



View of the façade of property

## **SITE CONTEXT**

### **1.00 MACRO ENVIRONMENT**

- 1.01 The property that is the subject of this application is Somerset Hotel, 6-7 Dorset Square, London NW1 6QA.
- 1.02 The property is in the Dorset Square Conservation Area.
- 1.03 The hotel is in pair of Grade II Listed buildings – Historic England ref: 1210609, Westminster ref: 34/61. The listing is for Nos. 1-8 group of terraced properties forming east side of square.

### **2.00 MICRO ENVIRONMENT**

- 2.01 The property comprises the whole of No.s 6 and 7 Dorset Square, accessed from pavement level via a flight of stairs to the front area of No. 6 to the basement and two small sets of steps to the main front doors accessing the ground floor of No. 6 and 7.
- 2.02 The area of the site upon which the property is located is approximately 420 square metres including the front area and vaults under the pavement, 336 square metres of which comprises the building footprint at lower ground floor level. There is a front area of about 20 square

metres and a ground floor courtyard to the rear of about 87 square metres. The vaults under the pavement take up 40 square metres.

- 2.03 The site is shown outlined in red on the site location plan, forming part of this application. The applicant does not own any adjoining land or properties.

## **HERITAGE**

### **3.00 INTRODUCTION**

- 3.01 Government guidance on listed building control is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'). This advises that the level of detail provided in this statement should be proportionate to assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (Para 128). This statement outlines the features of the property and explains how the works impact on the listed building.
- 3.02 Before starting to explore the design options for this property, we studied the property in respect of its history and its neighbouring properties. A review was made in respect of council records and the previous planning history.
- 3.03 An assessment was made of the site in its context and its environment and a study was made of the interior and exterior of the property in relation to its history and a record taken of the original features and as far as possible also the fabric of the building.
- 3.04 The proposed works comprise internal alterations to the ground and lower ground floors and the addition of a new sub-basement under the footprint of the existing property. The scheme also includes the replacement and repair of an area of bulging brickwork mostly at second floor level in the façade with bricks, bond and pointing all to match existing to be toothed into the existing brickwork.

### **4.00 LISTED BUILDING**

- 4.01 The property is grade II listed (along with others in the terrace – 1-8 consecutive) and was first listed on 10-Sep-1954 (Historic England listing reference 1210609 and Westminster reference 34/61). The listing description is as follows:

*TQ 2782 SE CITY OF WESTMINSTER DORSET SQUARE, NW1 (East side) 34/61 10.9.54 Nos. 1 to 8(consec.)*

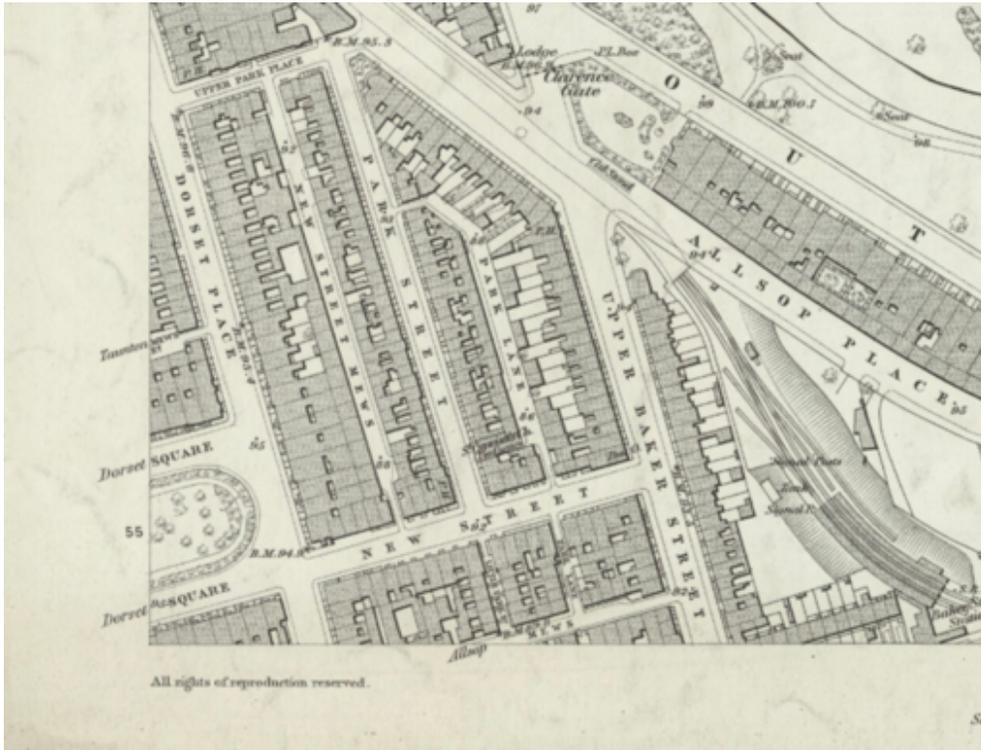
*Terraced town houses forming east side of square. c.1815-20 Portman Estate development. Stock brick with stucco ground floors mostly banded; concealed slate roofs. Symmetrically balanced block with central pair (Nos. 4 and 5) slightly advanced. 4 storeys and basement. 3-window wide fronts apart from No. 1 with 4 windows and the central pair with 2 each. Doorways symmetrically placed to left and right, semicircular arched with panelled doors flanked by Greek Doric columns in antis carrying Greek key enriched doorheads below patterned fanlights (apart from Nos. 6, 7 and 8). Recessed sashes, some with glazing bars, under flat gauged arches to upper floors, those of central pair with stuccoed flat arches and keyblocks. Flat band over ground floor. Crowning stucco cornice and blocking course. Cast iron geometric pattern balconies across 1st floor and Nos. 1, 2 and 8 with good iron trellis standard verandahs with tent roofs. Cast iron area railings with urn finials.*

- 4.02 History Summary of the Dorset Conservation Area:

*1533 - 270 acres of land passed to William Portman, the Lord Chief Justice to Henry VIII, who created*

- the Portman Estate*  
*1787 - Thomas Lord leased some of the estate's land to create the first Lord's Cricket Ground*  
*1811 - northward expansion of the Portman Estate led to rising land values which led to the cricket ground being forced to surrender its lease.*  
*c.1814 onwards- Dorset Square and its environs were laid out by J T Parkinson and building leases granted by the estate to David Porter*  
*Late 1820s/Early 1830s - surrounding service streets, made up of a mixture of second and third rate houses and mews, were constructed.*  
*1894 - the building of the Great Central Railway and the construction of Marylebone Station (opened in 1899)*  
*1905-10- Clarence Gate Gardens constructed*  
*1920s- Baker Street Station and Chiltern Court were constructed*
- 4.03 Development began with the construction of Nos. 2 and 39 near the south-east corner. Terraced houses with gardens were then extended northwards and westwards from these two points but it was not until around 1830 that the square was complete.
- The area remained substantially intact throughout the Victorian period, until the Great Central Railway built the final stage of their London extension, which was started in 1894. The line cut through St John's Wood to Blandford Square, the east side of which was subsequently cleared to build Marylebone Station. The station was opened in 1899 with the Grand Central Hotel built facing the station across a forecourt.
- 4.04 In the inter-war years, further peripheral developments occurred along Baker Street and Marylebone Road, where the platforms at Baker Street Station were surrounded by the development of Chiltern Court, built during the 1920s. The Marylebone Road was also transformed, with the building of larger-scale mansion blocks.
- During World War II, the area experienced some bomb damage. In 1940, three bombs were dropped over Dorset Square, demolishing houses on the south side, the Portman Arms on Balcombe Street and the railway goods yard on the corner of Rossmore Road and Lisson Grove. The war also saw the former railway hotel being used as a transit camp and no. 1 Dorset Square occupied by a branch of the Secret Operations executive.
- Following the war, and the death of the Viscount Portman in 1946, the freehold of the houses in the Dorset Square area was sold by the Portman Estate.
- 4.05 Since this time, development in the area has taken the form of piecemeal infill and reconstruction. The Council rebuilt flats and houses on the bomb sites in Balcombe Street and Dorset Square. Other postwar development was concentrated in the mews and on the fringes of the area.
- 4.06 Dorset Square was designated as a conservation area in 1968, which was then extended in 1978, 1990 and 2008. Today it remains of historic interest as a substantially intact area of Georgian townscape.
- 4.07 No. 6 and 7 Dorset Square would appear to have been the Somerset Hotel prior to the terrace being Listed based on information from a 1940-1960 OS plan and the infill at the rear appears on an 1870 OS plan:

**SOMERSET HOTEL  
HERITAGE, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT  
6-7 DORSET SQUARE, LONDON NW1 6PU  
22 January 2021**



1870 OS plan showing rear infills to numbers 2-8 Dorset Square



1940-1960 OS plan showing Somerset Hotel noted on the plan



View: TQ2782SE - A (includes: St Marylebone) - Ordnance Survey National Grid Maps, 1940s-1960s  
<http://maps.nls.uk/view/102901738>

## **5.00 POLICY CONTEXT**

- 5.01 National planning policy advice is contained in the adopted National Planning Policy Framework, which replaces the previous Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements.
- 5.02 The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (Para 56).
- 5.03 In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to 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 (Para 128).
- 5.04 Local planning policy for this site comprises of the adopted Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies (November 2013) and 'saved' policies from the Westminster Unitary Development Plan (January 2007).

- Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies (November 2013)

Policy S25 (Heritage) seeks to conserve the historic nature of Westminster including its listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings. It states that historic and other important buildings should be upgraded sensitively, to improve their environmental performance and make them easily accessible.

- Westminster Unitary Development Plan (January 2007)

Policy DES 10 sets out the policy approach to Listed Buildings. It outlines that any proposal relating to the extension or alteration of a listed building will, where relevant, need to include full details of means of access, siting, design and external appearance of the proposed development in order to demonstrate that it would respect the listed building's character and appearance and serve to preserve, restore or complement its features of special architectural or historic interest.

## **6.00 DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

- 6.01 The hotel extends over the lower ground floor level, ground, first second and third floors and occupies the whole footprint of a pair of terraced properties (No.s 6 and 7) on the east side of Dorset Square. The buildings are linked at each floor through the dividing wall.
- 6.03 The property is generally in good condition structurally other than the bulging brickwork in the façade between the second floor and third floor level. The front façade is broadly original as is the rear façade of the main building. There are still some original features internally at ground floor level (most notably the staircases) but over time many if not most of the original features have been lost. The property generally is in need of some long-term maintenance and work is required to make the building more inclusively accessible.
- 6.04 The property at lower ground floor extends over the whole site area (other than the front lightwell) and other than the original perimeter walls and dividing wall between the two properties most of the building fabric is not original. From record drawings the entrances to the basement were originally via doors in the main façade (which are still in use) rather than doors leading into the new lobbies under the front steps of the ground floor. There were then diagonal corridors leading to the staircases which no longer exist.

- 6.05 There is a rear courtyard at ground floor level with single story closet wing extensions along both flank party walls and smaller closet wing extensions at first floor level. Both the courtyard and closet wing extensions are clearly not original.
- 6.06 Whilst the forms of the front rooms of both properties are broadly intact (albeit subdivided in many instances), the conversion into a hotel has meant that rear principal rooms on each floor have been reduced in depth to provide horizontal access corridors between the 2 buildings. The bulk of the internal doorways and doors to bedrooms and bathrooms are not original and many of the original moldings and features have been lost over time. The bulk of the windows and external doors in the original buildings (that is to say not the extensions) appear to be original.

## **7.00 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 7.01 Approval was granted for the tanking of the vaults in September 1993 (Ref. No: 93/04815/LBC)
- 7.02 An application was submitted and withdrawn in January 1994 for internal alterations and the demolition of ground and first floor buildings at the rear and replacement with a new ground and first floor extension to create extra bed spaces (Ref. No: 93/04962/FULL and Ref. No: 93/04963/LBC).
- 7.03 An application was submitted and withdrawn in January 1994 for the demolition of the existing roof and the erection of a mansard extension to provide extra bedrooms (Ref. No: 93/04964/FULL and Ref. No: 93/04965/LBC).
- 7.04 Approval was granted in March 1996 for internal refurbishment of bathrooms, new door openings and decoration (Ref. No: 96/00843/LBC).
- 7.05 Approval was granted in January 1998 for the installation of a backlit fascia sign (Ref. No: 97/05110/ADV and Ref. No: 97/05111/LBC)
- 7.06 Approval was granted in September 1997 for the replacement of UPVC windows with timber (Ref. No: 97/05112/FULL and Ref. No: 97/05113/LBC)
- 7.07 An application was submitted in 2017 for the excavation of a sub-basement (Ref. No: 17/11162/FULL) – status NFATFU
- 7.08 Following a face-to-face pre-application meeting, an application was submitted in January 2020 for the excavation of a sub-basement and replacement of bricks to part of the front elevation and second and third floor levels (Ref. No: 19/07942/FULL and Ref. No: 19/08322/LBC). This application was withdrawn at the recommendation of the officers involved as although the principal of the scheme was within policy there was inadequate information. The applicant was advised that they should resubmit a more detailed application within 12 months in which instance the previously paid planning fee would be carried forward.

## **8.00 PROPOSED SCHEME AND ITS EFFECT**

- 8.01 To carefully cut out the bulging brickwork to the façade at second and third floor levels (providing temporary support as advised by structural engineers) and to rebuild at the same plane as the principal façade in reclaimed brickwork with bricks, bond and pointing all to match the existing.



View showing part of the bulge in the brickwork in the facade

- 8.02 To reorganise the existing basement including upgrading the restaurant, kitchen and bar and adding a disabled WC. Also to modify the layout to provide a proper protected means of escape in case of fire. Also to provide acoustic lining to the perimeter walls.
- 8.03 To excavate to form a new sub-basement with a height of 4m under the footprint of the existing basement linked to the existing building with a pair of staircases under the existing stairs between the basement and ground floor. This additional floor to provide a function room, WC facilities and storage.
- 8.04 At ground floor level to remove the WC in the original hallway to number 7 and relocate it into room 105. Also to install the lift where there is currently a bathroom.
- 8.05 To form the new sub-basement with acoustically considered construction and acoustic wall and ceiling linings to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.
- 8.06 To install a lift between the ground floor and new sub-basement to provide inclusive access to the lower levels.
- 8.07 To part demolish the basement under the ground floor courtyard to provide a lightwell with glazed roof to the existing basement.

- 8.08 To provide mechanical ventilation to the new sub-basement and existing basement with any plant noise to be 10dB below background within 1m of any neighbouring window.
- 8.09 To refurbish the interior of the existing basement.
- 8.10 To protect and retain the original features – primarily the entirety of the façade, the existing original basement walls and the pair of staircases.
- 8.11 To reinstate the second external staircase in the front lightwell of number 7.

## **DESIGN**

### **9.00 CURRENT AND PROPOSED USAGE**

- 9.01 The building is a hotel (Class C1) and there is no proposed change of use.

### **10.00 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.01 The proposed rebuilding of the bulging area of brickwork in the facade at second and third floor levels should be regarded as a repair and all completed work and materials will match the existing.
- 10.02 The proposed addition of a sub-basement will not affect any of the original fabric of the building.
- 10.03 The proposed internal reorganization of the basement will not affect any of the original fabric of the building. The original exterior perimeter walls, spine wall, staircases and façade will remain as existing.
- 10.04 The addition of a lift between ground floor and the new sub-basement will have a small impact on the original fabric of the building as it will require forming a hole in the floor and one wall. A lift will however make the lower floors accessible for those in wheelchairs or with other mobility issues.
- 10.05 The proposed mechanical ventilation will be designed by experienced mechanical and electrical consultants to meet the Local Authority noise criteria.

### **11.00 EXISTING APPEARANCE**

- 11.01 The existing building is a pair of terraced four-storey buildings over basement with a rear extension at lower ground and ground floor levels. The roof is the traditional 'M' style roof behind front and rear parapets.
- 11.02 The front of the buildings is painted render at ground and lower ground floor levels and fair-faced stock brickwork above. The rear of the property is fair-faced brickwork painted in some areas.
- 11.03 External window and doorframes and sash elements are white painted timber. Metalwork and rainwater goods are painted black.
- 11.04 The front exterior of the building is largely original, with the exception of the doors under the ground floor front steps. The rear elevation has a number of non-original, modified openings

and closet wing extensions and ground and part first floor levels. The interior of the basement has nearly all of the original features and much of the original fabric with the notable exception of the staircases. The upper levels retain part of the plan form of the original building but again many of the original features have been lost at ground floor level and nearly all at first floor and above.

## **12.00 AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 12.01 The proposed new sub-basement will provide additional floor space of 331m<sup>2</sup>.
- 12.02 The proposed sub-basement will not be visible from the exterior of the property or any adjoining properties.

## **13.00 REFUSE DISPOSAL**

- 13.01 No change to the existing.

## **14.00 CYCLE STORAGE**

- 14.01 No change to the existing.

## **ACCESS**

### **15.00 ACCESS LINKS**

- 15.01 No change to vehicular or pedestrian access is proposed. The building is accessible to pedestrians via stepped access from Dorset Square. The site is approximately 230m west of Baker Street London Underground Station (Zone 1) and approximately 250m east of Marylebone National Railway Station and a number of bus routes pass close to the site along Dorset Square and Marylebone Road. It scores a PTAL level 6b which identifies its excellent access to public transport. There is on-street parking directly outside the property, on Dorset Square.

### **16.00 PRE-PLANNING ADVICE**

- 16.01 A pre-planning application was submitted and validated on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020 but unfortunately due to Covid 19 and officer leave periods no response was able to be provided prior to the annual cutoff date for resubmitting this application (23<sup>rd</sup> January 2021) and as such we have submitted the application today as it is the last day whereby the application could be resubmitted within incurring an additional planning fee.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **17.00 SUMMARY**

- 17.01 Repairing the bulging brickwork in the façade at second and third floor levels to match the existing will visually benefit the property and the terrace as well as safeguarding its structural integrity.
- 17.02 The addition of a sub-basement will provide much needed accommodation for facilities which the hotel does not currently provide - a function room, WC facilities and storage.

- 17.03 The proposed works to the existing basement do not change the functions of the room but do reorganise them and improve the facilities and means of escape in case of fire.
- 17.04 Removing the bathroom in the existing hallway to number 7 will allow this space to be reinstated to the original form and improve access to and escape from the building.
- 17.05 The addition of a lift will provide access to the basement and sub-basement for those with mobility issues conforming to current Building Regulations part M and the 2010 Equality Act.
- 17.06 The proposed internal refurbishment to the existing basement will not affect any of the original fabric of the building. The additional of a covered lightwell will be more in character with the form of the original building (as evidenced by the adjoining property at No.5 Dorset Square) and will significantly improve amenity by providing natural light to the rear of this floor.
- 17.07 All remaining original features (internal and external) are to be retained.
- 17.08 The proposed works will not have a negative effect on the historic and special architectural importance of the listed building and conservation area; our opinion is therefore that planning permission and listed consent should be granted.