

No. 4–6 Bedford Place WC1B 5JD

Heritage Statement: roof repairs

For

Nebra Property 2022 Limited

September 2022

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1. Introduction

Purpose of this Heritage Statement

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been written by Spurstone Heritage Ltd for Nebra Property 2022 Limited, to support a listed building consent application for *Repairs to existing roof structure and replacement of roof covering* at No. 4–6 Bedford Place. It should be read alongside the *Structural Statement in Support of Listed Building Consent – Existing Roof* (Rev P1 19 August 2022) by Hydrock Structural Engineers, and the application drawings.

Heritage planning context

- 1.2 The Site consists of three adjoining houses in the terrace Nos. 1–20 Bedford Place, a Grade II listed building. The terrace on the opposite side of Bedford Place, Nos. 21–40, is also listed at Grade II. The street is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The listed terrace, neighbouring listed buildings and conservation area are designated heritage assets as defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the NPPF).

Methodology and structure of the report

- 1.3 The information contained in this report was acquired through desk-based and archival research, site visits (10 and 17 May 2022) and discussion with the owner.
- 1.4 This Introduction is followed by a summary history of the Site in Section 2. The significance assessment in Section 3 uses the definitions of significance in the NPPF and provides the basis for assessing the potential impact of the proposals in Section 4. Sources consulted are given in Section 5. Appendix A contains the relevant entry from the National Heritage List, and Appendix B summarises relevant policies.

Scope and limitations

- 1.5 This report deals only with the part of the Site affected by the proposals, i.e. the roof. It does not deal with structural matters. The Historic Environment Record (HER) has not been consulted, as no below-ground works are proposed and all relevant designations have been obtained from other sources.
- 1.6 The information contained in this report is based on the research described above, understanding of the site acquired on the site visits, and information supplied by the owner. Further research or site investigations may bring to light new information or evidence that may require the assessments or conclusions in this report to be revised or amended.

2. The Site



Fig. 1. Site location



Fig. 2. The Site in its urban context (Google Earth, annotated)

Site description

- 2.1 The Site is on the east side of Bedford Place towards the south end. The front boundary is the Bedford Place pavement, the basement vaults extending as far as the roadway. The Site is bounded to the rear by a strip of undeveloped land, to the north-east by No. 7 Bedford Place and to the south-west by No. 3. The approximate centre of the Site is at Grid Reference TQ302817. The property consists of three adjoining terraced houses of three main storeys with basement and attic (Fig 3). The roof of each house has 'butterfly' slopes supported by the party wall and covered with slate under asphalt, and a flat area with a lantern over the main staircase. Parapets conceal the roof in views from the ground to front and rear.

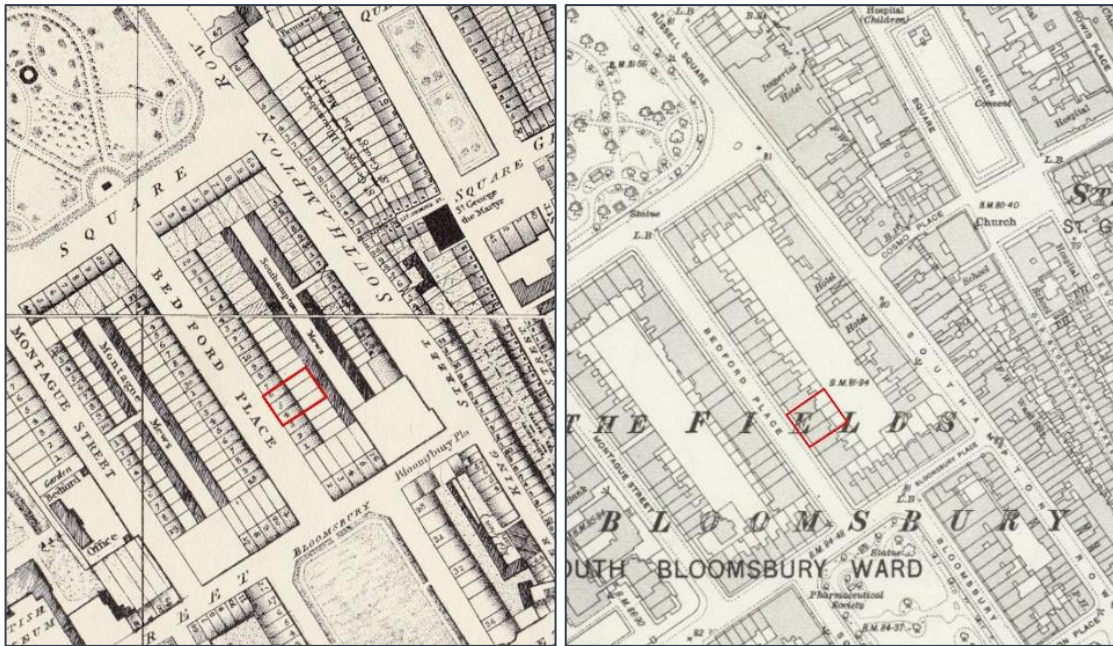


Fig 3 (left). Horwood's map as revised by Faden, 1813, detail with Site outlined. Fig 4 (right). Ordnance Survey, 1936, detail

Summary history

- 2.2 The fourth Earl of Southampton began the development of Bloomsbury Square and Great Russell Street in the 1660s. On the death of his daughter and heiress, Rachel, in 1723, Bloomsbury — the area now enclosed by Euston Road to the north, Woburn Place / Southampton Row to the east, New Oxford Street to the south and Tottenham Court Road to the west — became part of the Bedford Estate.
- 2.3 From about 1800 the fifth Duke of Bedford instigated a more intensive phase of development under the supervision of his surveyor and architect James Burton (1761–1837), *'the most successful developer in late Georgian London, responsible for some of its most characteristic architecture'*. (Bowdler, 2004).
- 2.4 In 1800 Burton ordered the demolition of the old Southampton House, clearing the site of the mansion and its extensive garden ready for redevelopment. Within four years he had laid out Russell Square as the largest and *'most handsome'* square in London (Hobhouse, 1971), commissioned Humphry Repton (1752–1818) to design the garden at its centre, and completed the houses on all four sides. Horwood's map shows Russell Square fully enclosed, and Bedford Place to the south (Fig 3).
- 2.5 Bedford Place — at first also sometimes referred to as Lower Bedford Place — was built from about 1815 on the site of Bedford House. It connected Russell Square to the earlier Bloomsbury Square. The Bedford Estate imposed high standards on developers in order to attract well-to-do residents, and the houses of Bedford Place are *'characteristic of the style of the Duke of Bedford's new developments of this time by his builder James Burton; absolutely plain, decently proportioned, with stuccoed ground floors'*. (Cherry & Pevsner 2002; 326).
- 2.6 As early as the 1850s, however, many of the larger houses in Bloomsbury were being converted into hotels and boarding houses, and despite attempts by the Estate to prevent it, this trend continued into the twentieth century. *'Pevsner'* notes that *'In the early C20 [Bloomsbury] fell into gentle decline, and the name became the term for the set of intellectuals and artists who lived cheaply here in those short years around the First World War.'* (Cherry & Pevsner 2002; 320–1)



Fig 5 (left). Nos. 4–6 Bedford Place, front elevation. Fig 6 (right) No. 4, rear elevation



Fig 7 (left). No. 6, roof lantern. Fig 8 (centre). No. 4 roof with metal stair and timber walkway. Fig 9 (right). Slates covered with bitumen (Turnerised)

- 2.7 Nos. 4, 5 and 6 Bedford Place were first built as three separate houses, and remained so throughout the nineteenth century. By 1930, however, No. 4 was a ‘private hotel’, sometimes listed as the Sandringham House Hotel, and by 1975 Nos. 5 and 6 had been amalgamated into one premises, the Wansbeck Hotel, with openings in the party wall at every level. In 1978 the two hotels were united with new openings in the party wall between Nos. 4 and 5 at every level except the ground floor. (LBC Archives, App. No. A 6771 approved 10.05.1978)

No. 4–6 Bedford Place today

- 2.8 The street elevation of No. 4–6 Bedford Place, designed in neoclassical style with Palladian proportions and constructed of stock brick in Flemish bond with rusticated basements and ground floors, is largely intact (Fig 5).
- 2.9 The rear elevations are plain stock brick with the same system of fenestration as the front: large windows denoting the principal rooms on the first floor and successively smaller windows for the lower-status levels of the house. Small windows have been inserted on the second floor, and No. 4 has been rendered (Fig 6). The houses have all been extended to the rear, each to a different design.



Figs 10 and 11. Details of the roof, showing failure of the Turnerising and deflection exacerbated by the additional weight of the bitumen coating

- 2.10 The roofs are largely unaltered, having oval glazed lanterns over the staircases, and 'butterfly' slated roofs sloping up to the party walls. The external glazing to the lanterns has been reglazed with modern wired security glass (Fig 7). Modern metal ladders and rails have been added to provide secure access to plant rooms in the roof voids (Fig 8). While the form of the roofs is intact, the slates and coverings have been subject to a series of insensitive repairs, including painting with bitumen (Turnerising) in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent leaking (Figs 9, 10 and 11). The roofs are in poor visual condition, and failing; water damage is present throughout the building.

3. Significance

Assessing significance

- 3.1 The assessment follows the advice on assessing significance contained in the NPPF. Significance underpins the definition of a ‘heritage asset’ in Annex 2 of the NPPF:

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 assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

- 3.2 Annex 2 of the NPPF 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.

- 3.3 Significance is usually derived from a mix of the types of interest mentioned in the NPPF.
- 3.4 Understanding significance helps owners and others responsible for managing a heritage asset to repair, maintain and develop it in a way that preserves, enhances or better reveals its special interest, character or cultural value. Analysis of the relative significance of different parts of a site can help designers arrive at the most appropriate proposals by identifying parts that can sustain a greater or lesser degree of intervention—those that can be changed without harm to significance, and those that are more sensitive and should not be changed.

Levels of significance

- 3.5 Different levels of significance may be defined as follows:

High significance: makes an important specific contribution to the special interest of the site

Moderate significance: makes a specific contribution to the special interest of the site

Low significance: makes a general contribution to the interest of the site

Neutral: makes no contribution to special interest, but does not detract

Detracts: obscures or harms significance.

Designations

Listed building

- 3.6 The significance of No. 4–6 Bedford Place is officially recognised by its inclusion in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest as part of the terrace Nos. 1–20 Bedford Place, at Grade II (NHL No. 1244591; Appendix A). This confirms that the terrace is considered to be a building of national importance, warranting every effort to preserve it.

Setting of listed buildings

- 3.7 The Site is within and forms part of the setting of several listed buildings, including the terrace Nos. 21–40 on the opposite (west) side of Bedford Place (NHL No. 1244593; Fig 12).



Fig 12. Listed buildings: blue triangles denote Grade II listed buildings and terraces; orange triangle denotes Grade II* (HE, annotated)

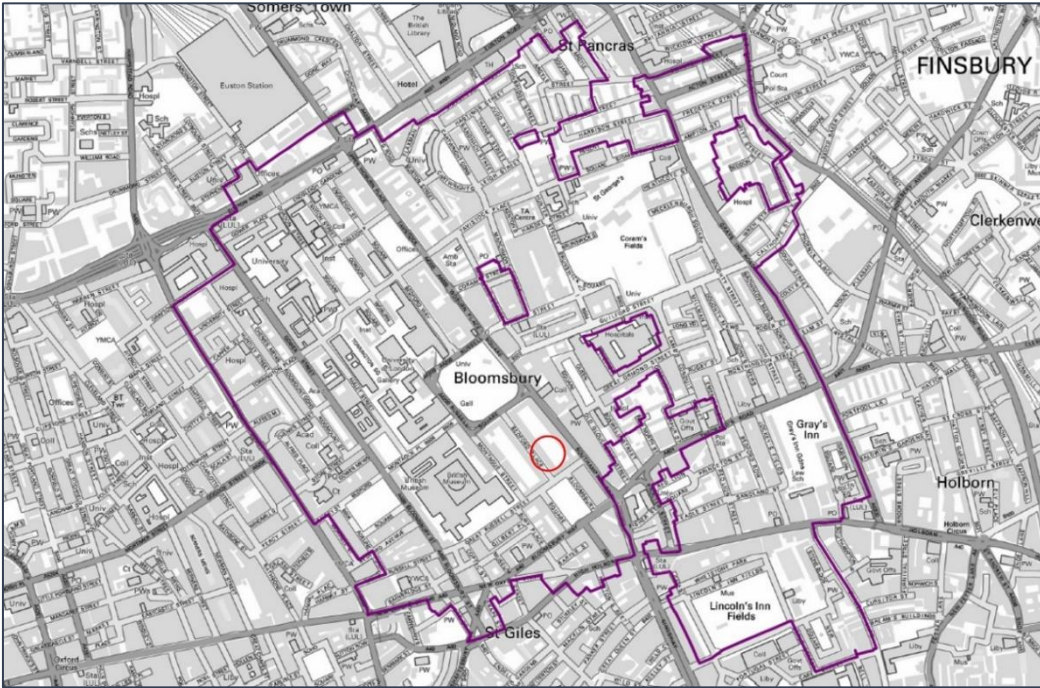


Fig 13. Bloomsbury Conservation Area, approximate Site location circled (LBC 2006, annotated)

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area

3.8 The Site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in Residential Sub Area 6: Bloomsbury Square/Russell Square/Tavistock Square (Fig 13). The *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal* notes that ‘there is strong consistency in the architectural vocabulary of the original terraced development.’ (LBC 2011; 5.80)

3.9 In describing Bedford Place, the *Appraisal* notes that the terraces on both sides are identical, and similar to other Burton developments in the sub area; they provide ‘a strong sense of enclosure and a horizontal parapet line on each side’. (LBC 2011; 5.90) The Site makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Significance of No 4–6 Bedford Place

- 3.10 The terrace Nos. 1–20 Bedford Place has historic interest as part of the substantial phase of development of the Bedford Estate that took place from 1800, following the creation of Russell Square. It exemplifies a style of town planning and domestic architecture established by the Bedford Estate in the late eighteenth century and continued in the early nineteenth-century until Bloomsbury was a complete high-class suburb, a *'world of ... squares and terraces, pleasant leafiness in alternation with equally pleasant architectural restraint, an ideal example of the right mixture of formal and informal.'* (Cherry & Pevsner 2002, p. 321)
- 3.11 Bedford Place was laid out and built up by James Burton, an important figure in the development of this part of London. It was conceived as a connection between two of the principal architectural set-pieces of the estate, Bloomsbury Square and Russell Square.
- 3.12 The street frontage is well preserved along the full length of the terrace (on both sides of the street), which adds to its architectural and artistic interest. It has **high significance**.
- 3.13 The rear elevation is generally well preserved. Its design is plainer than that of the front, appropriate to its lower status and private aspect. It has some architectural and artistic interest, and **moderate significance** generally.
- 3.14 The roofs of all three houses, with their butterfly format and party wall upstands with chimney pots, are generally well preserved, and have **moderate significance**. The lanterns are important elements of the staircase design, and have **high significance**. Their wired security glass and the recent metal stairs giving access to the roof voids are not particularly sympathetic but do not actively detract: these elements have **neutral significance**. However, the roof is in a poor condition as a result of alterations and attempts to fix leaks. The Turnerising harms the roof's appearance and **detracts from its significance**.

Significance plan

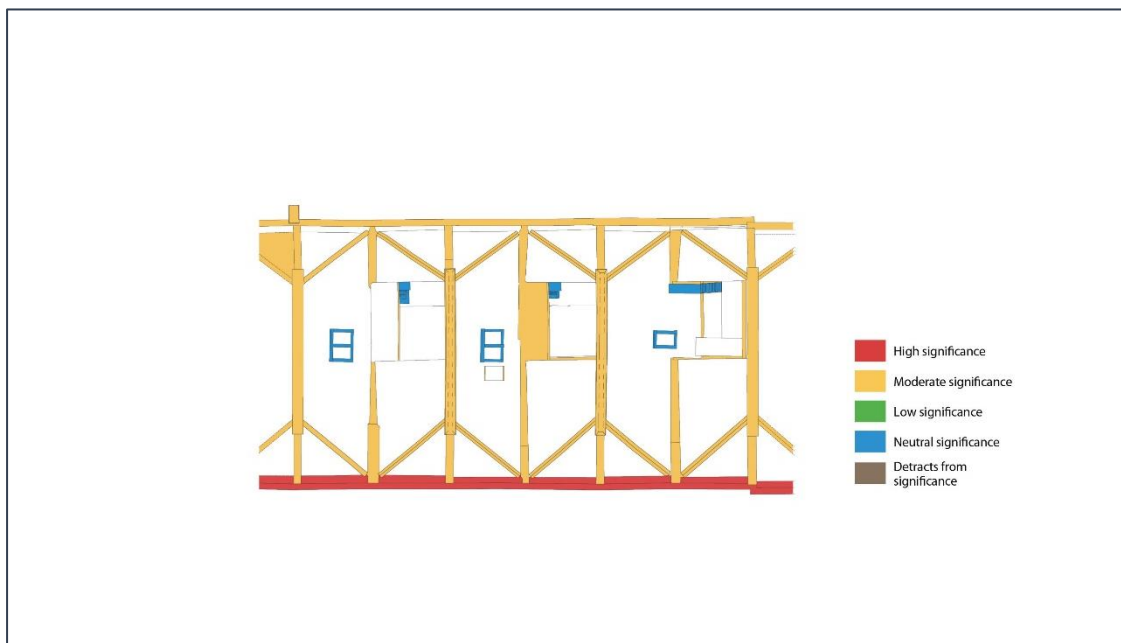


Fig 14. No. 4–6 Bedford Place: roof significance

4. The proposals and their impact

Background to the proposals

- 4.1 Work is currently in hand on basic maintenance of No. 4–6 to make the building weathertight before the coming winter. This is the first part of a phased scheme to extend and refurbish the hotel, to bring the accommodation up to current standards. The details of this scheme are to be discussed with the Council in due course.
- 4.2 As set out above, the roof is in poor condition and needs urgent repairs. While the form of each roof is intact, the slates and coverings have been subject to a series of insensitive repairs, including painting with bitumen (Turnerising) in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent leaking. The roof is in poor visual condition, and failing; water damage is present in several places on the third floor. The bitumen has also added significant weight to the underlying timbers, which has caused them to bow. For further detail, please refer to the structural engineer's report.

The proposals and their impact

- 4.3 In summary, it is proposed to remove the existing asphalt, slates and sarking boards so that the condition of the existing roof can be properly investigated. All sound timber will be retained. Decayed timbers will be repaired by splicing in new timber.
- 4.4 The roof structure will be strengthened by the addition of new steel strengthening channels to both sides of the valley beams, trimming beams, and new rafters and ceiling joists. Once the roof structure has been strengthened, new insulation will be installed before the roof covering are replaced.
- 4.5 As many as possible of the existing slates will be retained, cleaned and reused, but given the asphalt painting of the slates, it is anticipated that nearly all the roof will need to be re-covered with new natural slate to match the historic roof covering. Details of the proposed slates are set out in the architect's supporting documents.
- 4.6 The existing historic fabric and the original format of the roof will be retained, and the steel beams will be clearly distinguishable from the historic structure. The external appearance of the roof will be greatly improved by the reinstatement of a natural slate covering. The work will make the building weathertight, and better insulated. The impact of the proposal on the significance of the listed building will be positive.
- 4.7 There will be no impact on the significance of the neighbouring listed buildings, or on the character or appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Conclusion

- 4.8 The project team have carried out extensive research into the history and construction of the existing roof. A detailed understanding of the fabric and assessment of the Site's heritage significance have informed the design of proposals that will enhance the significance of the designated heritage asset and support the continuing use of the building as a hotel. The proposed repairs to the roof of No. 4–6 Bedford Place are in accordance with the NPPF paras 197 and 199, and Camden's Local Plan policies D1 and D2 (Appendix B). It is therefore requested that the application be approved.

5. Sources

Books and journals

Camden History Society, *Streets of Bloomsbury and Fitzrovia*, 1997

Cherry, B. and Pevsner, N. (2002), *The Buildings of England. London 4: North*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Weinreb, B. and Hibbert, C. (1995), *The London Encyclopaedia*. London: Papermac

Policy and guidance

LB Camden (2011), *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy*

LB Camden Archives

Drainage application plans for Nos. 4, 5, and 6 Bedford Place, 1891–1971 (microfiche)

Appendix A. Statutory List entry

Numbers 1–20 and attached railings, 1–20 Bedford Place

Overview

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1244591

Date first listed: 28-Feb-1969

Date of most recent amendment: 11-Jan-1999

Statutory Address 1: NUMBERS 1-20 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 1-20, BEDFORD PLACE

Location

Statutory Address: NUMBERS 1-20 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 1-20, BEDFORD PLACE

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden (London Borough)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: TQ 30249 81820

Details

CAMDEN

TQ3081NW BEDFORD PLACE 798-1/100/63 (East side) 28/02/69 Nos.1-20 (Consecutive) and attached railings (Formerly Listed as: BEDFORD PLACE Nos.1-20 AND 21-40 (Consecutive))

GV II

Symmetrical terrace of 20 houses forming the east side of Bedford Place. c1815. By James Burton. Multi-coloured stock brick with rusticated stucco ground floors. Stucco 3rd floor sill band. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Slightly projecting end bays (Nos 1-3 and 18-20) and central bays (Nos 8-12). Wide segmental-arched doorways with some patterned fanlights, sidelights and double half-glazed doors. Gauged brick flat arches (painted red) to recessed sash windows, some with original glazing bars. Continuous cast-iron balconies at 1st floor level, No.11 with arched trellis balcony with tented canopy. Parapets. INTERIORS not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas, some houses with area overthrows.

Listing NGR: TQ3024981820

Legacy

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

Legacy System number: 476645

Legacy System: LBS

Legal

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

End of official list entry

Appendix B. Summary of relevant planning policy

- B.1 As No. 4–6 Bedford Place is Grade II-listed, works that affect its significance require listed building consent and will be assessed against Government guidance contained in the NPPF and the online NPPG, which gives useful guidance on public benefits. Historic England has produced relevant guidance on *Easy Access to Historic Buildings* (HE, 2015). In regional policy, the London Plan (GLA, 2021) contains policies for the historic environment. Local policies in the Camden Local Plan (LBC, 2017) are also relevant.

National: Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- B.2 Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require local planning authorities, in considering whether to grant listed building consent, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- B.3 Section 72 of the Act requires local planning authorities, in considering whether to grant planning permission with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

National: NPPF 2021

- B.4 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England. Section 16 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* contains guidance on how local planning authorities should assess proposals to alter listed buildings. Paragraphs 197, 199, 200 and 202 are relevant to the present application.

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. [...]*

Regional: The London Plan 2021

- B.5 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.
- B.6 Chapter 7 of the London Plan, *Heritage and Culture*, contains policies for the protection of the historic environment. Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth states:

[...] (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. [...]

Local: Camden Local Plan

- B.7 The Local Plan was adopted on 3 July 2017 and is the basis for planning decisions and future development in the borough. Chapter 7 *Design and Heritage* contains the following policies that are relevant to the proposals.

Policy D1 Design: *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;*
- c) is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;*
- d) is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;*
- e) comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character; [...]*
- g) is inclusive and accessible for all;*
- h) promotes health; [...]*
- n) for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and*
- o) carefully integrates building services equipment.*

Policy D2 Heritage states 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.*

[Local: Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011](#)

B.8 The *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy* is concerned with the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area, and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Section 3 'Maintaining Character' outlines the general approach to maintaining the special interest of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and includes:

applications for development will be determined having regard to the special interest of the Conservation Area and the specialist advice of conservation officers; (Paragraph 3)

in undertaking its development control function the Council will ensure that that the historic details which are an essential part of the special architectural character of Bloomsbury Conservation Area are preserved, repaired and reinstated where appropriate; (Paragraph 6)

In Section 5 'Management of Change' , under 'Maintenance and Repair of Listed Buildings,' the *Appraisal* says:

Owners will be encouraged to keep listed buildings occupied and in an appropriate use. [...]. (Paragraph 5.18)

In all cases the Council will expect original architectural features and detailing to be retained, repaired, protected, or refurbished in the appropriate manner [...].(Paragraph 5.33)

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