

21-22 BLOOMSBURY SQUARE

DESIGN + ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT



THIRDWAY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the proposed internal minor modifications to the recently refurbished 21-22 Bloomsbury Square, London, WC1A 2NS. The recent improvement works, completed in 2022 allow the building to function as a modern building and create a pleasant internal condition throughout all levels. Due to the recent works the building is now in a good condition, restoring the original historic features as well as ensuring it is fit for purpose to host a future fit out for a modern office space.

The applicant is seeking to modify the building to facilitate opportunities focused around the business core function of providing a space to allow like-minded individuals to meet and work together.

THIRDWAY

Designer

Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Heritage



THE APPLICANT

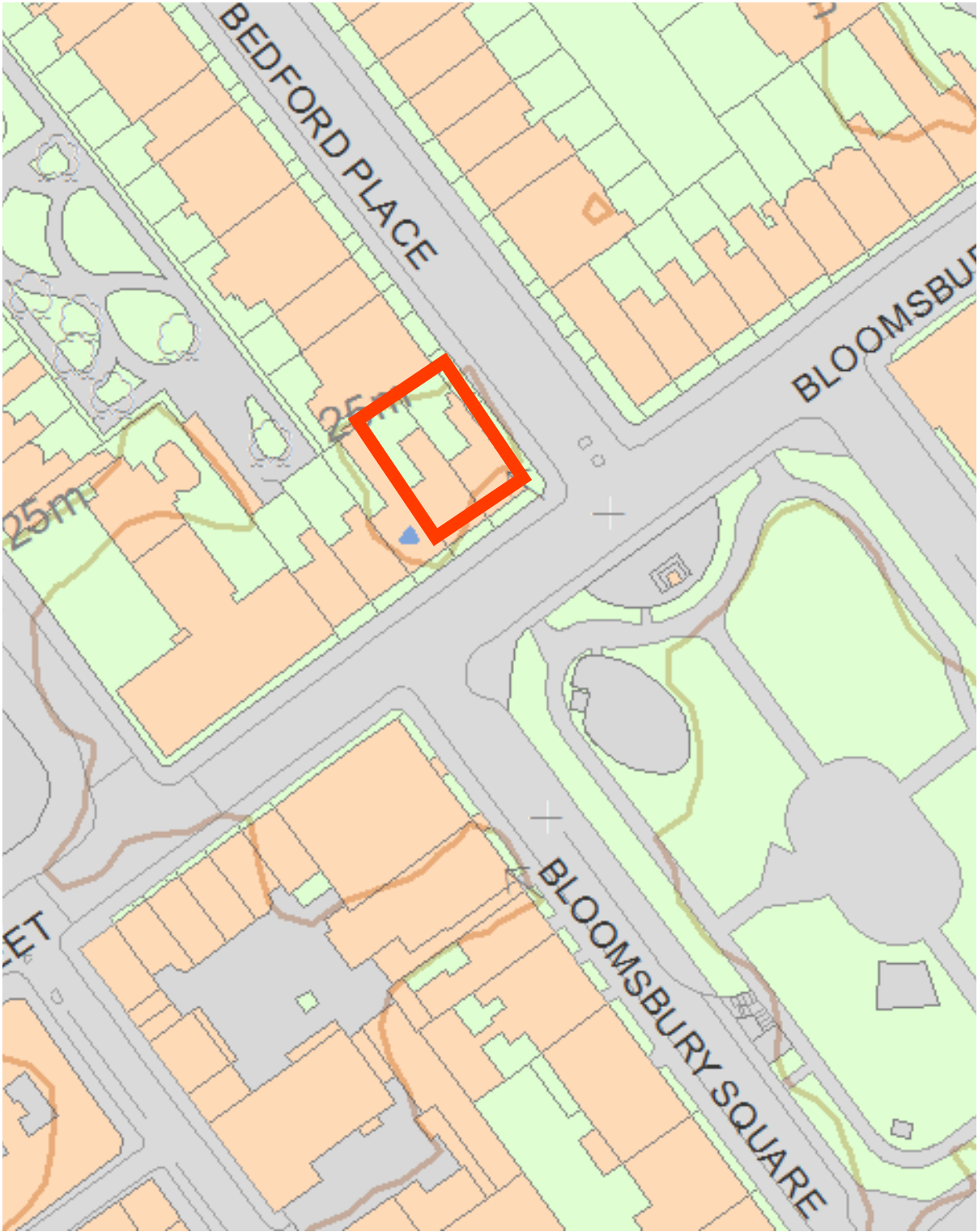
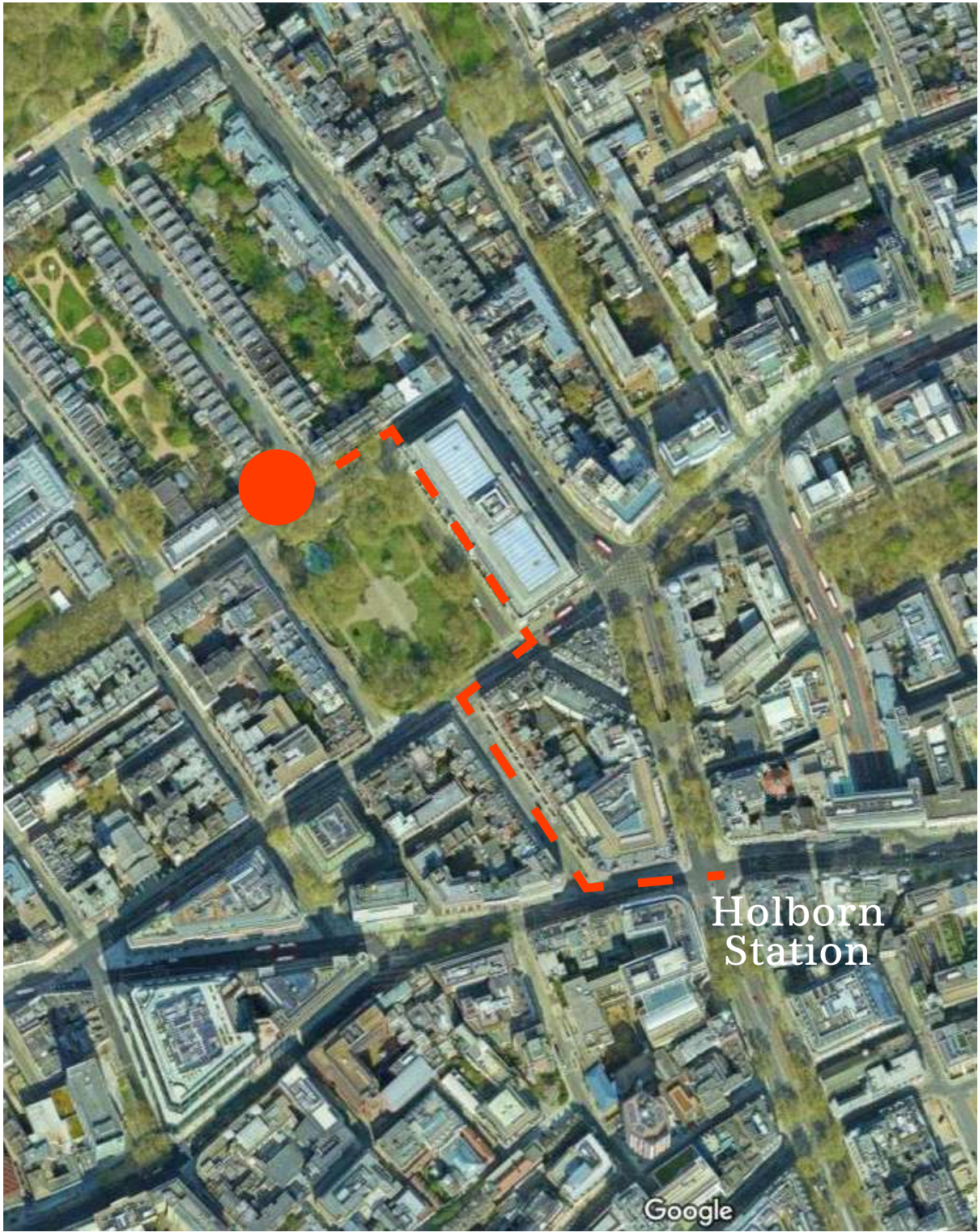
Menzies Aviation started trading in 1833. They are an independent global provider of passenger, ramp and cargo handling services specialising within the airline industry.

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THE BUILDING

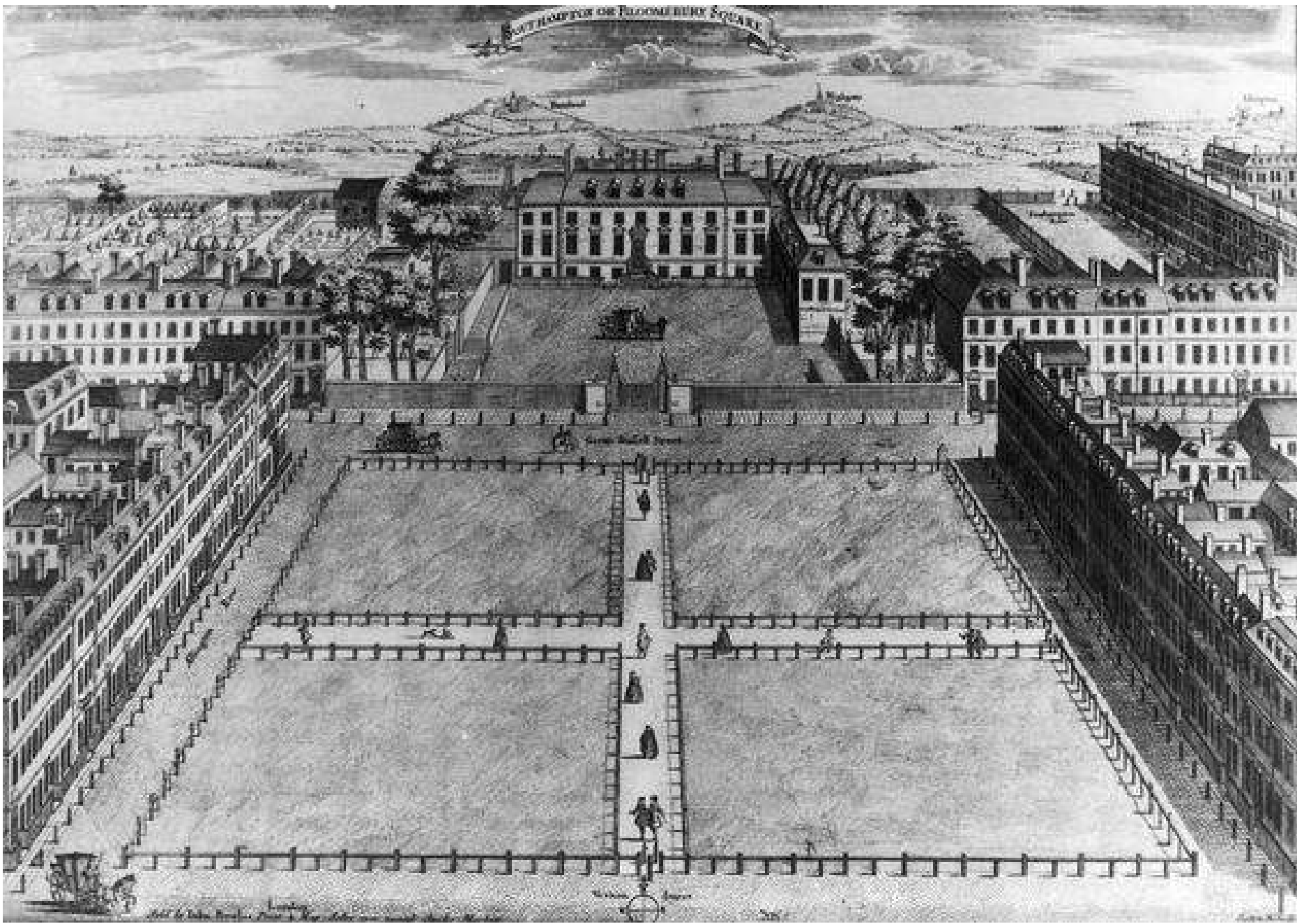
The site is located in the heart of Bloomsbury to the east of Tottenham Court Road and south-east of the British Museum. 21-22 Bloomsbury Square is to the North of Bloomsbury Square on the corner of Bedford Place.



SITE HISTORY

The terrace is on the site of Bedford House, formerly Southampton House, which was demolished in 1799. The square was the first garden square of its type in London, dating back to the C17th, developed by the 4th Earl of Southampton.

In the C20th the building has been used as a commercial office.



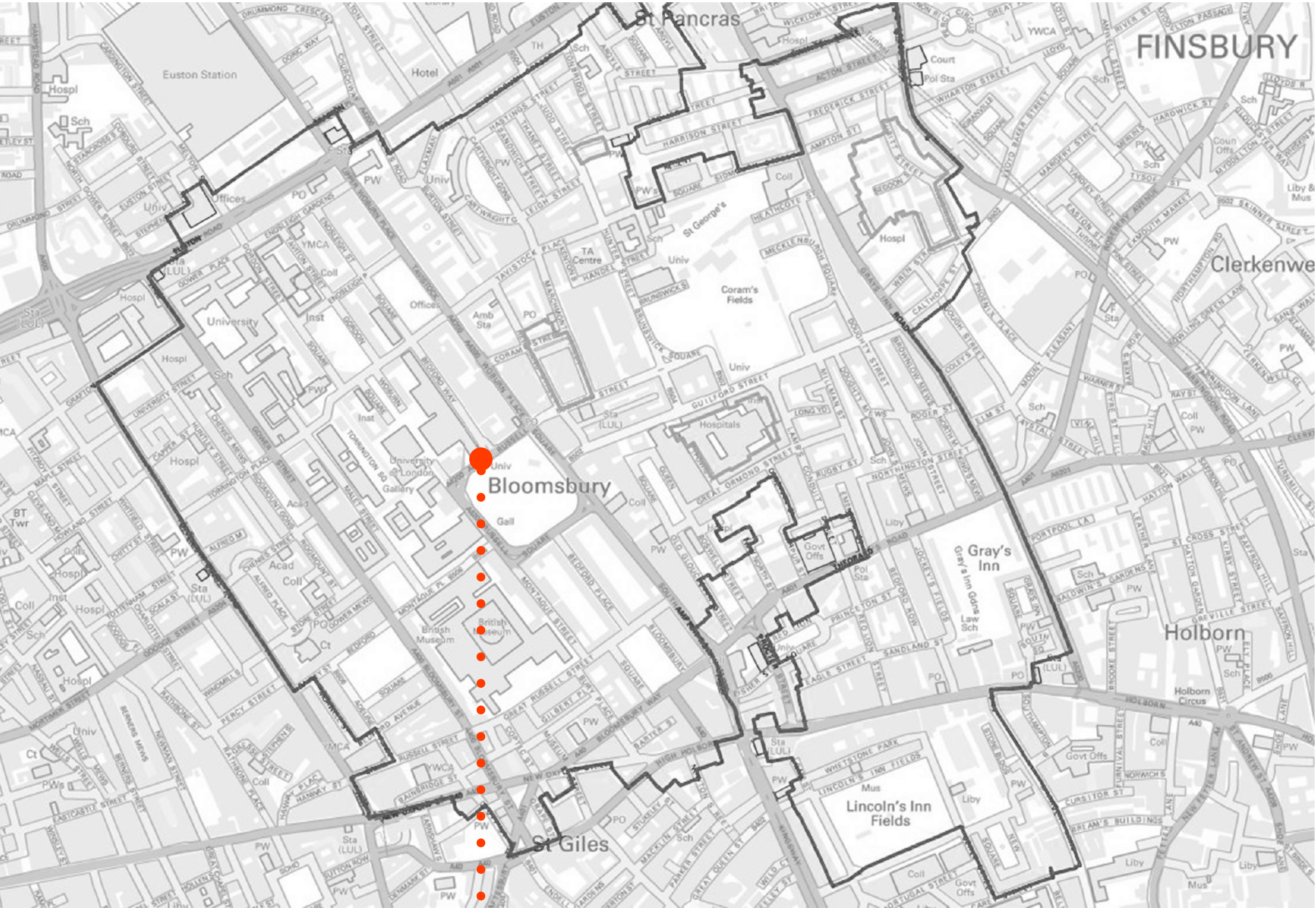
Southampton House
and
Bloomsbury Garden



CONSERVATION AREA

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area covers an area in the South corner of the London Borough of Camden, immediately North of Tottenham Court Road.

21-22 Bloomsbury Square (Site) is situated to the Western extent of the Conservation Area and forms part of a listed square of terrace buildings and garden as described on the following page.



Site

21-22 Bloomsbury Square

LISTED BUILDING STATUS

21-22 Bloomsbury Square is part of the listing entry number 1244454 covering Numbers 18-22 and Attached Garden Wall and Railings.

The properties are Grade II listed, first listed on 28th February 1969. The list entry quotes the details as below;

5 Terraced Houses, 1800-1805. Designed and built by James Burton. Multi-coloured stock brick. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each, No.22 with 4-window return (mostly blind) to Bedford Place. Round- headed entrances in recesses with reeded pilaster jambs carrying cornice-heads; fanlights (No.19 radial) and panelled doors. Gauged red brick flat arches to recessed sash, and 1st floor casement, windows, some with original glazing bars. Continuous 3rd floor sill band. Parapet.

Interiors: Not Inspected

Subsidiary Features: attached cast-iron railing with urn finials to areas. No.22 with attached garden wall to Bedford Place return. Wall with square-headed stucco surround to panelled wood door with reeded architrave with roundels. To left of door, a glazed oculus with small leaded panes of stained glass forming a pattern around the rim. Stone capping to wall with cast-iron railings.

Historical Note: this terrace is on the sit of Bedford House (formerly Southampton House) demolished 1799.



EXISTING BUILDING APPRAISAL

EXISTING BUILDING

21-22 Bloomsbury Square has been designed as a self-contained period townhouse with a private rear garden.

The restoration has been sympathetic to the buildings Georgian origins with simple contemporary insertions.

New carpet flooring runs throughout the property with tiled flooring in the showers, toilets and kitchenettes. These are not original to the building.

The project ambition is to deliver an environment befitting the goals and vision of the tenant to create a space that celebrates the existing fabric and aesthetic of the building.

New toilets and showers have contemporary tiling and sanitary ware whilst the kitchenettes have integrated cabinetry.



EXISTING LOWER GROUND FLOOR

The Lower Ground Floor has 3 large main rooms all with new plastic perimeter trunking and non-original carpet and light fittings.

The existing showers, toilets and kitchenette have been recently refurbished with contemporary tiled flooring and modern sanitary ware.

There are no obvious period features.



Lower Ground Floor



Lower Ground Floor



Lower Ground Floor



Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan

EXISTING GROUND FLOOR

The Ground floor has two entrances from street level. Non-original carpet has been installed as part of the refurbishment with non-original feature lighting in the hallway and suspended linear lights in the rooms. Non-original cast iron radiators have been installed underneath the windows as well as new aged brass light switches and sockets.

The central room to the front of the building has a marble fireplace and mouldings on the walls. Two plaster ceiling rose are in situ.

A kitchenette has been installed to the rear of the property with a small adjoining toilet. New cabinetry and floor tiling.



Ground Floor

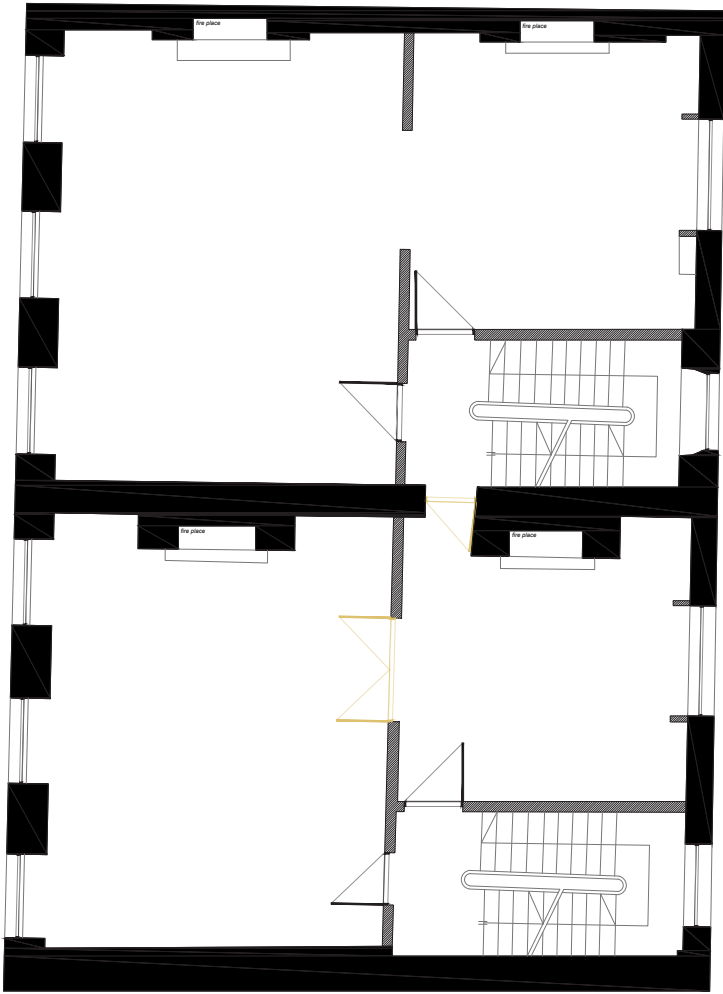


Existing Ground Floor Plan



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR

The first floor is accessible by two staircases from the Ground Floor via No.21 or No.22. There are two marble fireplace in the rooms to the front of the property. Non-original carpet and suspended linear lights have been installed throughout.



Existing First Floor Plan



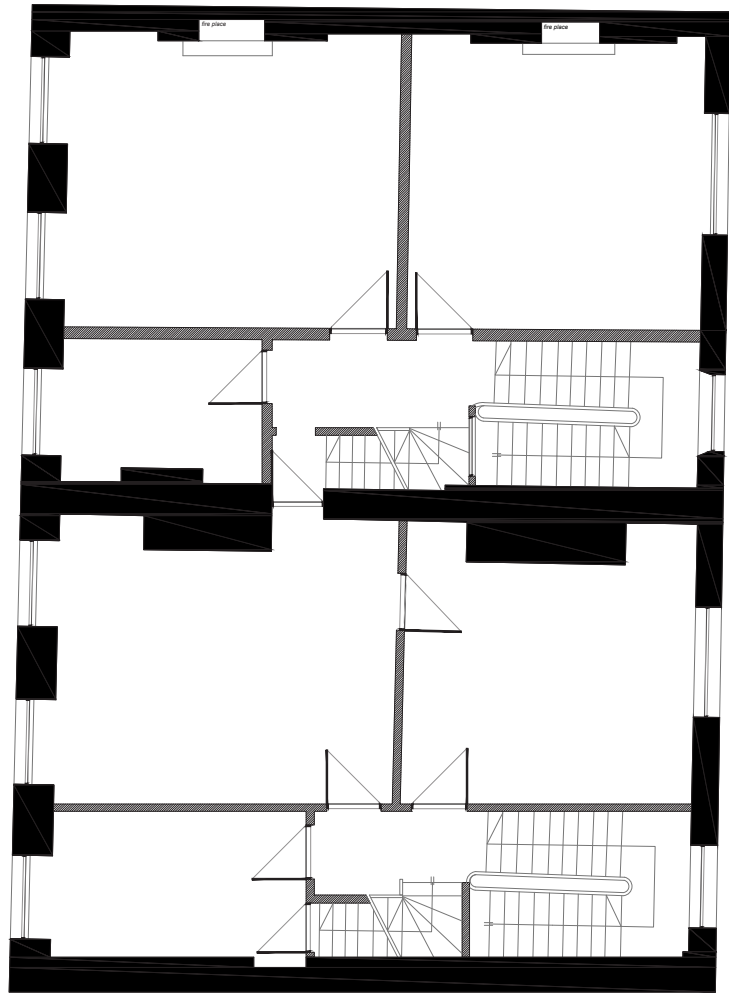
First Floor



First Floor

EXISTING SECOND FLOOR

The second floor is accessible via the central staircases in No.21 and No.22. The floor is divided into 6 rooms with non-original carpet and suspended linear lights. Non-original cast iron radiators have been installed underneath the windows.



Existing Second Floor Plan



Second Floor

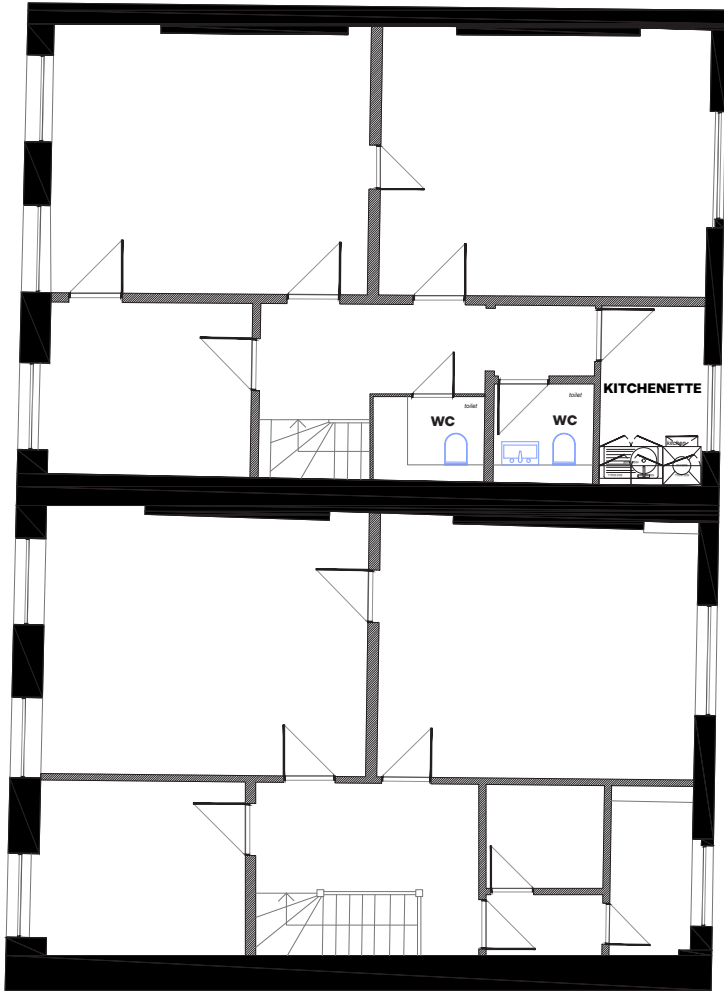


Second Floor

EXISTING THIRD FLOOR

The Third floor is accessible via smaller staircases in No.21 and No.22. The floor is divided into 6 rooms with non-original carpet and suspended linear lights. Non-original cast iron radiators have been installed underneath the windows.

Two small non-original toilets and a kitchenette all with new tiled flooring are in situ.



Existing Third Floor Plan



Second Floor



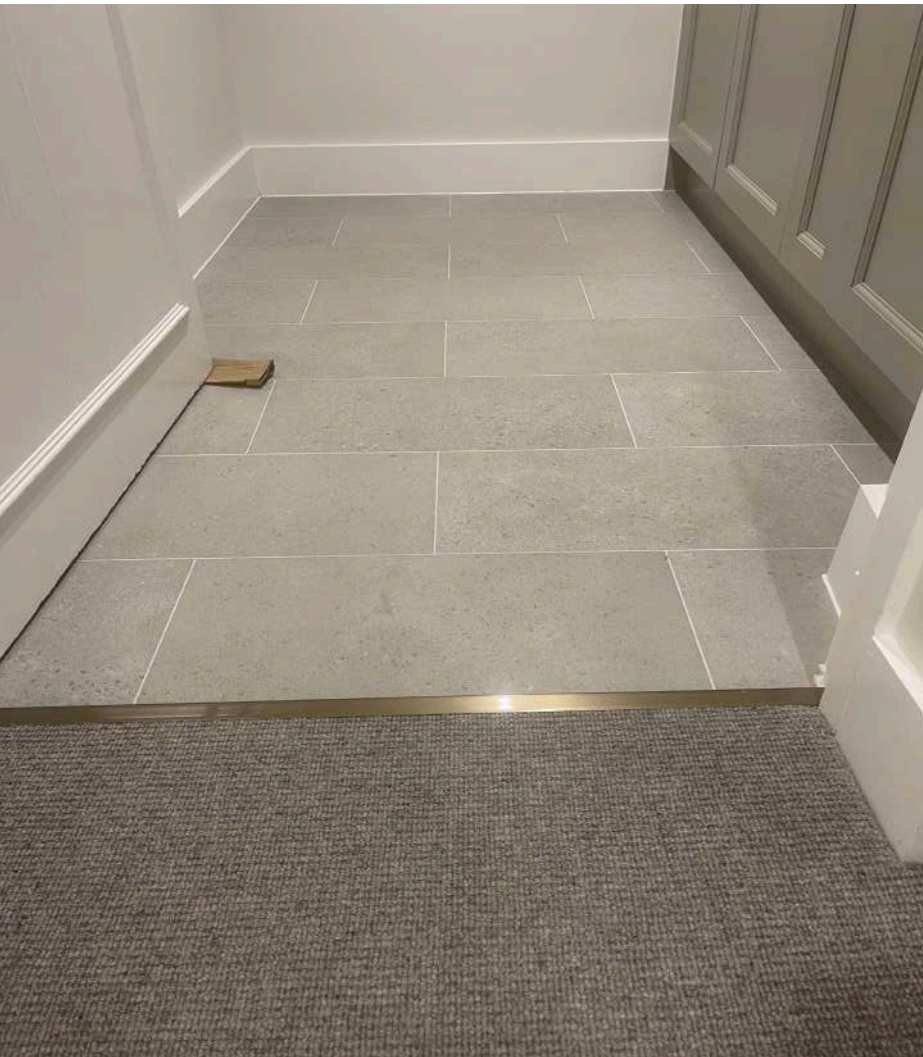
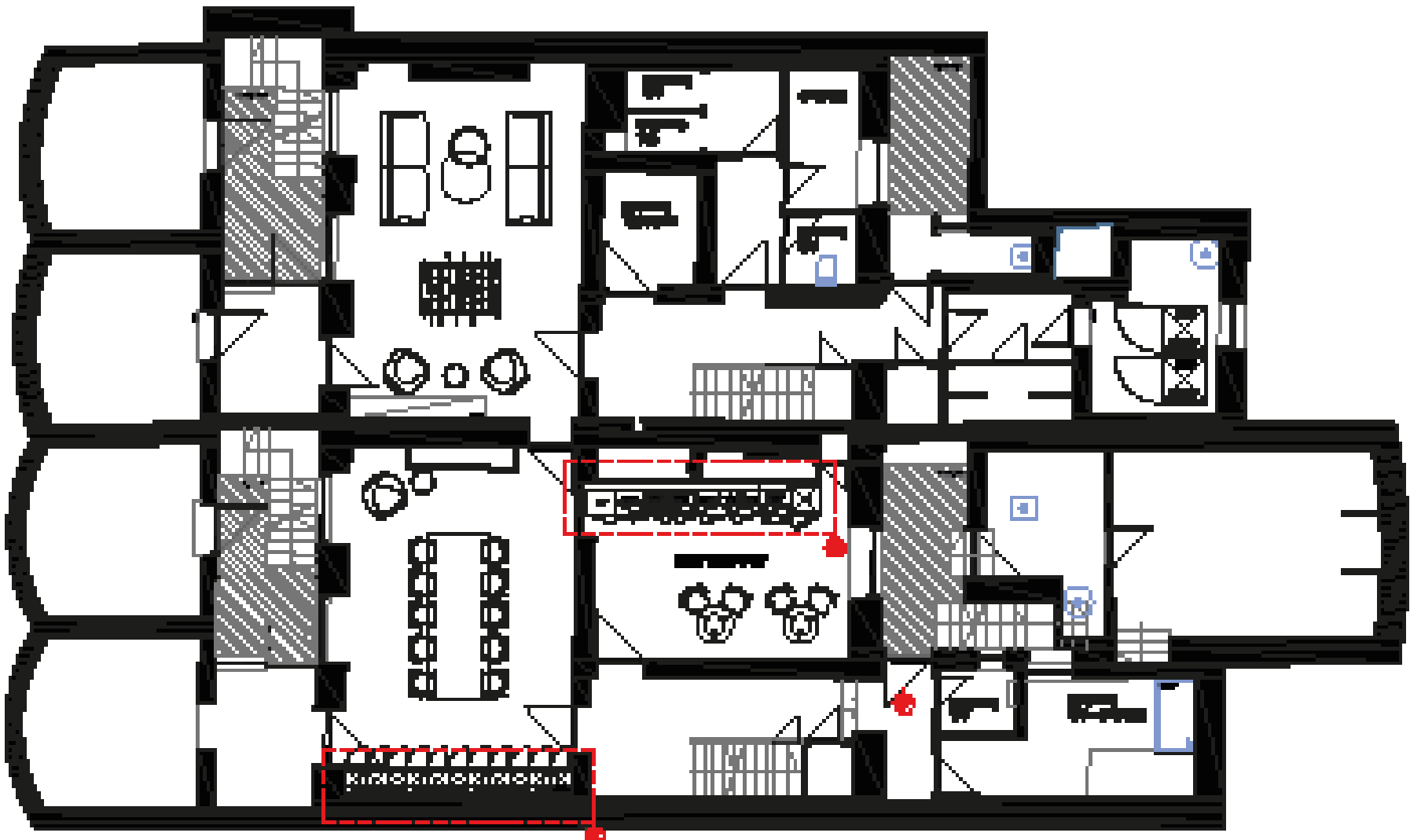
Second Floor

OUR PROPOSAL

DESIGN INTERVENTION .01

The Lower Ground Floor proposal is to install a larger Tea Point to facilitate Menzies employees in the rear room of No.22. The existing Tea Point is insufficient in size to facilitate for the Menzies team. This is to include a dishwasher, integrated Fridge/ Freezer The cabinetry, worktop and flooring would match the non-original tea points existing in the building.

The proposal is to also replace the non-original carpet within this rear room of No.22 to a porcelain tile more suited to a kitchen area. This will allow Menzies to better up keep the flooring in this area where drinks and food will be prepared.



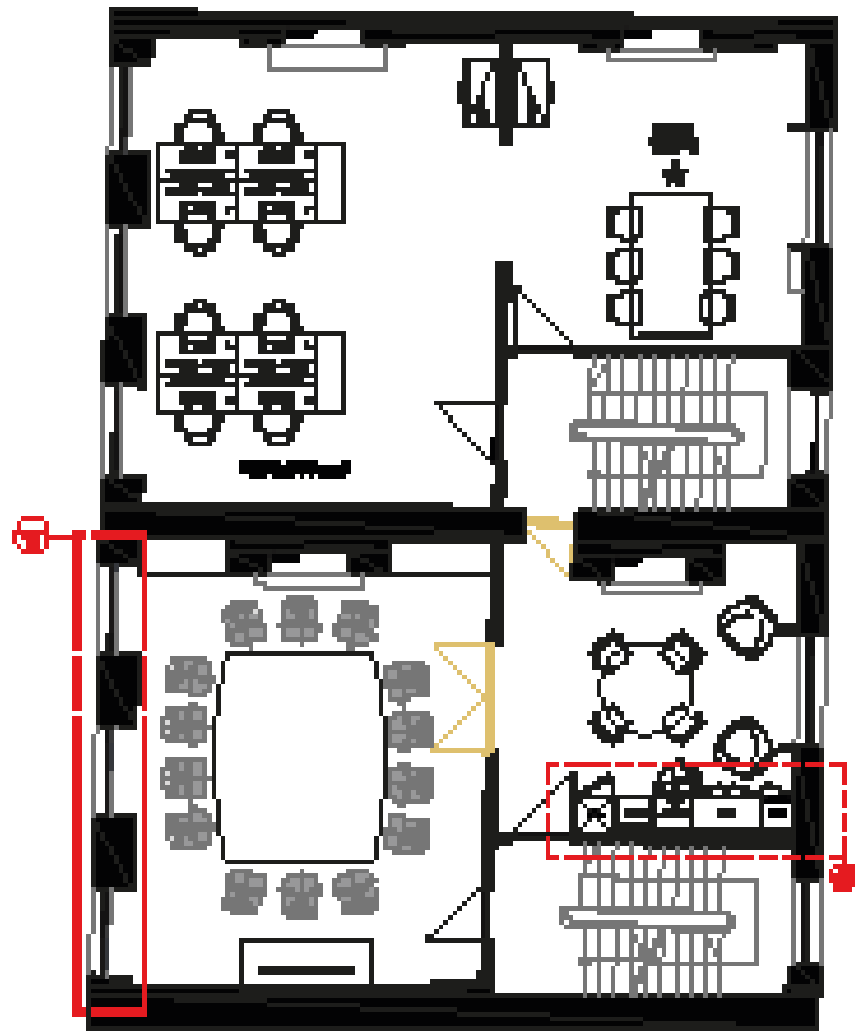
Existing Tea Point

DESIGN INTERVENTION .02

Proposal to install cabinetry to include an integrated fridge to the rear room of No.22 on the first floor. This will service the adjacent Boardroom for refreshments.

Cabinetry and worktop to match the existing non-original tea points.

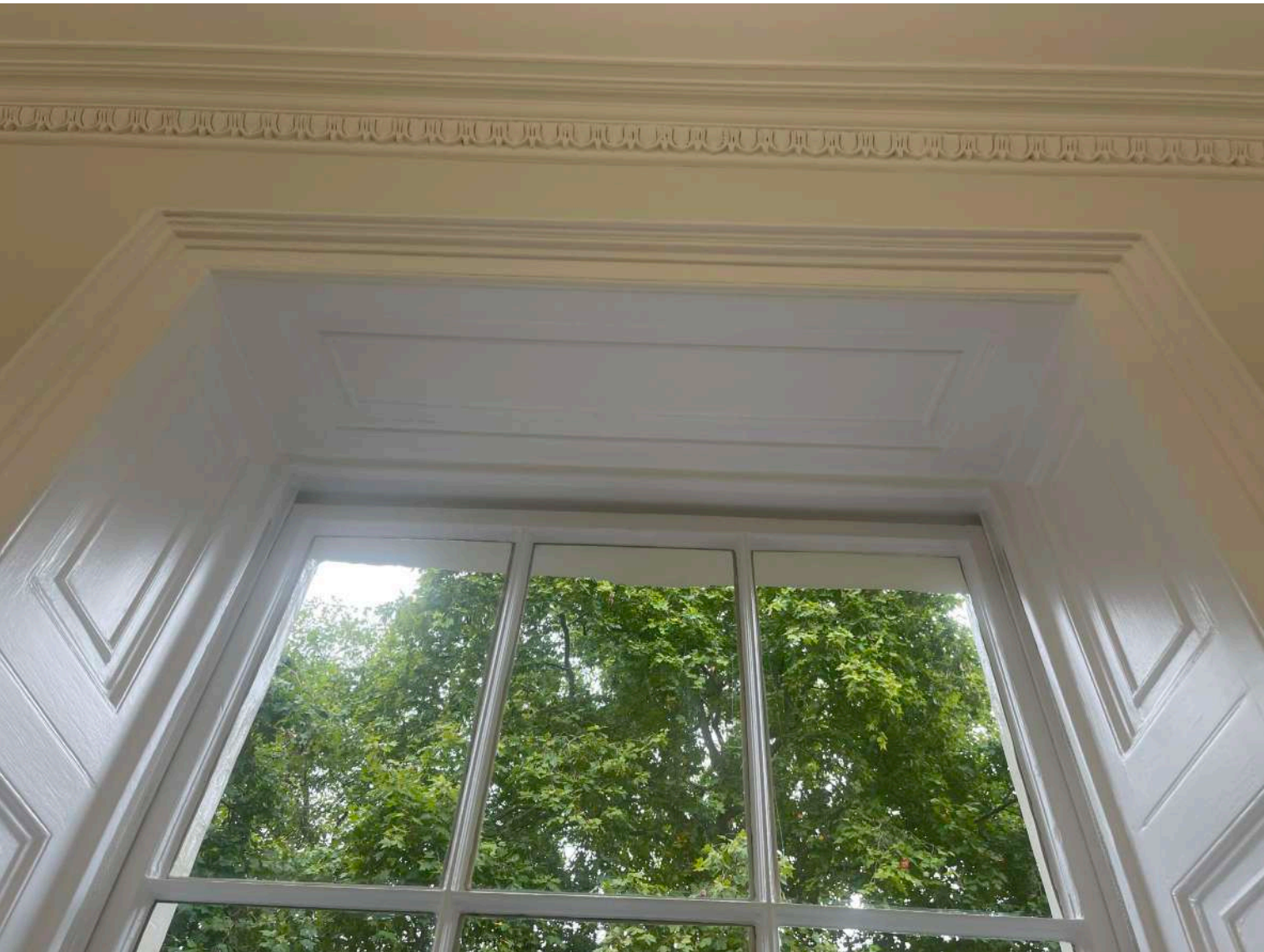
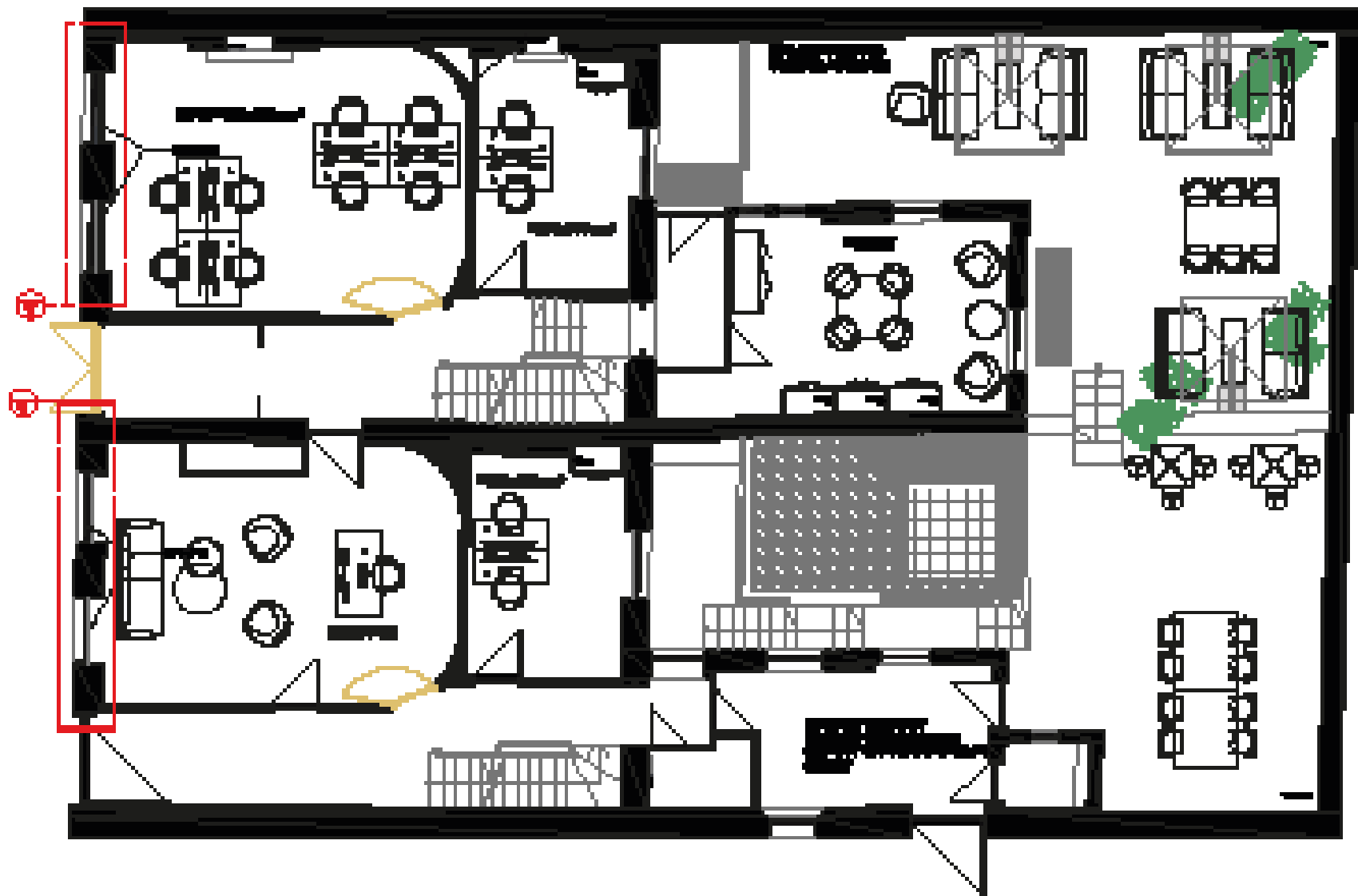
All joinery entails to be scribed around original heritage features.



DESIGN INTERVENTION .03

Proposal to install plantation shutters to the Ground floor front windows of No.21 and No.22. This will act as a security measure for the building.

Proposal to install roller blinds to the timber reveal of all the windows to the front of buildings No.21 and No.22. These are South facing will aid with regulating the temperature inside the building during the day whilst helping those working with a computer screen from glare.



Existing Window Reveal

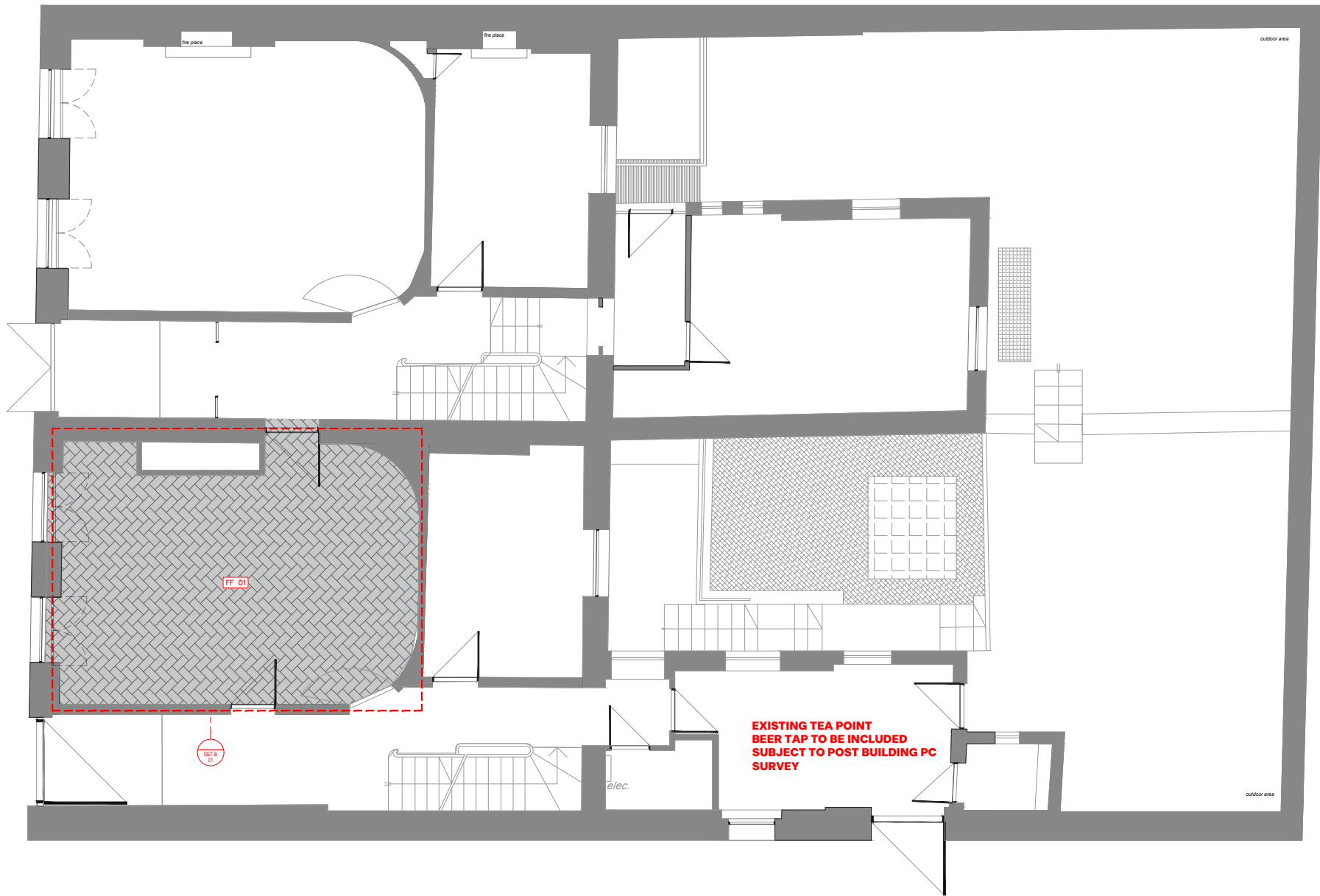


Proposed Window Treatment

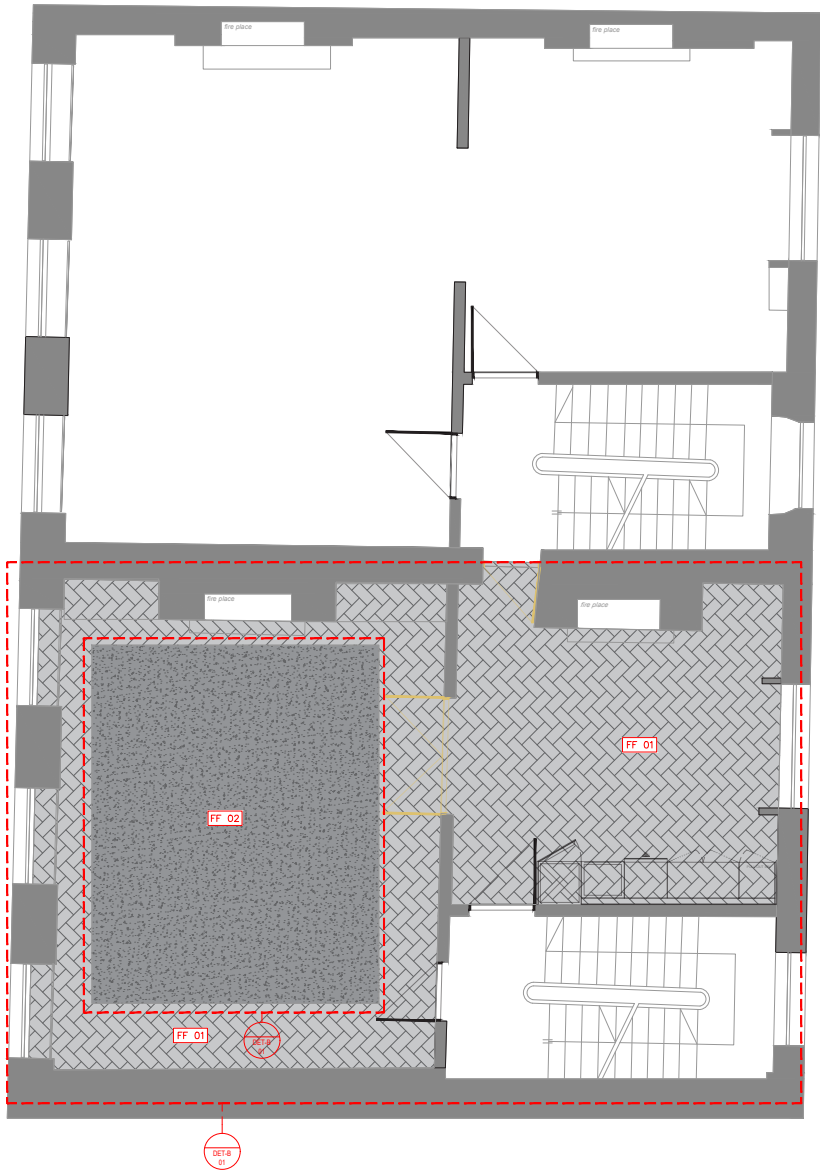
DESIGN INTERVENTION .04

Proposal to install timber chevron flooring to the ground floor front room and first floor front and rear of No.22. The floor levels will remain as per the existing carpet and will be applied directly to the existing plywood not effecting the original timber joists.

An inset carpet is proposed to be installed on the first floor front room of No.22 in the centre of the room underneath the boardroom table. This will be applied to the existing plywood and not effect the original timber joists.



Ground Floor



First Floor

DESIGN INTERVENTION .05

Proposal to replace the non original task lighting on the ground floor front room of No.22 with feature pendants. These are proposed to be suspended from the rooms two original ceiling rose.



Existing Ceiling rose and non-original task lights.



Concept

DESIGN INTERVENTION .06

Proposal to replace the non original task lighting on the ground floor rear room of No.21, first floor front and rear room of No.22 and rear room on the second floor of No.22. The existing fixings and electrical points would be used. The proposal is to install modern suspended linears in an antique brass finish to match the existing ironmongery. The fittings are streamlined and will elevate the meeting rooms for which Menzies will host clients.

HERITAGE COMMENTARY

HERITAGE COMMENTARY

The proposed scheme seeks to change a number of modern floor finishes and light fittings within the interior of the office accommodation at 21-22 Bloomsbury Square, together with the installation of window blinds and two new tea points to service the offices.

21 and 22 Bloomsbury Square are two Grade-II listed buildings that are significant as good examples of early-19th century townhouses by the renowned developer and architect: James Burton, who built much of the surrounding area. Their primary significance lies in their external street facing elevations, which are well preserved examples of early-19th century domestic architecture, and for the group value they share with the wider terrace and urban-garden of Bloomsbury Square.

The interiors of the buildings have been converted into office accommodation, presumably in the mid-to-late-20th century, with discreet openings in the party wall to link the two buildings together. Despite their conversion, the interiors survive substantially intact with original cornices, fireplaces, doors and staircases.

The modern additions to the interiors, including the suspended task lights, lower-ground floor electrical trunking and overlaid carpet floors, contribute nothing to the significance of the listed buildings. It is these elements which the proposed scheme principally seeks to change.

The following section provides a description of the proposals, with the impact on the significance of the listed buildings set out in italics.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PROPOSALS AND THEIR IMPACT

Lower Ground Floor

At lower ground floor level, it is proposed to convert the office in the rear room of No. 22 into a tea point / break-out space, to provide these much-needed facilities for the office accommodation. The tea point would be created by inserting a new stud wall in front of the plain west wall that has various awkward projections [Fig 1],



which would provide a plain to fix the kitchen units to, as well as a concealed void to run services. The waste would run

behind this wall and within the floor – which is a modern concrete floor – to meet the cast iron downpipe and drain in the flanking rear lightwell [Fig 2].



No extract would be required as the tea point would not include kitchen equipment.

As this room has a plain, modern interior with no historic fixtures or fixings, the proposed tea point would cause no harm to the significance of the listed building. It would nonetheless be constructed to be fully reversible, so the existing proportions of the room could be reinstated if the tea point were to be removed in the future. The route of the proposed waste pipe would also be discreet, connecting to an existing outlet within the sunken lightwell to ensure it would be largely concealed and would not harm the overall appearance of the listed building.

Additional alterations would include the replacement of the modern carpet floor, along with the detracting electrical trunking that runs at skirting level around the room. The floor would be replaced with a porcelain tiled floor more suited to a kitchen area, and the skirting would be replaced with a timber skirting to match the profile elsewhere on the lower ground floor. In addition, the same finishes are also proposed to be replaced in the front rooms of Nos. 21 and 22, but the floor in here would be replaced with a new timber floor [Fig 3].



The replacement of these modern floor finishes would cause no harm to the significance of the listed buildings, as the accompanying floor build-up sections show that both floors would be overlaid onto the existing concrete floor with a separating ply membrane. In addition, the overall depth of

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PROPOSALS AND THEIR IMPACT

the floor build up would also remain the same, meaning there would be no impact on the floor levels or the surrounding doors, skirtings and architraves.

The replacement of the unsightly electrical trunking with skirting to match the existing would also be a benefit, as it would restore the historic character of this part of the interior. The proposed square-edged detail of the skirting would also be preserve the hierarchy that is expressed in the lower ground floor fittings.

Ground Floor

At ground floor level, it is proposed to remove the task lighting from the ceiling in the front room of No. 22, which detracts from the historic character of this room, and reinstate pendant lights to the ceiling roses. *The removal of the unattractive task lighting and reuse of the plaster ceiling roses, supplied with traditional pendant lights, would be a considerable benefit as it would restore the historic character of this room and enhance the overall significance of the listed building.*

It is also proposed to remove the modern carpet floor in the same room, which would be replaced with timber parquet flooring [Fig 4].



As on the lower ground floor, the replacement of the carpet would cause no harm to the significance of the listed buildings, as the accompanying floor build-up sections show the new floor finish would be overlaid onto the historic floor with a separating ply membrane. This would ensure the historic floor would be preserved and could be re-exposed in the future. The overall depth of the floor build up would also remain the same, meaning there would be no impact on the floor levels or the surrounding doors, skirtings and architraves. The reinstatement of a timber floor would arguably enhance the historic character of the ground floor interior.

In the rear room, it is also proposed to provide a new plantation-style shutter to the existing window, to provide screening to the rear office. This would be fixed into the surrounding frame with a minimal number of screws, to ensure the sash window would remain openable.

These fixings could be easily repaired if the shutter were to be removed and therefore on balance, no harm would be caused to the significance of the listed building.

In the rear room of No. 21, it is proposed to replace the task lighting with new pendant lights that reuse the existing fixings and electrics. *The proposed new lights would have a similar modern appearance to the existing task lights and their proposed replacement would therefore have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building. The proposed light fittings would also be similar suspended modern fittings to the existing, reusing the existing fittings, which would have a neutral impact on the character and significance of the interior.*

First Floor

Similar alterations are also proposed at first floor level including the removal of the task lighting and carpet floor finishes in the front and rear room of No. 22.

As elsewhere, the carpet finishes would be replaced with new timber parquet flooring, with an inlaid section in the front room to mark the outline of the boardroom, which would be separated with a flush brass trim.

This would cause no harm to the significance of the listed buildings, as the accompanying floor build-up sections show the historic floor finish would be preserved underneath the new floor, and the brass trim would be fixed to the separating ply membrane. The overall depth of the floor build up would

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PROPOSALS AND THEIR IMPACT

also remain the same, meaning there would be no impact on the floor levels or the surrounding doors, skirtings and architraves. In addition, the reinstatement of a timber floor would arguably enhance the historic character of the first-floor interior.

The task lighting would also be replaced with new pendant lights that suit the layout of the furniture in the proposed new room uses [Fig 5 and 6].



In both rooms, it is proposed to reuse the existing fixings / electric routes and only provide new pendant fittings. These fittings would include suspended lights in the front room, and a suspended square-shaped linear light in the rear room. These lights would have a similar modern appearance to the existing task lights and their proposed replacement would therefore have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building.

In the rear room, it is also proposed to install a new drinks point. This would be situated on the east wall of the rear room and would include low-level cabinets with two fridges. No sink or waste extract is required from this area.

The proposed tea point would be constructed in front of a fully reversible timber stud partition, which will sit in front of the historic skirting to ensure that no damage would be caused to this feature and the fittings could be easily removed in the future. The cabinets would also sit at low-level and would

be discreet additions in the room, thereby having a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building.

In the front room it is also proposed to provide new blinds to the windows. These blinds would be fixed into the surrounding frame with a minimal number of screws. *These fixings could be easily repaired if the blinds were to be removed and therefore on balance, no harm would be caused to the significance of the listed building.*

Second Floor

At second floor level, the task lighting in the rear room of both No. 22 would be replaced with new pendant lights that reuse the existing fixings and electrics [Fig 7].



DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PROPOSALS AND THEIR IMPACT

The proposed new lights would have a similar modern appearance to the existing task lights and their proposed replacement would therefore have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building.

The proposed light fittings would be similar suspended modern fittings to the existing, which would have a neutral impact on the character and significance of the interior.

In the front rooms across both Nos. 21 and 22, it is also proposed to provide new blinds to the windows. These blinds would be fixed into the surrounding frame with a minimal number of screws. *These fixings could be easily repaired if the blinds were to be removed and therefore on balance, no harm would be caused to the significance of the listed building.*

Justification of the Proposals and Conclusion

In summary, it is considered the proposed scheme would cause no harm to the significance of the listed buildings and as such, their special architectural and historic interest would be preserved, in full compliance with the statutory duties set out in Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Camden Council’s Local Policies, specifically Policy D2 on Heritage.

Where proposals would cause no harm to the significance of a listed building, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the presumption in favour of sustainable

development’ should apply and this is the case here. Indeed, the proposals would sustain the significance of the listed buildings in accordance with paragraph 192 of the NPPF.

It is nonetheless helpful to consider the benefits of the proposals to inform the wider planning context. These benefits would also outweigh any perceived harm that might be found in the proposals, which could only be less than substantial harm in accordance with the terminology of the NPPF and would also be at the very bottom end of the scale.

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF would therefore be the appropriate test to apply. In accordance with this, any perceived less than substantial harm would be outweighed by the public and heritage benefits that would arise from the proposals, which would include:

- The removal of visually unattractive task lights and the reinstatement of pendant lights to the historic ceiling roses in the ground floor front room.
- The reinstatement of parquet floors in the principal ground floor and first floor rooms, which would restore the historic character of these interiors.

THIRDWAY