family house and the extensive works of sympathetic restoration to the fabric of the building. Thus, its special architectural and historic interest will be preserved in line with the s.16 statutory duty.

6.56 The external works are generally modest in their scale and impact and in many cases will enhance the listed building, most notably with regard to the reinstatement of appropriate fenestration throughout. Where the

works are more extensive, they are situated to the rear of the property, of which there are no public realm views, and where the rear courtyard is well screened due to the densely packed urban environment. Nonetheless, the proposed extension is a high quality and well designed addition to the listed building and will replace the current low grade, modern infill structures. Consequently, the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area will be preserved in line with the s.72 statutory duty.

6.57 The proposed works are considered to comply with the relevant sections of the London Borough of Camden's Local Plan 2017.

6.58 **Policy D1 – Design** requires development to respect local context and character, preserve or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets and comprise details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character. **Policy D2 – Heritage** outlines that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate enhance the borough's rich and diverse heritage assets, including conservation areas and listed buildings. Any less than substantial harm must be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. With regard to listed buildings, the Council will resist proposals for a change of use or alterations or extension to a listed building where this would cause harm to its special interest.

6.59 The proposed conversion of the building to a single family house represents a significant enhancement to its special architectural and historic interest. The best use for historic buildings is the one for which they were designed and constructed, and the proposals will allow the high significance interior to be refurbished and appreciated within a domestic context and setting. The proposals include a full scheme of repair, refurbishment and restoration of the fabric and features of the listed building, including works of enhancement such as the removal of the railing to the front parapet and the reinstatement of appropriately detailed, subdivided sashes.

6.60 Externally there will be few changes to



the high significance front elevation of the building, besides for minor changes within the lightwell and to the front railings. The most notable change will be the reinstatement of appropriate windows which will be a significant enhancement to the character of the building and the quality of the streetscene along Great James Street. To the rear the proposed infill extension is of an appropriate scale and massing, reflecting recent permissions to neighbouring properties along Great James Street. It's simple, contemporary design will provide a subtle juxtaposition with the 18<sup>th</sup> century character of the house and enhance its setting to the rear through the replacement of the existing unattractive and incongruous modern infill structures.

6.61 The proposed layout of rooms within the house largely works within the existing plan of the listed building, with the removal of later added partitions to the rear room at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level enhancing the spatial quality of the building. The insertion of new partitions is restricted to areas of lower significance at basement and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level and are considered acceptable given the overall beneficial impact of the proposals.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework 2021**

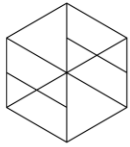
6.62 The NPPF requires the significance of heritage assets to be described and for planning applications to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing this significance. New development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Great weight should be given to the conservation of the heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposed development. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be.

6.63 This Heritage Appraisal has provided a thorough analysis of the significance of the listed building and the relative contribution of the various parts to its special architectural and historic interest. The proposals will avoid any harm to this defined significance or value, through the sensitive conversion of the building back to a single family house and its careful

adaptation, restoration and refurbishment. Consequently, the proposals are considered to comply with the requirements of the NPPF.

#### **The London Plan 2021**

6.64 The proposals are also considered to comply with the adopted London Plan (2021). The thrust of Policy HC1 - Heritage conservation and growth is that heritage assets should be valued, conserved and re-used and that development should be sympathetic in terms of their form, scale, materials and architectural detail. The proposals will ensure the ongoing occupancy and maintenance of the listed building in a sympathetic manner which reflects its original domestic use. The remodelling of areas to the rear which are of no architectural or historic interest will be achieved through the insertion of a high quality, contemporary infill structure which will provide attractive and flexible accommodation without harm to the listed building or the wider terrace and townscape.



## 7 Conclusion

7.1 This application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion of the house from office use to a single family house and associated alterations and extensions.

7.2 The proposed reinstatement of the house's domestic use will be a significant enhancement and will be in keeping with the conversion of other buildings along Great James Street from office use to residential. The proposed works to the house will include a comprehensive refurbishment of its fabric and services in order to secure its ongoing beneficial use for the medium to long term. The provision of a modest amount of additional space within the rear courtyard allows for a degree of open plan, modern living space whilst preserving the intimate, domestic character and spatial quality of the main envelope of the listed building.

7.3 The proposals will preserve and enhance the key high significance front façade of the listed building, its positive contribution to the streetscene along Great James Street and to the character and appearance of this part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

7.4 The proposed works are considered to fully comply with the requirements of the London Borough of Camden's Local Plan 2017 and will preserve and in many respects, enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. The proposals also accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular ensuring that the significance of the heritage asset is sustained and enhanced.





## Appendix A – Relevant historic environment policy

### National Planning Policy & Legislation

A1 Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that:

*“In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall 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.”*

A2 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that:

*“...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”*

A3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. There is a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within national planning policy guidance.

#### Paragraph 194

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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

#### Paragraph 195

Local planning authorities should 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.

#### Paragraph 197

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

#### Paragraph 199

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.

### Local Planning Policy

A4 Camden's Local Plan was adopted on 3 July 2017 and sets out the Council's planning policies, replacing the Core Strategy and Development Policies planning documents that were adopted in 2010. The Local Plan will cover the period 2016-2031 and will play an essential role in the delivery of the Camden Plan, which sets out the Council's vision for the borough.

A5 **Policy D1 – Design** is a key policy and has various parts that are relevant to the proposed development in heritage terms;



*"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";*
- e. comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*

A6 **Policy D2 – Heritage** has relevant parts and is clear 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.*

#### **Designated heritage assets**

*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.*

#### **Conservation areas**

*Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. 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.*

#### **Listed Buildings**

*Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. 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."*

#### **The London Plan**

A7 The London Plan 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth part C is relevant.

C Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.