5 Bloomsbury Place
LONDON

Heritage Assessment of Proposed Air Source Heat Pumps

April 2022

1.0 Scope

This assessment has been prepared to accompany a listed building application for the replacement of the existing gas fired central heating system with Air Source Heat Pumps and associated internal heating / cooling units. To 5 Bloomsbury Place.

This report has been prepared by Sean Emmett who is a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. It is based on a desk-top study of the building, the listing description, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area draft statement.

2.0 Location

The property is situated between Bloomsbury Square and Southampton Row on the north side of Bloomsbury Place.

It is in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, sub-section 6 Bloomsbury Square, Russell Square and Tavistock Square.

It forms part of a short terrace, numbers 1-5 Bloomsbury Place, all of which are listed Grade II.

3.0 Background and Description

Bloomsbury Place's origins date back to the demolition of Bedford House on the north side of Bloomsbury Square in the early nineteenth century. The development of the estate saw the implementation of a new road layout and terraces built to the north side of Bloomsbury Square. The terrace of 1-5 Bloomsbury Place is first shown on an 1824 map. The Bedford Estate Archive and 1866 map show subsequent works carried out to the property including the re-fronting of the terrace, the rebuilding of the top storey and the provision of a simple 2 storey closet wing to the rear.

Includes: No.65 SOUTHAMPTON ROW. 5 terraced houses. Late C17, refronted 1857-62 possibly by Searle & Trehearne. Stucco with rusticated ground floor with band above. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Each house treated as a bay with paired rusticated pilasters rising through ground, 1st and 2nd floors and extending as panelled pilasters through 3rd floor. Entrances with consoles, pulvinated friezes, cornices; square-headed fanlights and panelled doors. Recessed sash windows; 1st floor with consoles, bracketed cornice and cast-iron window-box guards; 2nd and 3rd floor with architraves. 3rd floor with pulvinated frieze and cornice. Bracketed cornice at 3rd floor. Cornice and blocking course. INTERIORS: No 3, some panelling and turned balusters to stairs. No.4, panelled staircase and square balusters and shaped ends to stairs. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.4 was the home of Sir Hans Sloane (GLC plaque). No.65 Southampton Row forms part of No.1 Bloomsbury Place with 3 window return (all blank) and double entrance.

Whilst the key elements identified in the listing are unchanged, the rear of the property and the interior have undergone significant change in terms of internal alterations to openings/partitions at all levels and more recent electrical and mechanical installations, much of which is face-fixed.

4.0 Proposals

The proposals for the replacement of the exiting gas fired boiler with Air Source Heat pumps are set out in the Design and Access Statements.

The work entails the removal of the existing gas fired boilers, radiators and redundant pipework combined with the installation of new units internally in purpose made free standing joinery units. The condenser units will be installed within the rear garden, housed within an acoustic enclosure. As confirmed in the Design and Access Statement, the acoustic enclosure will be located in the rear of the garden and will match the enclosures in the gardens of 2,3 & 4 Bloomsbury Place, which were granted permission under application, 2019/5238/P, 2019/1024/P and 2017/6579/P respectively. The enclosure will be hidden behind the existing boundary wall and therefore not visible from the adjacent public highway.

The pipework serving the internal comfort cooling units will be routed within existing service routes. Vertically, the pipework will run within an existing riser located in the rear corner of the main house where the redundant central heating pipework will be removed. Horizontally, the pipework will be routed within the existing floor voids. Generally, the internal units have been located in the same position as the redundant radiators, which will allow pipework to run in existing service penetrations/notches within the timber joists.

Thus the proposals do not affect the external appearance of the building as seen from Bedford Square or the wider area.

5.0 Assessment

The proposal will not have an adverse effect on the exterior of the building which, as, described above, is of particular significance. They therefore do not adversely affect the significance of the exterior of the listed building, nor the adjoining listed buildings or the Conservation Area.

The proposals for internal distribution of services keeps these concealed using existing voids for the purpose and thus they do not adversely affect the significance of the interior features.

The new services will be run in existing routes to mitigate the impact on the fabric of the building, the risers, etc will be cleared of redundant pipework and cabling to make space for the new services.

The installation of Air Source Heat Pumps will ensure the sustainability of the existing building, allowing the building to be heated and cooled with renewable energy. The Air Source Heat Pump will also be considerably more efficient than the original outdated gas fired boiler, further improving the sustainability of the building.

In summary, it is considered that the proposals comply with both national and local guidance on the protection of designated heritage assets and the conservation area while ensuring that the building provides a sustainable asset.

Sean Emmett
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