

Heritage Statement

26 Lower Belgrave Street
January 2021

R A I N S F O R D
L O N D O N

Introduction

Upon appointment by current owner of 26 Lower Belgrave Street, Rainsford Ltd have prepared a Full Application for planning Grant and Listed Building Consent to upgrade and alter this family home.

The property lays within Belgravia Conservation Area and is a Grade II listed asset (listing reference: 1274657).

Purpose of the report

This assessment and methodology statement has been prepared with the intention to provide an analysis of the existing fabric of the property, and how that fabric will be affected by the planning proposals.

Furthermore, in light of current socio-economic context, this documents strives to assist Westminster Planning Department Officers with clear understanding of present state of the architectural fabric, to which end extensive schedules have been collated, including:

- 'Photographic room record'
- Existing fabric schedule
- Architectural mouldings schedule

Use of the report

This report forms supporting statement for the drawn information and should be read in conjunction with those packages and documents as listed in appended Issue sheet.

This report is to be read as a double page document, please select two pages on PDF viewer.

Drawings

All drawn information contained herein is *not to scale*.

We refer you to the drawing packages for respective scaled versions.

Recent planning history

*87/06395/FULL & 88/02061/LBC
Granted 14.03.1989*

Proposal: Alterations & extension to existing single family residential dwelling.

Including construction of infill conservatory at rear basement level, rebuilding of first floor rear extension and erection of second floor extension on top with roof terrace above for continued use as a single family dwelling.

*96/00349/FULL & 96/00069/LBC
Granted: 24.04.1996*

Proposed: Internal and external alterations and repairs, including the removal of load-bearing partition at ground floor level & installation of air conditioning units and flue at rear on 3rd floor terrace.

*96/06997/ADFULL & 96/06998/ADLBC
Granted: 16.09.1996*

Proposal: Approval of details pursuant to planning permission TP-1982, condition 2: details of sash windows. Sash windows to front and rear elevations.

*P20/00721 1MJ4N28D3C5GS
Pre-application advice, 23.09.2020*

Including subsequently withdrawn application (20/06868/FULL & 20/06869/LBC) in favour of reducing scope of the proposed intervention, more closely aligned with the Council's expectations.

Current Application and intent

Current proposals seek to sensitively upgrade fabric and infrastructure of the property to improve its impact of the environment, tailor its layout to contemporary family life needs, whilst protecting heritage value of this impressive terrace.

Site Context

26 Lower Belgrave Street is situated within the Belgravia Conservation Area, a fashionable, historic residential area in the West End of London. To the immediate east of the property lies the Grosvenor Gardens Conservation Area with the Royal Parks Conservation Area to the northeast. Lower Belgrave Street adjoins Eaton Square, laid out in 1816, and forms part of the later development during the 1820s and 1830s.

Belgrave Conservation Area is an area of high townscape uniformity and a formal layout based on a grid pattern running northeast to southwest of related squares and crescents enclosing central gardens and linked by terraced rows. Short entrance streets lead to the main squares and boulevards. These streets consist mainly of brick houses with stuccoed ground floors which retain their original character, scale and unity.

Lower Belgrave Street is one such street and many of its townhouses are listed for their historic and architectural interest, often for group value. No.26 lies on the east side of the street and is listed in a group 16-46, Lower Belgrave Street SW1.

Site Context

All the properties were built during the development of the area and whilst reflecting its character, they can also possess individual elements of Classical detailing.

16-46, Lower Belgrave Street SW1. No. 16 has a shop to the ground floor and also stucco architraves as do Nos. 28 and 30. No.30 also has a projecting Doric porch as does No.42. No.44 is of 5 storeys.

Planning History

There is recorded consent for alternations in both 1988, and more recently 1996, where approval was given for new sash windows to the front and rear elevations of the property, and various internal works.

Reference: 96/06997/ADFULL



No. 40 & 42 Portico



Historical photo of No. 38 & 44

New openings and wall removal

New door openings at Lower Ground and First floor levels will not interface with existing structure and therefore avoid any permanent alteration to the original timber joists.

At First floor level, presence of ornate cornice is noted, however the door openings will be significantly shorter the total room height- it will match the existing adjacent aperture. Furthermore, this doorway is a reinstatement of the original layout and as such considered as contribution to the overall building value.

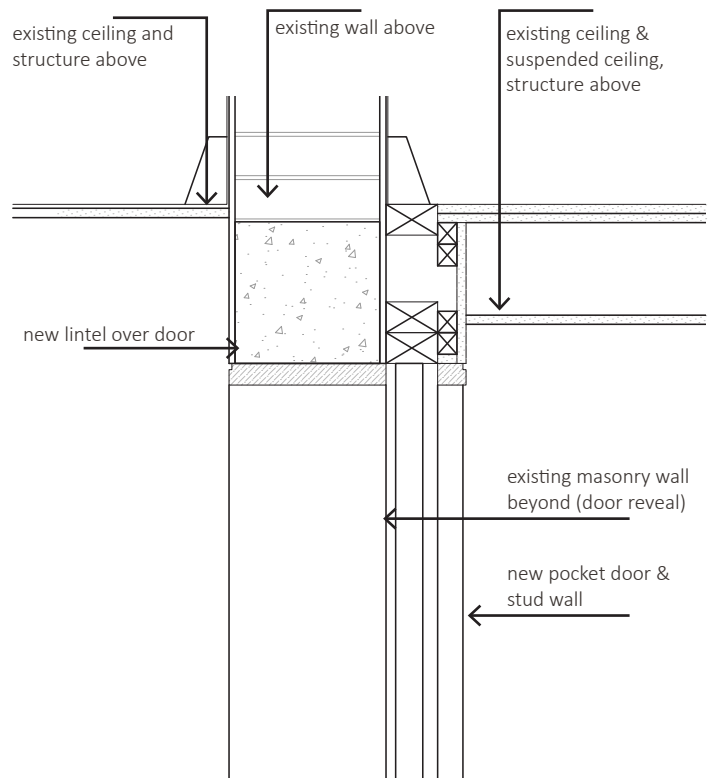
New opening at Lower Ground floor, is pending Structural Engineering design, however, it is intended to be significantly shorter than original level ceiling height and will not interface of the joists above. The aperture being planned as approx.w1500-1600mm is intended to be formed by a lintel- avoiding permanent structural alteration. Design intent is presented on the below sketch section of the doorway head, indicating new lintel and level of existing

joists, along with the suspended ceiling implemented in recent past.

Further discussion on this element of proposal can be found the accompanying Design & Access Statement.



existing wall between future Playroom and TV Den, with new opening outlined in red



N-E elevation of closet wing seen from ground floor Patio N°26 Lower Belgrave St

Heritage Statement

Situated to the northwest side of Lower Belgrave Street the property is set over four floors with a basement level. The property along with the surrounding properties in the area was erected in circa 1825 by Thomas Cubitt, who built the majority of the properties in Belgravia for Lord Grosvenor in this period. The property is a listed building (Grade II), being listed as part of the group (Numbers 16 to 42 even). The site is also within the Belgravia Conservation Area. The area has a high degree of uniformity with the terraces being erected within a short period and also in the same style with similar materials used. However, upon closer inspection, alterations to a number of properties within the area have been made with variety in the form of window style, roof and basement alterations and porches being notable.

The conservation area is adjacent to others, namely Grosvenor Gardens to the east, Albert Gate to the north and Royal Parks to the north and north east.

The proposed design has sought to ensure that the character of the area is retained and reflected.

MEP infrastructure

Proposed routes for the MEP infrastructure will be designed to avoid interface with the original timber joist and lathe & plaster chisellings (where identified)- in favour of mostly re-use existing risers. Where new risers are indicated, these will be formed between the joists, with no trimming required. As can be seen from the schematic plans for the M&E infrastructure, appended, pipework runs utilise direction of existing joists, allowing for long uninterrupted runs alongside the joists, without need for new notching. Where interface between historic joists is unavoidable this will be consulted with Westminster Planning Department and Grosvenor Estates.

Radiator flow & return pipework will follow routes water supply (following the methodology outlined above), and where new radiators are not installed in the exact location of the existing they are intended to be mostly located in close vicinity to existing outlets- where suitable.

Lighting and Small Power

As part of effort and design process to reduce extent of new required chasing into masonry and opening up stud walls, the existing light and small power points have been mapped out on the appended plans, to the best of our ability.

New outlet and light point layouts have been developed based on the above, and seek to predominantly re-use existing recessed downlight apertures, where these are within ceiling build-up containing lathe or lathe & plaster. Redundant apertures will be carefully patched-in with plasterboard and skimmed for seamless finish. Where new/adjusted locations are necessary to provide functionality of the room, pendants/chandeliers (a few of which may require localised pattrassing), surface-mounted wall lights and recessed floor boxes are favoured over recessed downlights to reduce disturbance to existing ceiling fabric.

Predominantly, LED lamps are favoured for new light fixtures, due to their superior heat management and environmental credentials. Surface mounted wall lights and feature pendants/ chandeliers may not be available with LED light sources, but these will not be recessed into ceiling voids and are therefore acceptable from the fire safety perspective.

Similarly, proposed small power layouts are biased towards adopting existing recesses for new back boxes. Where this is not possible, we sought to locate new outlet point as closely as feasible those already in situ, to reduce required chasing. In areas where built-in joinery is planned, all MEP services and wiring is intended to be channelled away from the architectural fabric, and concealed by the joinery.

Fireplaces

During the course of the property's development, fireplace surrounds have been removed altogether or replaced with modern, stone pieces.

First floor fireplace, in the rear aspect room functions as an ornament only- the flue aperture within the gable is sealed, whilst the surround whilst being pleasant is not of great aesthetic value. Removal of this surround and hearth will not inflict loss of fabric (non heritage element) which would outweigh need for this room to provide pressing and current needs for functionality faced by the young family who hope to make this property their cherished long-term home.

Similarly, Ground floor fireplace if retained, would render the Kitchen layout infeasible. This room plays a pivotal role in the overall tailoring of the dwelling to contemporary needs and well-being of the family. Maintaining kitchen within Lower Ground floor in order to retain a fireplace, would be extremely impractical and highly detrimental to how present day lifestyle needs, not to mention requirement for well-lit and ventilated spaces in which family spends most of their day- none of which can be offered by the basement, and all of which is met by the ground floor design.

The ground floor mantel piece is intended to be removed and blocked up with light-weight construction, while the hearth will be kept in situ and concealed by new joinery above it- providing indication for future, of the fireplace's presence and readiness for reinstatement.

Architectural mouldings

[refer to Architectural moulding schedule and Existing fabric schedule]

The property appears to have lost its original heritage architectural detailing in the past. Pending specialist report on the subject, our understanding is that all existing mouldings are of modern methods of production and do not carry historic value. Nevertheless, these are retained throughout except in very limited areas, as indicated on the appended schedules, and sensitively and appropriately repaired where required.

Cornicing is present only at Ground and First floor levels. Where new built-in joinery is proposed, its uppermost line will be offset by min.150mm from the base of cornice. New ornamental cornice, suitable for the property's age is proposed to be installed at 2nd and 4th floor levels to contribute towards overall value of the listed asset.

VENTILATION GRILLES

A number of mechanical extract, intake and passive ventilation grilles peppers N-W elevation of rear closet wing. As part of the works, a positive contribution to restoring original architectural fabric, all redundant fascias will be removed and the apertures sealed with bricks to match those existing. removal of bathroom from 2nd floor closet wing, along with rationalization of the M&E infrastructure will allow this elevation to be visually 'purged' of the unsightly features.

Additionally, boiler vent will be ducted along the closet elevation further away from the French door linking main living space with the sole outdoor amenity area at this level- as is, there terminus is as much an eye sore as it is unergonomic and unhealthy (the extract is approx. at eye level of an adult person).

New aperture and slimline grille will be installed to the side of low level window form the Powder room, enabling fresh air intake to be supplied to the rearmost rooms within the basement below. Our investigations to date failed to uncover any means of providing fresh air to this level, apart from the front aspect window, which is insufficient for the well-being of the building users, and unhealthy for the the people and building fabric alike.

Further, oversized and unsightly upstand ventilation pipes terminating at 3rd floor terrace will be removed as much as possible to improve amenity of this exterior space.

At lower ground floor, 2no new ventilation apertures are required to provide passive and mechanical air exchange to Utility room and Kitchen, respectively. These will formed above existing door and window within the Lightwell's N-W elevation, away from the principal S-W of the main house volume.



N-E elevation of closet wing seen from ground floor Patio
N°26 Lower Belgrave St



ventilation grilles scattered across N-E elevation of closet wing
N°26 Lower Belgrave St



boiler extract and ventilation grilles within rear Patio
N°26 Lower Belgrave St



existing ventilation standpipes at 3rd floor terrace
N°26 Lower Belgrave St



where new passive vents are installed, these
will be fitted with traditional airbricks
N°36 Lower Belgrave St

Methodology for discovery of original fabric

To date, none of our investigative works unearthed any original floorboards.

In instance where, in the progress of strip out works suspected original architectural fabric is discovered, it will be documented as follows:

- photographed prior to its removal
- location mapped on appropriate plans/ sections/ elevation drawings
- removed by hand, numbered/ Id tagged and carefully stored
- Westminster LPA and Grosvenor Estates will be notified

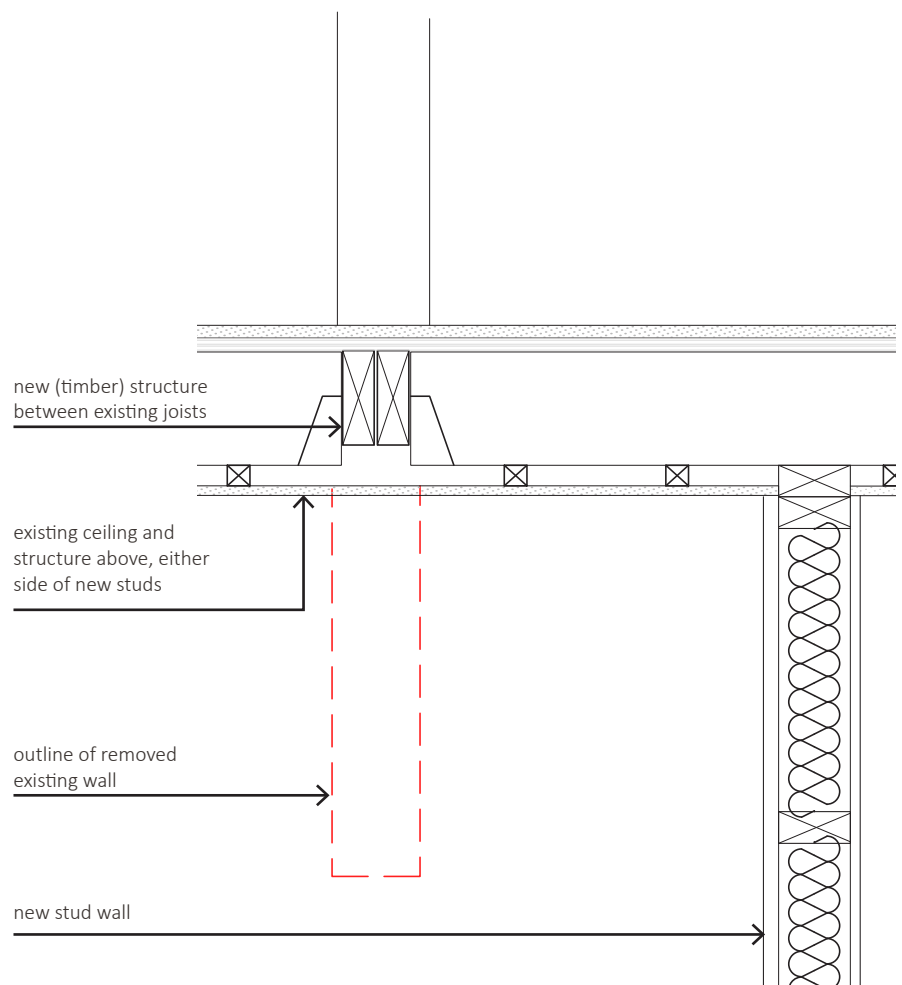
Wall removal

In order to form a suitably sized family bathroom at 2nd floor level, portion of spine wall between the front and rear aspect rooms requires removal.

Lack of original cornice and original ceiling allows us to open up this area to its full height and install supporting structure to floor joists above.

This intervention is pending Structural Engineering design, however, it is intended to install timber beam flush with level of existing ceiling joist above this area and patch-in ceiling as required, with minimal adjustment (if any) to the existing ceiling above.

Design intent is presented on the below sketch section of the new stud wall head, indicating new (timber) lintel and level of existing adjacent ceilings.



Conclusion

This proposal's focus is on sensitively adjusting and upgrading existing architectural heritage fabric.

Where alterations are necessary these are being approached so as to provide longevity and respectful use of the building stock, as part of sustainability drive towards reducing carbon footprint from both use and construction of new dwellings.

We remain at your disposal and would welcome an opportunity to enter into a collaborative dialogue in order to agree on mutually acceptable extent of works resulting in delivery of an asset with improved heritage value to its current state.

