

25 Molyneux Street,
London

Historic Building Report and Design
and Access Statement
December 2015

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Historic Buildings Report and Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Montagu Evans LLP for the purposes of planning permission and listed building consent for the refurbishment of the basement flat of no. 25 Molyneux Street.

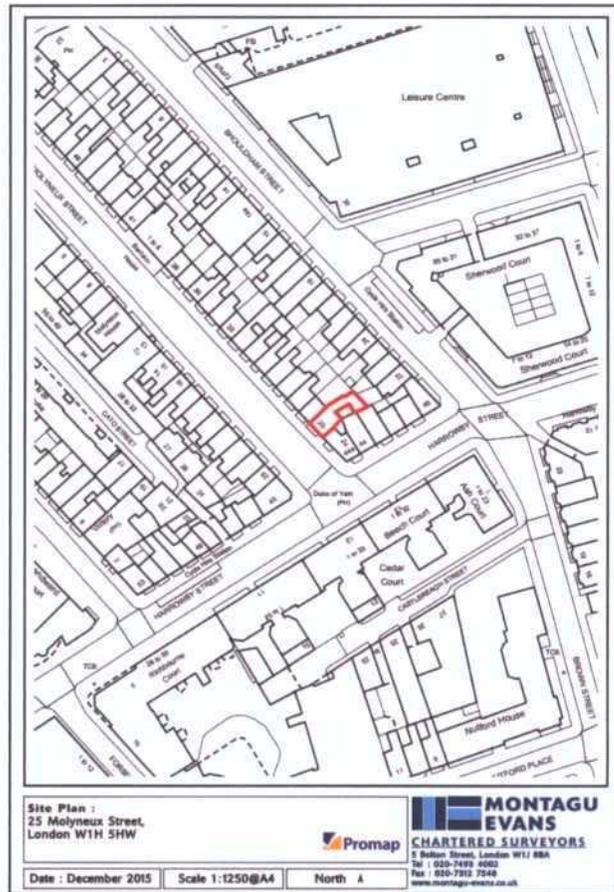


Figure 1. Site Plan of the Boundary

1.2 The subject of this report is 25 Molyneux Street which is located within the City of Westminster. A site location plan is provided at Figure 1. The site is located within the Molyneux Street Conservation Area

(Westminster). The building is listed at grade II as part of the group designation of nos. 25-38 Molyneux Street (Grade II).

1.3 The property is part of an early C19 terrace of houses over three storeys plus basement level. This report will focus in particular on the basement flat of the property which appears to have been subdivided after a phase of works in the 1950s to separate the house into smaller residences.

1.4 The proposals seek to upgrade the basement of the property for residential use and create a one bedroomed dwelling. At present the flat presents a very poor quality living environment. The proposals will include the alteration of the floor level in the rear room, and the enhancement of the connection between this rear room and the extension. The proposals seek to make other changes to the exterior of the building to provide further enhancements to the Molyneux Street Conservation Area.

1.5 The history of the site is included in Section 2.0. The report also considers the nearby heritage assets to the study site: these are identified in Section 3.0. Section 4.0 is the statement of significance.

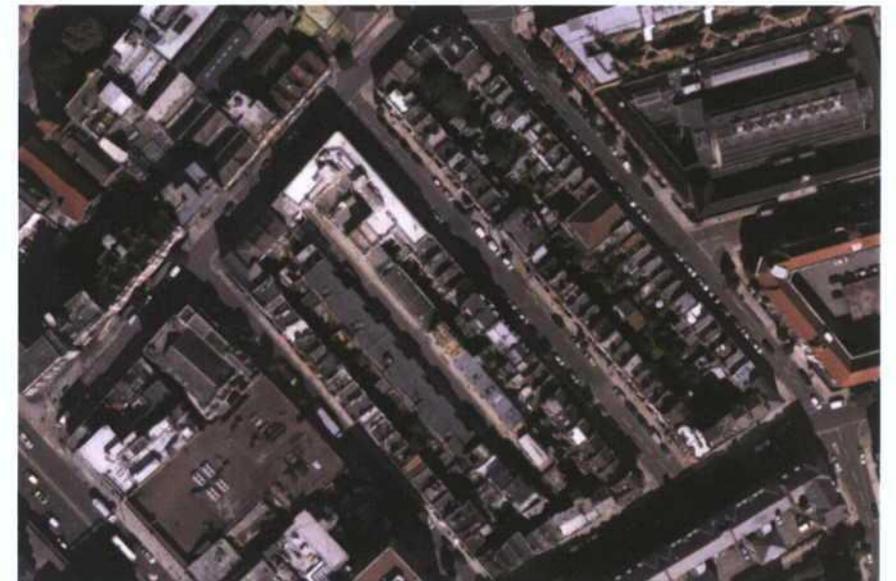


Figure 2. Aerial Photograph of the site and surrounding streets

2.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE

Brief History of Molyneux Street

- 2.1 Molyneux Street is located within the ancient borough of Marylebone. During the C18 the area nearby began to be developed as part of the fashionable West End, and small pockets of land were developed along the north-east side of the Edgware Road. As can be seen in Horwood's map of 1799 (**Figure 3**), Queen Street (Molyneux Street located just to the north) had been started but Molyneux Street and neighbouring streets remained open land.

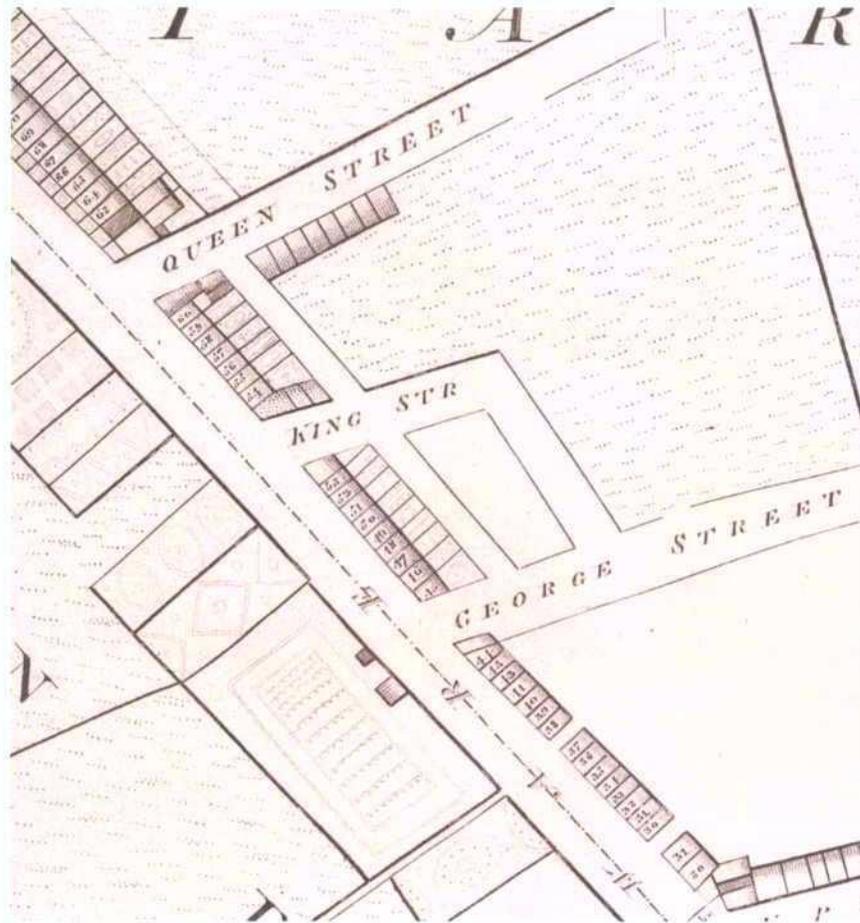


Figure 3. Horwood's Map of 1799, with the site located to the north of Queen Street

- 2.2 Molyneux Street was developed in the first decade of the C19 in a typical grid iron formation, with fourth rate town houses. The scale of the development has been described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as "[The] modest neighbour to the dignified squares and sheets to the east that comprise the area now designated as the Portman Estate Conservation Area."



Figure 4. Georgian Houses: first rate, second rate and fourth rate

- 2.3 No. 25 Molyneux Street, like many others in the street was constructed with a basement and ground floor which are currently in white stucco, with the first and second floors in exposed stock brick. The third floor level windows are set within a dormer level. The basement is accessed through railings and a concrete staircase. Unlike the fourth rate town houses represented above in **Figure 4**, those on Molyneux Street have flat headed arches, rather than round headed on the ground and first floor.
- 2.4 At the rear of the property the building has been extended with a two storey extension over basement and ground floor level. The precise date of this work is unconfirmed but was probably in 1954 when the main building was connected to the extension. Previously an outhouse/store was present (as early as 1893) however, this was accessed from the external courtyard and was not part of the house (**Figure 7**).

2.5 It appears from drainage plans in the Westminster Archives that this part of the building was transformed to habitable space in 1954 to include a rear bathroom and kitchen, and a number of major works completed at this time including the insertion of a structural beam to support the rear wall (Figures 9-11).



Figure 5. 1869 Ordnance Survey Map



Figure 6. 1953-4 Ordnance Survey Map

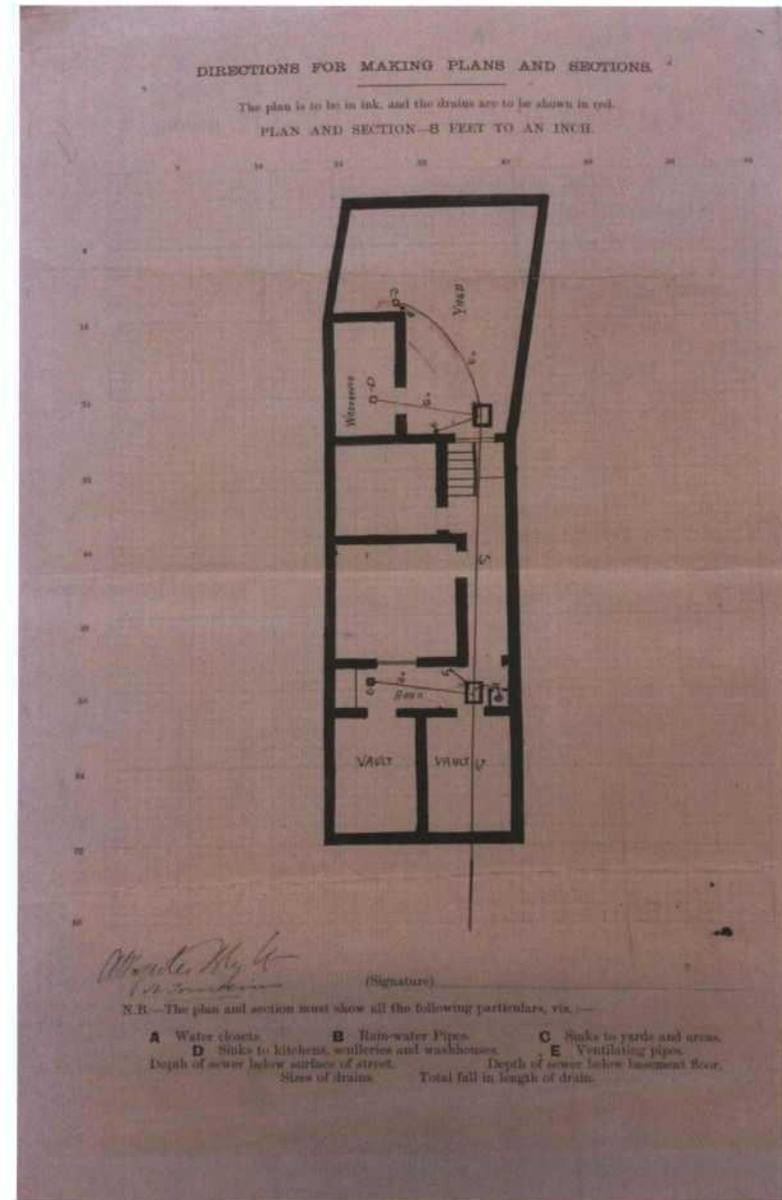


Figure 7. 1893 Plan of Basement showing a washhouse at the rear of the building but unconnected to the rear room, Westminster City Archives

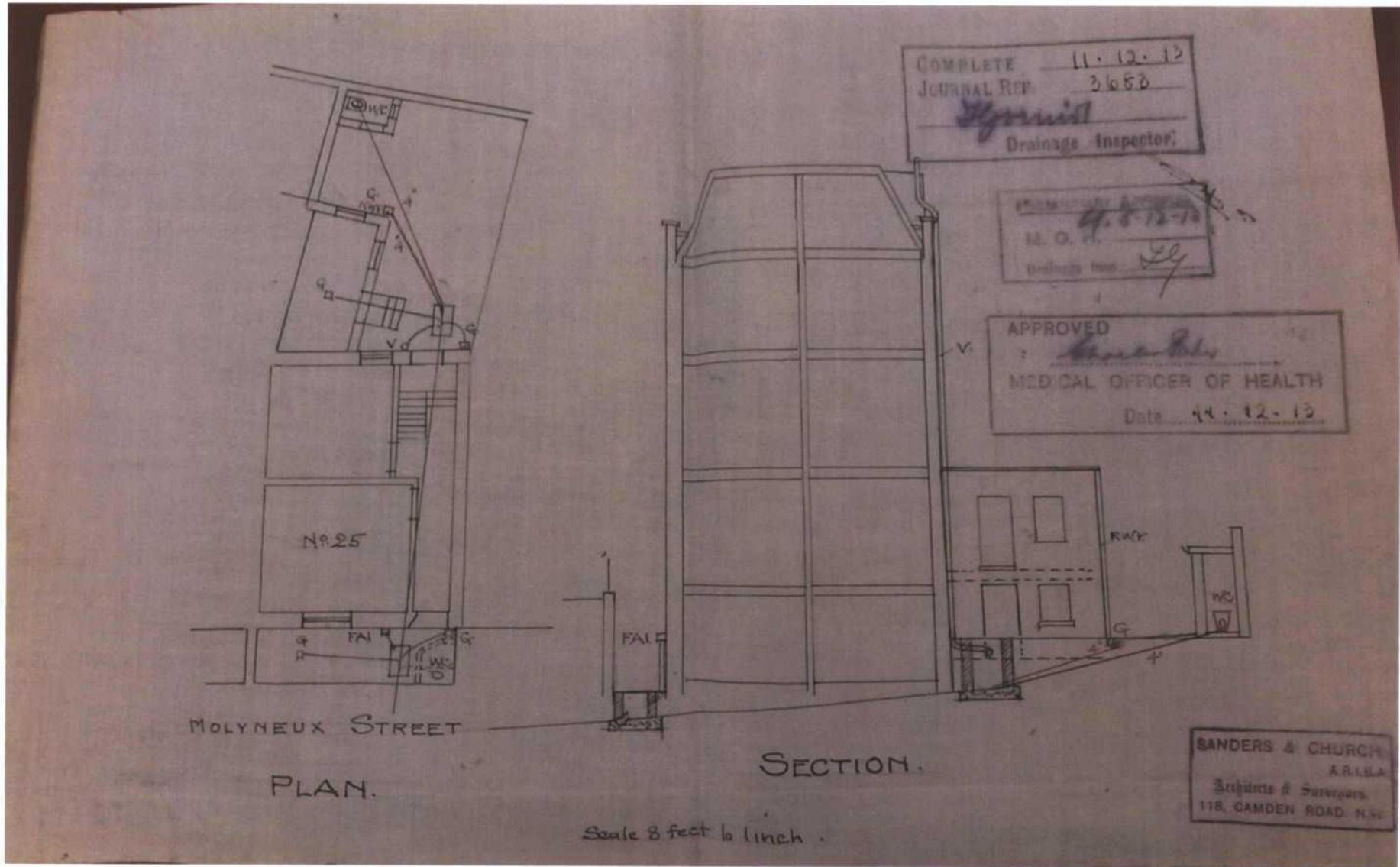


Figure 8. Drainage Plans of 25 Molyneux Street with the washroom unconnected to the rear room of the house, 1913.
Westminster City Archives

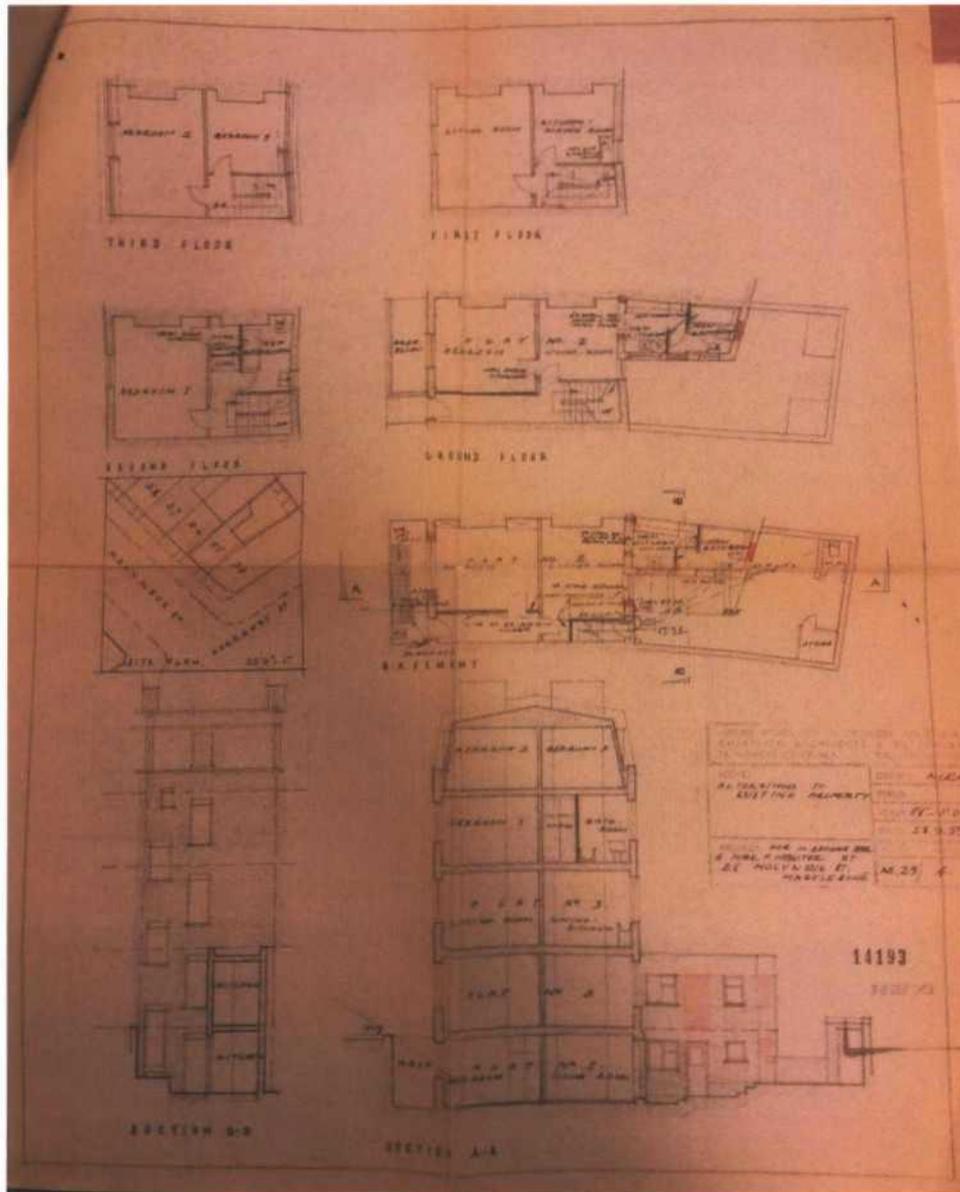


Figure 9. Drawing of 25 Molyneux Street, 1954, Westminster Council Planning

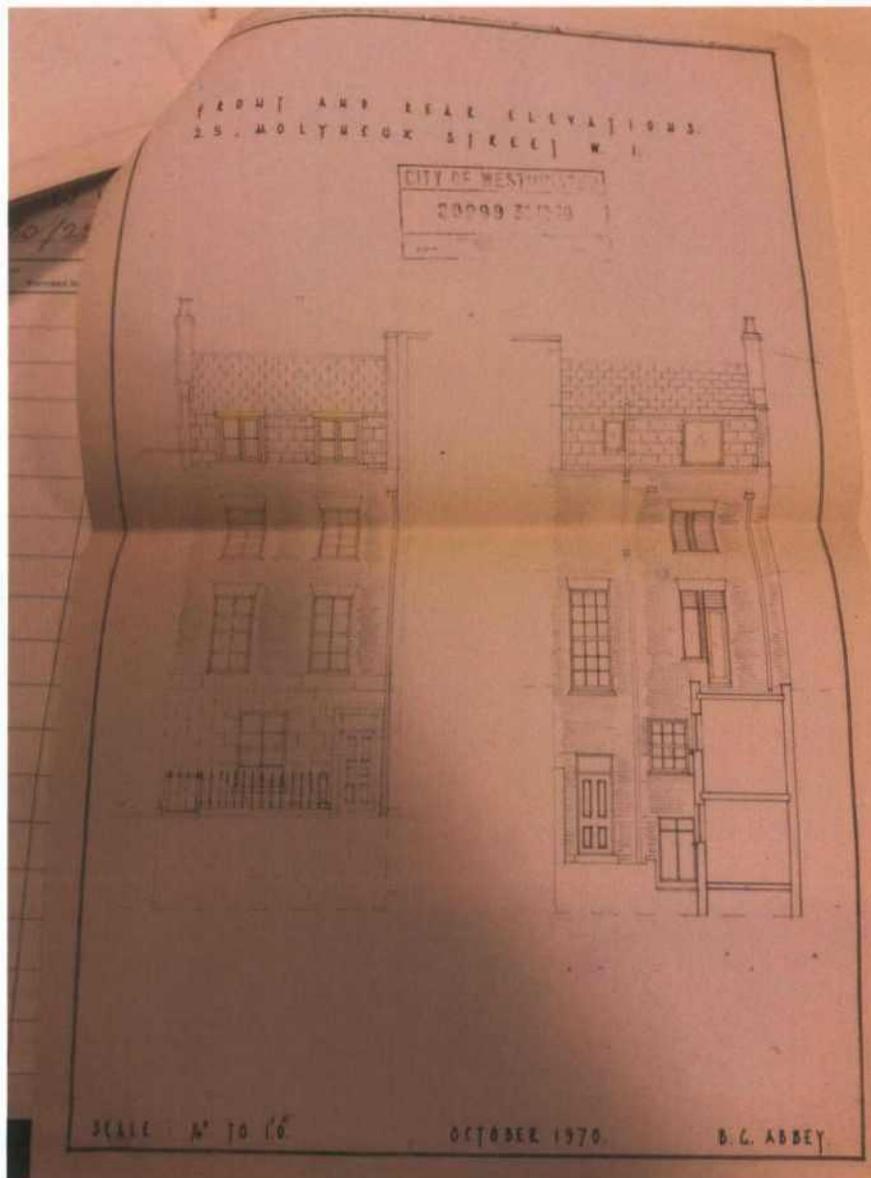


Figure 11. Elevation of 25 Molyneux Street, 1970, Westminster City Archives

25 Molyneux Street- Basement

- 2.6 The property is accessed from a concrete staircase at the front of the building (**Figure 22**). Within the property there are two primary habitable rooms which are set within the historic core of the building. The basement flat is entered from the concrete staircase, on entering the flat there is a narrow corridor with access to the front room, and the rear room. The partition wall separating this room was erected in the 1954 phase of works. A kitchen and bathroom are located off the rear room in the extension which were joined to the main historic core of the house in 1954.
- 2.7 There are no remaining historical features of note within the basement flat. In the front room of the house there is a chimneybreast with no remnants of historic detailing (**Figures 12 and 13**). There are no plaster mouldings and the skirtings – which are rounded – are not original, and have been added to all spaces including in the hearth of the fireplace.
- 2.8 According to the drawing from 1954 from the Westminster City Archive the window in the front room has been widened (**Figure 10**), and a Crittal window has been added to the front façade (**Figure 13 and 22**). This window appears to date from 1954.
- 2.9 The rear room of the basement flat has no architectural features of note, and is in poor condition (**Figures 15 and 16**). A partition wall was added to this room when the staircase was divided and access restricted between floors. The present configuration can be seen in **Figure 16**.
- 2.10 During the 1954 phase of works part of the rear wall was removed, a new beam over the door was inserted and two further spaces were created to house a kitchen and bathroom (**Figures 10, 17, 19 and 21**). The external windows in the rear extension appear to date from this time as they are also metal Crittal Windows (**Figure 18**). Previously the WC would have been located at the rear of the courtyard (**Figures 8 and 10**).
- 2.11 The rear extension which leads to the kitchen and bathroom (**Figure 21**) contains two large steps from the rear room to the extension which provides difficult access. The head height at this connecting point is very low and inadequate for use in conjunction with the steep steps. Between the kitchen and bathroom is an exterior door which provides access to the courtyard. The connection is very narrow and is an awkward space.
- 2.12 At present there are two vaults beneath the pavement at the front of the property which are blocked, one by the external staircase providing access into the property.



Figure 12. View of the Front room of the basement of 25 Molyneux Street



Figure 13. The Crittal window in the front room of the basement



Figure 14. Doorframe of the entrance of the rear room.



Figure 16. View of the new partition wall in the area which housed the stairs



Figure 15. The rear room in the basement of 25 Molyneux Street



Figure 17. View of the kitchen in the rear extension 25 Molyneux Street



Figure 18. The rear extension of the basement of no. 25 Molyneux Street including the 1950s windows



Figure 19. The bathroom in the rear extension of 25 Molyneux Street



Figure 20. The rear elevation of 25 Molyneux Street



Figure 21. The view to the extension of 25 Molyneux and into the courtyard



Figure 22. The view to the basement from the street of 25 Molyneux Street with the concrete stair and the 1950s Crittal window

3.0 LOCAL DESIGNATIONS

- 3.1 A heritage asset map of the area is included as **Appendix 1.0**.
- 3.2 The site is located within the Molyneux Street Conservation Area which is within the Royal Borough of Westminster. A boundary map of the Molyneux Street Conservation Area is attached in **Figure 23**. The site is located in the centre of the Conservation on Molyneux Street.
- 3.3 There are a number of designated heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the application site. They are described in more detail below:

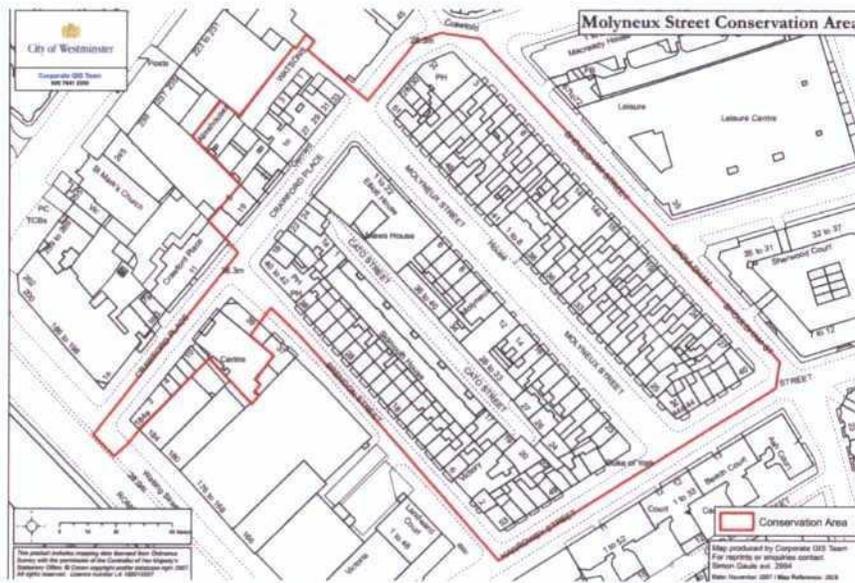


Figure 23. Molyneux Street Conservation Area Map (Westminster)

6-9, 16-23, 25-38, 41-49 Molyneux Street (Grade II)

- 3.4 The other properties which are statutorily listed on Molyneux Street are similar to no. 25 Molyneux Street. They are fourth rate townhouses and share many of the common characteristics on the street. They are arranged over three storeys with basements, usually with a stuccoed basement or basement and ground floor. The upper storeys remain in exposed stock brick. Some properties have straight parapets and others have attic dormers set within mansard roof extensions. A number of these properties also have wrought iron balconies on first floor level.

4-14, 15-27 Shouldham Street (Grade II)

- 3.5 The terrace on Shouldham Street dates from the early C19, and is contemporaneous with the building of the neighbouring streets of Molyneux Street and Harrowby Street. The buildings are three storey townhouses with basements, of the same size and scale as Molyneux Street. They share characteristics with the neighbouring street and have a variety of exposed brick and stucco frontages. Some of these properties retain the wrought iron balconies on first floor level.

41-43, 46-53 Harrowby Street (Grade II)

- 3.6 The designated properties on Harrowby Street were built in the first decade of the C19, and were built concurrently with those on Molyneux Street. They are three storey townhouses with basements, and some of these properties also have ground floor shop fronts.

Molyneux Street Conservation Area (Westminster)

- 3.7 The Molyneux Street Conservation area was designated by the City of Westminster Council in 1974, it was extended in 1990, 1993 and 1994. It is a small conservation area which provides a limited envelope around Molyneux Street and the neighbouring streets of Harrowby Street, Shouldham Street, Crawford Place and Brendon Street.
- 3.8 The properties in the Molyneux Street Conservation Area are characterised by fourth rate town houses which were constructed in the first decade of the C19. There are a high number of statutorily listed buildings (many as group listings) and a large number of properties which are unlisted buildings of merit within the conservation area (**Appendix 1.0**). The unlisted buildings of merit are typically buildings which date from the late C19 and are of architectural interest yet replace the original early C19 terraces.

4.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 The following section will assess our understanding of the site which we have gained through documentary research and by visiting the property and considering the surrounding area.

4.2 Historic England in their 2008 guidance *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* describe the idea of significance as a set of collective heritage values which can be used to assess a heritage asset. In this case the study site is a non-designated heritage asset as it is listed at Grade II and it is also located within the Molyneux Street Conservation Area (Westminster).

4.3 Historic England's guidance provides a useful methodology for the establishment of significance by looking at four values and provides a useful way to breakdown the assessment of the building:

Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence of past human activity.

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associate.

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

4.4 The basement property at no. 25 Molyneux Street contains historical value as a residential property which is part of the larger residential premises at no. 25 Molyneux Street and as part of a street which was developed in the early C19 as a larger residential development of the area, and as part of the westward extension of the fashionable West End. It was constructed in a style typical of this date, and to a recognised design, that of the fourth rate town house which was represented in many builders' manuals and publications. Since its construction it has been subdivided into flats yet retains its original residential use.

4.5 The exterior of the building has aesthetic value as a handsome Georgian buildings which retains many of its original characteristics and which retains its visual connection with the neighbouring properties. There are a number of features which are modern alterations which detract from the overall aesthetic value of the building.

4.6 The third floor dormer windows have been added into a mansard roof and are not in keeping with the overall character of the building.

4.7 In addition, the basement window at the front of the property has a mid C20 Crittal window which detracts from the aesthetic quality of the building and the Molyneux Street Conservation Area (Figure 22).

4.8 The rear of the property has a two storey extension at the rear which appears to have been remodelled and extended in the mid C20 to provide further accommodation in addition to the main historical core of the building on the basement and ground floor levels (Figures 18 and 20). This part of the building contains mid C20 metal Crittal windows.

4.9 The rear façade has been altered a number of times to accommodate changes to the building (Figure 20). Entrance to the building is by a concrete staircase to the basement where the door allows access into the flat which has reduced the aesthetic value of the property (Figure 22). Historically there are two vaults beneath the pavement which have been blocked up and are no longer accessible.

4.10 Internally the basement flat of no. 25 Molyneux Street has little aesthetic value. There are no historic features of note. The front room of the house has a fireplace with no detailing (Figure 12). The skirting mouldings have been continued around the inside of the hearth suggesting the fireplace has not been active for many decades. There is no original joinery and the front window is a mid C20 Crittal window which dates from the 1954 phase of works (Figures 13 and 22). The width of the window was widened during this stage (Figure 10). The partition wall was added in 1954, and is therefore not an original part of the layout of the building.

4.11 The rear room would have originally have contained the staircase which would have connected the basement to the upper floors of the house. Part of this room is currently given over to the new staircase which leads from the ground floor to the rear courtyard of the property. Parts of this room are in poor condition, and parts of the ceiling have disintegrated and the plaster is now removed. There has been considerable alterations to the rear part of the room and it contains little aesthetic value (Figures 14, 15, 16 and 21).

4.12 During the 1950s the flat was extended and the external wall was knocked through to the former washroom. A beam was inserted at this point in the external wall for support. Due to the change in level of these two parts of the building the connection between the core of the house and the extension is unsatisfactory (Figure 21). Two steep steps lead to the kitchen with a low positioned beam at ceiling height.

4.13 The kitchen and bathroom are currently located in this part of the building and provide inadequate facilities for a residential property of this kind (Figures 17 and 19).

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

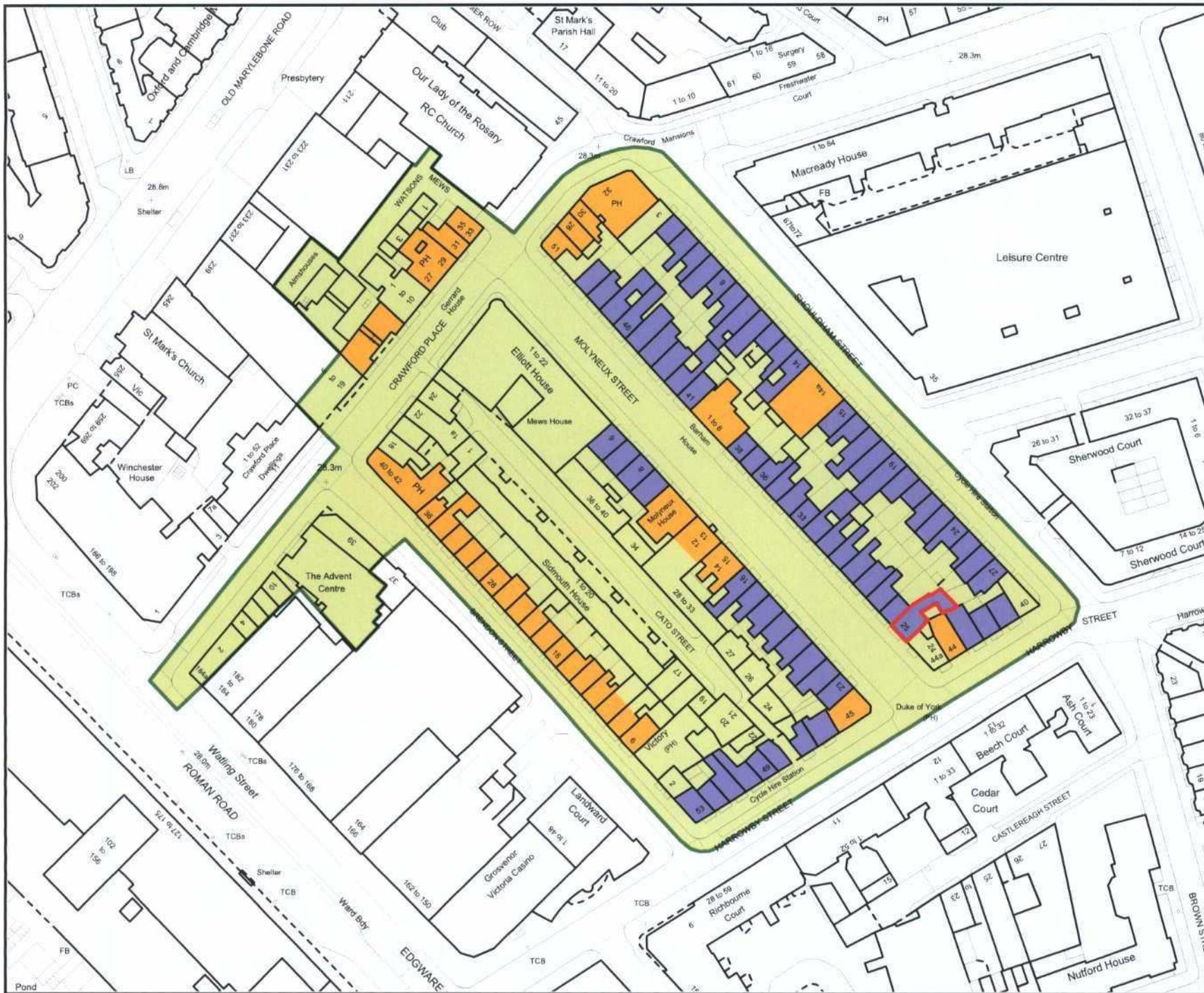
- 5.1 The proposals seek to retain historical associations of the property by undertaking works which allow the retention of the basement flat of no. 25 Molyneux Street as a residential property: a use which is not possible at the moment due to the state of repair and functional problems of the property. The proposals provide a number of enhancements to the listed building and the Molyneux Street Conservation Area.
- 5.2 At the front of the property the concrete staircase will be removed. A new staircase will be added which will provide better access into the basement of the property, and to the front door of the basement flat. The location of the front door will be changed to provide an entrance porch beneath the current access bridge to the ground floor door. This will provide an improved access to the basement whilst being in keeping with other properties on Molyneux Street, and providing an enhancement to the functionality of the building and will be a visual enhancement to the Conservation Area.
- 5.3 The two vaults at the front of the building which are currently blocked up will be excavated to provide additional amenity space. One vault will become internal and will be accessed from the new porch and will provide a utility room for the flat. The second vault will remain external and will become and will provide additional amenity space for the basement flat.
- 5.4 Internally, the building will be reconfigured to accommodate the needs of a one bedroom property. The partition wall in the front room will be removed to provide an open plan kitchen/living room. The existing Crittal window will be replaced with a timber sash window which will in keeping with the neighbouring properties in the Conservation Area. This will be a benefit to the Molyneux Conservation Area.
- 5.5 The rear room of the building will become the bedroom of the property. The area beneath the stairs will house the boiler and provide storage space within the flat. The rear extension of the property which at present houses the kitchen and bathroom will be altered to accommodate the dressing and shower rooms. In order for this area to function adequately the floor level will be lowered. This will enhance the experience of the extension which is currently difficult to access with insufficient standard of accommodation in the kitchen and bathroom.
- 5.6 The rear extension (on the basement and ground floors) will replace the existing metal windows with timber sash windows to be more closely aligned with the Conservation Area. This will be an enhancement to the Molyneux Street Conservation Area and to the listed building.

Effects of the Proposed Development

- 5.7 The proposed development will have a positive effect on the basement flat of the building and of the surrounding Conservation Area. At the present time the flat is uninhabitable and the proposals will ensure the ongoing use of the building as a residential property, thus ensuring the long term preservation of the building.
- 5.8 The proposals seek to ensure that the property is of a standard suitable for residential occupation. The excavation of the vaults will provide an external space for a store. The relocation of the front door to provide an entrance vestibule will provide access into the second vault which will be used as an internal utility room space, and provide further amenity space for the flat. These are enhancements to the property.
- 5.9 The front room of the flat will be extended to provide a large living space, including the kitchen. The partition wall added in the 1950s will be removed. The Crittal window which was added in the 1954 phase of works will be replaced with a timber sash window which will enhance both the property and the surrounding Molyneux Street Conservation Area.
- 5.10 The rear room of the flat will have additional storage and the connection between this room and the rear extension will be enhanced by the change of floor level in the rear extension. This will ensure the connection between the two parts of the building are safe and suitable for continued residential use. The rear extension of the building will be enhanced by the replacement of the windows at basement and ground floor levels.
- 5.11 These developments will enhance the significance of the building by ensuring its continued residential use and improved appearance, both internally and externally.

Appendix 1:

Heritage Asset Map



**25 Molyneux Street,
London W1 :**

Heritage Assets

- Application Site
- Molyneux Street Conservation Area
- Grade II Listed Buildings
- Unlisted Buildings of Merit in Conservation Area

Not To Scale

Date November 2015

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