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35 JOHN STREET

HERITAGE AND DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT  
5 JANUARY 2022





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Aerial view of front of 35 John Street  
Source: Google maps

## 1\_INTRODUCTION

This Heritage and Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of the Planning and Listed Building Consent applications for the proposed alterations proposed at 35 John Street, a Grade II listed house within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

### The proposal:

This proposal relates to existing permissions ref 2021/0092/P and 2021/0829/L which are currently in the process of being implemented.

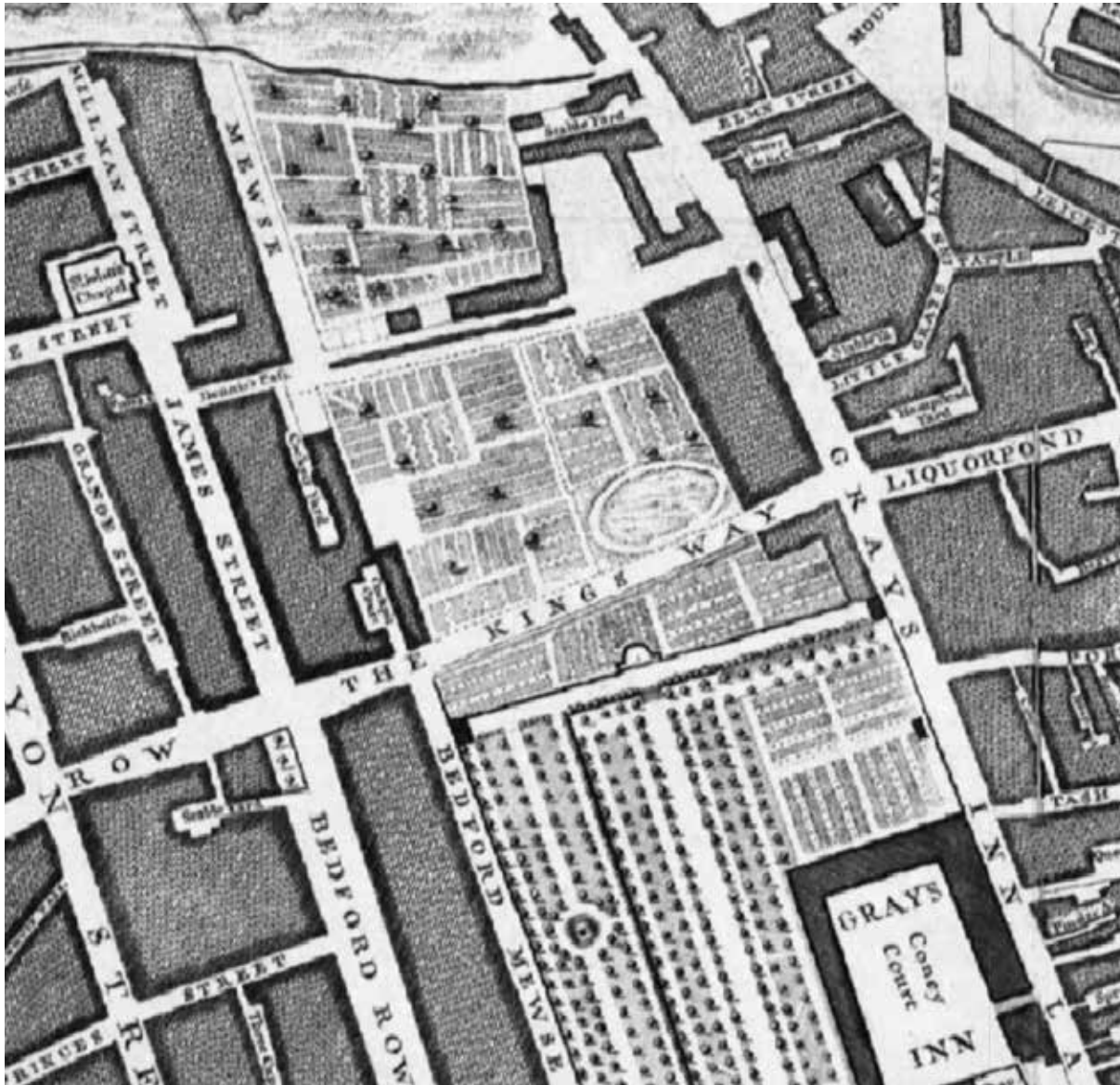
The current application seeks permission for alterations to the previously approved layout at Basement Level, including the reinstatement of a historic opening and the replacement of a non original external door to the front lightwell.

The proposed alterations are minor and aim to sympathetically reinstate historic detailing to an area of the house where little historic fabric remains.

This report is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- 1007 - P050 Site and Location Plans
- 1007 - P101A Lower Ground Floor as Existing and Demolition Plan
- 1007 - P110A Front Elevation as Existing and Demolitions
- 1007 - P201B Lower Ground Floor as Proposed
- 1007 - P110A Front Elevation as Proposed

- 1007 - P519B Rear Lightwell Window Details
- 1007 - P522 DB01 Front Lightwell Door Details



John Roche OS Map 1746  
Source: Layers of London

## 2\_CONTEXT

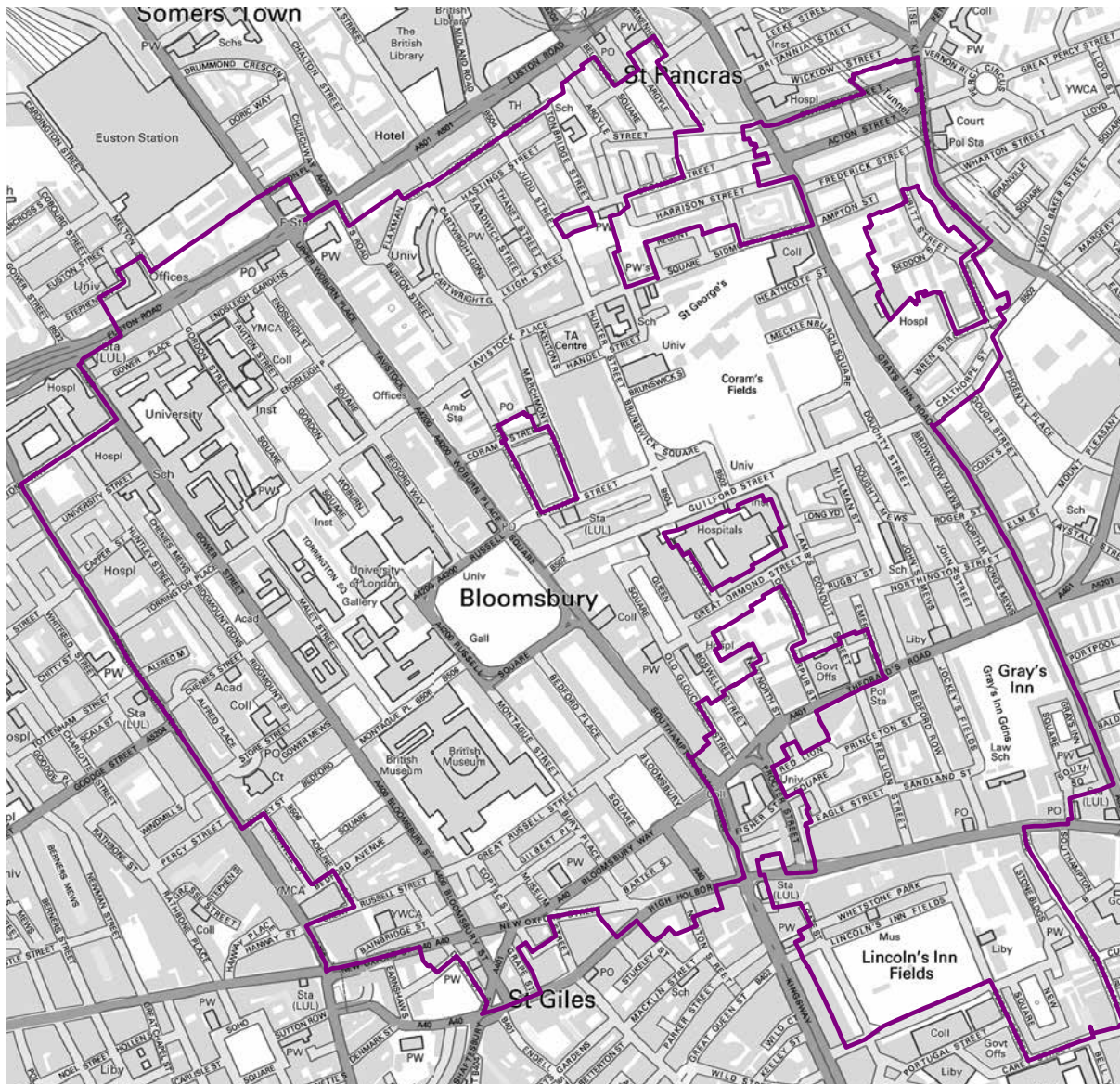
35 John Street is a Grade II listed building located within the East part of the Great James Street and Bedford Row sub area of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (designated in 1968), in the London Borough of Camden. Originally built as a family house in the 1750s as part of a terraced row, the building has undergone significant alterations over the years. Its use as an office and significant damage sustained during the Second World War has resulted in complete rebuilding of the upper floors, rebuilding of the rear façade and a substantial loss of historic fabric to interior more generally.

Around the start of the 20th century, the property was combined with numbers 33 and 34 and together they were converted into offices. All have since been converted back into residences. Number 34 and 35 were only recently converted from offices back into single-family dwellings circa 2007/2008 (planning and listed building consent numbers 2007/3742/P & 2007/3743/L).

The officers delegated report for the applications stated:

*"A detailed architectural and historic assessment has been submitted with this application. It is clear from this that the buildings have been significantly altered in the later 20th century, following bomb damage during WWII. This included the rebuilding of the front elevation at 2nd and 3rd floor levels, the significant remodelling of the rear elevations and the substantial rebuilding of the interior of the 3rd floor and parts of the 2nd floor. In addition, a new spine wall has been inserted into no.34, reducing the size of the rear room, with smaller spaces created between this new wall and the original spine wall. This has had a fairly significant impact on the plan form of the building, as well as its internal appearance with new cornicing and joinery installed into non-original spaces. The least altered spaces are at ground and 1st floor levels within both properties"*





Map of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area  
Source: Camden Council website

### 3\_SITE HISTORY

The Great James Street and Bedford Row sub area of Bloomsbury was originally set out by Nicholas Barbon with the site then established and developed during the Georgian and Regency periods under a number of different ownerships. Up until the 18th Century, this area north of Grays Inn was primarily undeveloped farmland. Great James Street was constructed in the 1720s during an initial boom of London's construction activity which tapered off to an inactive period lasting several decades until the 1760s, when construction resumed apace. The majority of the Bloomsbury area was built up by the 1820s during this second wave of construction activity. The row of buildings at the lower part of John Street, including number 35, forms part of a rare group of surviving buildings to have been constructed in the 1740s, during the period of inactivity.

Constructed by builder John Blagrove between 1754 and 1759, 35 John Street formed part of a development of 35 houses on the Henry Doughty Estate. The houses followed the Palladian mathematical proportions, whilst retaining a more minimal façade ornamentation in accordance with the trends of the times. On opposite sides of the street, 9 houses formed a terrace (numbers 2-10 and 29-37 respectively) with a central grander, pedimented house on each side (numbers 6 and number 33, both surviving though number 6 has since been rebuilt in materials unsympathetic to the original building).

A large portion of these houses in the lower end of John Street was damaged by the war and rebuilt to match the surrounding buildings. Numbers 31 and 32 were re-built to a high standard and are considered accurate reproductions with the exception of their mansard roofs. Number 37 no longer survives, having been replaced in its entirety with a large block stretching to the corner of Theobald's Road.

Number 33 seems mostly original, whilst number 34, 35 and 36 have had their upper floors predominantly rebuilt, after the second world war, following severe war damage.





LCC Bomb damage map 1945  
Source: Layers of London

The area retains its hierarchical structure set out on a grid system with an order of importance being evident in the grandness and progression of scale from one street to the next. John Street, Doughty Street and Bedford Row are wide roads of larger townhouses built in terraces with mews to the rear offering a significant contribution to the general network of London's Georgian streets where a large proportion of the original buildings survive.



1682  
OS Maps of the area. Site indicated in orange.  
Source: National Library of Scotland



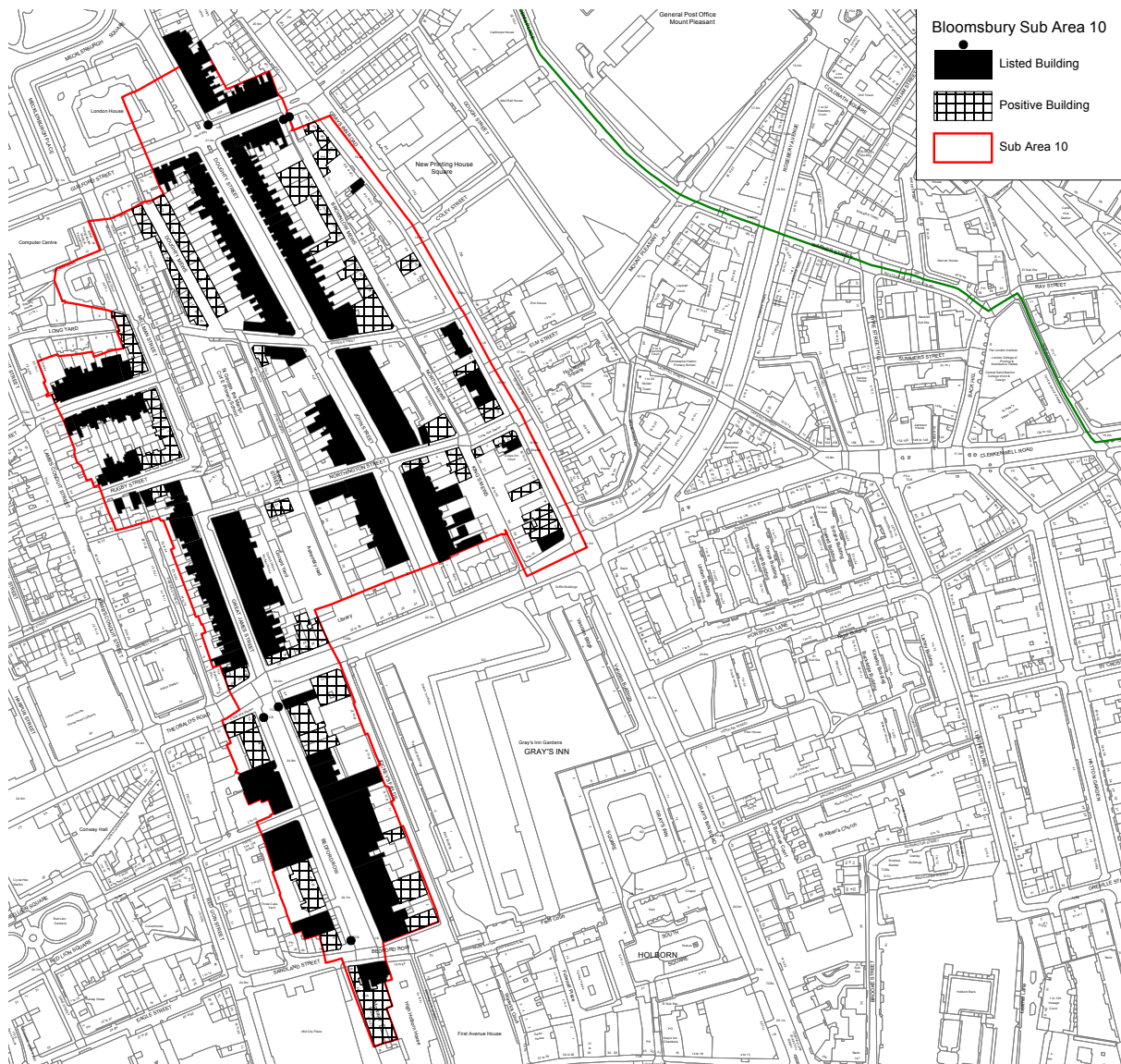
1893-95



1915



1944-69



Map of the Bloomsbury Sub Area 10 - Great Jame's Streer and Bedford Row  
Source: Camden Council website

## 4\_THE BUILDING

35 John Street is arranged over 4 storeys with a basement that has been extended into part of the garden. The building, is 3 bays wide and faced with stock brick. As indicated in section 2 above, the house formed a row of nine houses with a wider central pedimented house.

The property was listed in 1959 as part of the surviving group of 8 out of the 9 houses (Nos 29-36).

Historic England describes these buildings on the listing as follows:  
TQ3082SE JOHN STREET 798-1/96/945 (West side) 24/10/51 Nos.29-36 (Consecutive) and attached railings

*Terrace of 8 houses. c1754-59. Built by J Blagrove with W Barlow, J Bosworth, S Room and R Meel. Nos 31 & 32 rebuilt C20 in facsimile (except for addition of dormers). Multi-coloured stock brick; Nos 31 and 32, brown brick with slated mansard roofs and dormers; No.36, reddened brick. Plain brick bands at 1st and 2nd floor level; No.33 with stone band at 1st floor level. 4 storeys and basements; Nos 31 and 32 with attics. 3 windows each; No.33, 4 windows; No.29, 1 window return to Northington Street. Gauged red brick flat arches to recessed sashes, except No.33, most with glazing bars. Parapets. No.29: round-arched doorway with radial fanlight, pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-head and panelled door. INTERIORS: noted to retain panelled rooms and stairs with turned balusters. Nos 30 & 31: wooden Doric doorcases with triglyph friezes, dentil cornices, open pediments, patterned fanlights and panelled doors. INTERIOR: of No.30 noted to retain panelled rooms and stairs with turned balusters and carved ends in hall with heavy timber archways. Dentilled cornices on first floor. No.31 included for group value. No.32: wooden Ionic doorcase with modillion cornice and pediment. HISTORICAL NOTE: plaque with bronze bas relief roundel of a bust commemorating Sir John Kirk, JP, Christian philanthropist. No.33: slightly projecting with evidence of tuck pointing. Mid C19 stucco doorcase with attached columns. Cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Cyma-bracketed cornice on 3rd floor with pediment across attic storey and oculus in tympanum. Attached mid C19 cast-iron railings to area. INTERIOR: noted to retain moulded ceiling*





Goad Insurance Plan of London, 1887. Site indicated in orange.  
Source: Camden Council website

to 1st floor. Turned balusters and carved ends to stairs. Nos 34-36: wooden ionic doorcases with modillion cornices and pediments, pulvinated friezes and panelled doors. No.34, mid C19 cast-iron railings; No.35, entrance flanked by wrought-iron lamp brackets. INTERIORS: noted to retain panelled rooms, marble fireplaces and dentilled moulded ceilings. Stairs with turned balusters and carved ends. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with torch flambe finials to areas.

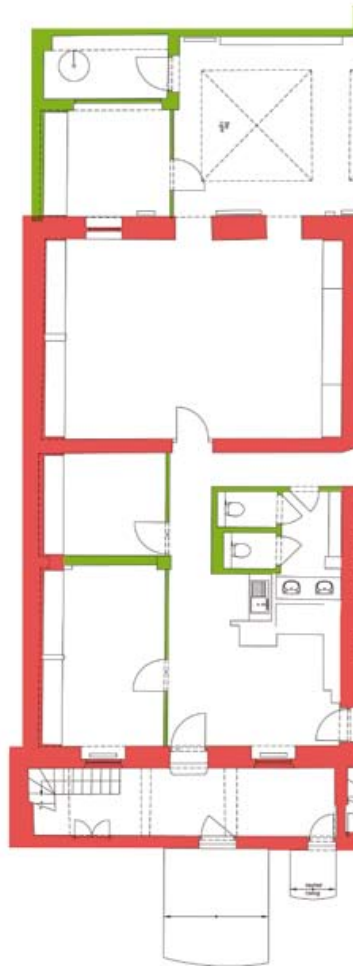
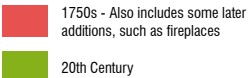
The house has a central well staircase set in the middle of the house between the front and rear rooms and lit from a large rooflight above. This type of well staircase was a 17th century feature that was beginning to go out of fashion when the house was built, though it provides a more luxurious aspect to the house with a larger entrance hall and wider front and rear rooms at first floor, as opposed to the later trend of the side cantilevered staircases commonly seen in subsequent developments, including that of number 34.

The hierarchy of the house internally, would have originally operated with the kitchen and ancillary rooms in the basement, Principal rooms on the ground and first floors, family bedrooms on the second floor and staff accommodation on the third floor. The Ground floor may have contained a reception room or Library at the front with a dining room at the rear and a drawing room in the first-floor rear room above.

A house of this type would have likely been occupied by a wealthy family, at least until the 1840s when the construction of the first railway influenced a move of the majority of the wealthy populations to commutable outer London suburbs.

With the move of the wealthy families out of the southern Bloomsbury area at the end of the 19th century, this part of London was taken over by businesses, primarily legal offices, where the conversion of the now emptying housing stock presented valuable office space. The Goad Insurance map dated 1887 indicates that 35 John Street (as well as its neighbouring 33, 34 and 36) was by this time already used as an office.





Basement Significance Plan dated 2007 prior to the property being converted into a single dwelling.  
 Source: Alan Baxter and Associates Assessment of Significance report in relation to 34 and 35 John Street.

## 5\_HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The following extracts and significance plans, have been obtained from the Assessment of Significance report produced by Alan Baxter and Associates that was submitted with application number 2007/3743/L:

‘To enable a more nuanced understanding of the significance of 34 and 35 John street, and thereby to make possible an informed analysis of the impact of the current refurbishment proposals, this section assesses the degree to which each element of the buildings contributes to the architectural and historical interest of the buildings.

### **Façades to John Street**

*Although they are individually quite self-effacing, 34 and 35 are part of the large ‘palace front’ formed by neighbouring properties, and their external appearance is therefore extremely important to their group value. the upper parts have been very carefully reconstructed and restored, and are close to their original appearance. the front façades are therefore of high architectural and historic significance, contributing strongly to the character of this part of the conservation area. the only detracting factors are the variations in glazing patterns caused by the piecemeal replacement of some of the windows.*

### **Rear façade**

*No. 35 has been considerably altered, such that only parts of the ground floor and the small areas of the First Floor brickwork remain as originally built. The basement has been extended, hiding the original form of the building at this level; the ground floor windows have been altered on more than one occasion; the first and second floor brickwork has largely been rebuilt, and an entirely new third floor façade has been created. In addition, the window heads on the upper floors consist of soldier courses of modern brick, rather than gauged brick voussoirs. Nevertheless, despite these changes the present rear façade is sympathetic in form to the Georgian architecture of neighbouring buildings. However, due to the nature and extent of the alterations this façade is only of neutral significance – with the exception of the ground floor which is of some significance.*







View of Front Elevation



View of front lightwell and door



View of steps to front lightwell



## 6\_HISTORIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed alterations are relatively minor. These are summarised below and analysed against any historic significance:

### Front lightwell door:

-The existing y from 1959 indicate these were previously made of solid stone (very likely York stone) that has since been replaced with concrete tiles, presumably due to the significant wear of the original stone, which is evident in the 1959 photographs (See <https://www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk> Record Number 72800 and 72799). The proposal aims to remove the existing crude concrete tiles and reinstate York stone.

### Works to the rear:

-Reduce size of existing lightwell at the rear and replace aluminium doors with painted timber fixed glazing and painted timber door.

The proposed works are as per previous approval ref 2007/3742/P & 2007/3743/L with a slight alteration to the design of the proposed glazed screens.

The basement is generally considered of neutral historic significance having lost any original historic fabric. Additionally, this area is part of a later basement extension (originally consented circa 1987 and further amended circa 2007).

### Internal Layout changes:

The basement is of neutral significance and has lost any original features. The general character of this area is modern. The proposal seeks to make alterations to partitions previously added circa 2007, to improve the use of space and provide a better boot room, laundry area and shower/cloakroom area appropriate for this large family home. A historic opening leading into the front room is to be reinstated to serve a pantry area.

The proposed works will not harm the character or significance of the listed house.



Internal view towards Basement Rear Lightwell

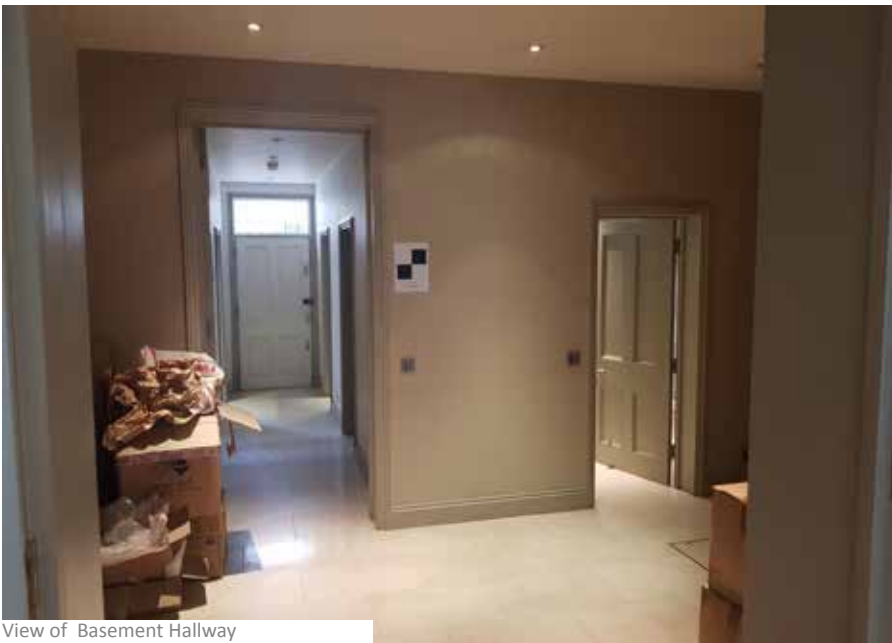
## 7\_USE

The property is in use as a single dwelling house (C3) and this use will be maintained. It is to be used as a family home, as it would have originally been intended.

## 8\_ACCESS

Access arrangements approaching the dwelling are not altered under the current proposals.

The main entrance of the house at Ground Floor is accessible via external steps that lead to an entrance hall and central staircase. The Lower Ground, First and Second Floors are accessed via the main staircase. The Third Floor and terrace are accessed by a secondary staircase. The Lower Ground Floor is also accessible via a staircase to the front lightwell.



View of Basement Hallway

## 9\_LAYOUT

The general layout and plan form of the original house is to remain unaltered.





View Basement Rear Lightwell staircase



View of railing around Basement Rear Lightwell

## 10\_PLANNING POLICY

The following paragraphs briefly set out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment. The relevant statutory provision for the historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

### -The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019 and sets out the government's approach to dealing with the historic environment. Section 12 of the NPPF deals specifically with this area of policy. Policies relevant in this particular case are as follows.

Paragraph 189 states that applicants should 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.' A history of the site and its context and a statement of significance are presented in this report at section 2.

Paragraph 192 is clear that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 193 sets out that '*when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.*'

Paragraph 200 deals with opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and setting of to enhance or better reveal their significance. It states '*Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better*



View of existing front Lightwell door to be replaced.

*reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'*

#### **-London Borough of Camden Local Plan**

Camden's Local Plan was adopted in June 2017. The most relevant policy in this case is Policy D2: Heritage.

With regard to Conservation Areas, the policy states that the Council will:

Require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character and appearance of the area.

#### **- Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)**

A number of CPG were adopted in January 2021.

The CPG on the Design of Heritage assets state that 'the level of detail required will be proportionate to the asset/s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset/s affected.'

The general thrust of national and local historic environment policy is to conserve and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets (such as listed buildings and conservation areas) and understandably to avoid harmfully affecting their special interest.





Aerial view of rear of 35 John Street  
Source: Google maps

## 11\_CONCLUSION

The proposals as set out above have been informed and shaped by an understanding of the historic building and its development. The interior of the house has been much altered and other than the plan form many of the historic features have been lost or replaced.

Taking into account the proposals as a whole, it is considered that the proposed scheme would not cause harm to the special interest of the listed building and would bring about genuine enhancements brought about through an appropriate programme of restoration and reinstatement of lost features and the sensitive layout and design of the internal and external works.

There will be some minor modifications to allow the creation of modern conveniences, but there will be no loss of historic fabric, or of any feature which contributes positively to the character and special interest of the listed building. The works do not affect the plan form or layout.

National policy (set out above) seeks to enhance the significance of listed buildings and to protect them from unjustifiable harm, in common with local historic environment policy. Considered as a whole the proposal would not harm the significance and special interest of the listed building and would significantly enhance its special character.

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