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98 Ebury Street, London, SW1W 9QD

***Heritage Appraisal relating to refurbishment and rear extension
to existing dwelling at ground and lower ground floors***

November 2019
Our ref: 982

Introduction

1. This Statement appraises the proposed refurbishment and extension of 98 Ebury Street. The property lies within the Belgravia Conservation Area and is Grade II listed.
2. The statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance contained in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (2014). Regard has been paid to the Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning 2 (2015), and the Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008).
3. The Statement has been prepared by Christian Leigh BSc(Hons), MPhil (Dist), MRTPI. I have over 20 years' experience on projects concerning Grade I, II* and II residential and commercial properties within central London and the South East. This has included advice for clients at a number of other Ebury Street properties and the nearby area of Belgravia. Wider work involves heritage appraisals, planning and listed building application and appeals, and enforcement matters. My work with TF Architecture goes back over 10 years, and this has included work on nearby Ebury Street properties.
4. I have prepared advice relating to conservation area designations. Clients include a number of London Estates, local and central Government, as well as major developers and householders within central London. I am currently a lecturer in planning law and practice, including heritage matters, at the Henley Business School, University of Reading.
5. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that applications for consent affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by a description of the significance of the heritage asset affected and their contribution to their setting of that significance. This assessment was prepared following a review of the statutory records for the property, an appraisal of published documentation, research at the Westminster Archives, and a site visit in September 2019.
6. This Statement accordingly sets out the findings from the above research and then continues to assess the effect of the proposed internal and external alterations and the planning policy issues surrounding the proposed works insofar as they relate to the heritage issues.

History of property and the area

7. No. 98 Ebury Street form part of a row of early 19th century houses and is a building designated at Grade II for its special architectural or historic interest. The listing was made in 1987 and is part of a group value comprising of 34A Elizabeth Street and nos. 96-114 (even) Ebury Street:

*TQ 2878 NE
CITY OF WESTMINSTER
EBURY STREET, SW1
103/13 (north-west side)*

*Nos 96 to 114 (even) including No 34A Elizabeth Street
GV II*

Row of houses. Early C19. Brick. Channelled stucco to ground floor. Slate mansards to Nos 96, 98, 102 and 104. 3 storeys attic, and basement, each house 2 windows wide. Square headed entrances, pilastered surrounds. Studded, panelled doors. Round headed to ground floor windows to Nos 96 to 104. First floor cast iron anthemion pattern balconies to Nos 96 to 104. C20 balcony to No 110. Square gauged headed upper windows, sashes, glazing bars. Cornice above second floor. Subsidiary cornice to attic. Rounded corner to left with return to Elizabeth Street matching that to opposite corner. (Nos 47 to 53 (odd) Elizabeth Street including Nos 110 to 116 (even) Ebury Street.)

8. The listing therefore arises from the group value of the terrace and, typical to listings of this period, refers to the front elevation of the building, with no description of the interior or rear elevation. No. 98 falls within this general description of the property within the listing.
9. There is no specific mention of the property within the Survey of London or the Council's Belgravia Conservation Area guide.

The historical development of the area

10. The name of Belgravia was originally applied as a nickname to Belgrave and Eaton Squares and the streets radiating immediately from them. The district was first laid out and built by Cubitt, under a special Act of Parliament, passed in 1826, empowering Lord Grosvenor to drain the site and raise the level. In this way, '*Lord Grosvenor has built a new and elegant town on the site of fields of no healthy aspect, thus connecting London and Chelsea, and improving the western entrance to the metropolis, at a great expense*' (Old and New London, 1878).
11. The area was an open and rural space, known as the Five Fields, and in the early 19th Century was frequented by robbers. *Old and New London* reports that the fields formed the scene of one of the first, but unsuccessful, attempts at ballooning in London. De Moret, a Frenchman proposed in 1784 to ascend from some tea-gardens, having attached to his balloon summer-house. But his machine caught fire and was burnt; the unruly mob avenging their disappointment by destroying the adjoining property and M De Moret making a quick getaway.

12. Cubitt's work to the area led to the draining of the land and creation of a new area for London to build on. Ebury Street and Ebury Square were so called from Ebury or Eabery Farm, which stood on this part of the land. The farm had been upwards of 400 acres, meadow and pasture, and was let on lease by Queen Elizabeth for the sum of £21 per annum, to a Mr Whashe.
13. A map of London and its neighbourhood, published in 1804, shows the whole of the site of Belgravia, between Grosvenor Place and Sloane Street, still covered with fields. They are crossed by 'the King's private road,' which was occupied by Hobart Place, the roadway in the centre of Eaton Square, and Westbourne Place, terminating in Sloane Square. About the centre of Grosvenor Place, at that time, stood the Lock Hospital or Asylum, which was founded in 1787 by the Rev. Thomas Scott. To the south, at the corner of the King's private road, was the Duke's Hospital.
14. More widespread development soon began to follow and by the time of Horwood's Map in 1799, terraces had grown up along Upper Grosvenor Place overlooking the Queen's Gardens, with additional new streets appearing further south, off Buckingham Palace Road.



Horwood's Map of 1799, with approximate position of 98 Ebury Street marked

15. In 1824, Cubitt came to an agreement with the Grosvenor Estate to lease nineteen acres on the south side of what is now Belgrave Square. He was largely responsible for the coordination of development, ensuring the quality of housing, roads sewers, street lamps and other services which contributed to the area's success. From 1826 development proceeded rapidly. Building began in Belgrave Square, which was to be the most important and expensive part of the development



Greewood's map of 1827

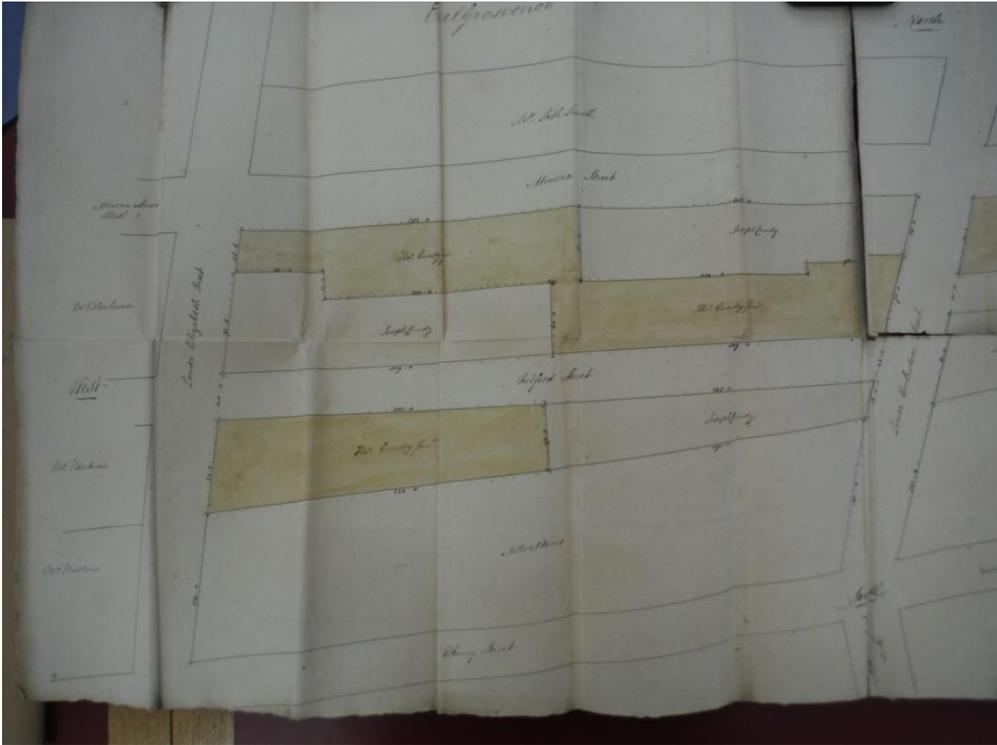
16. What is now Ebury Street was then an open roadway, called Ranelagh Street, having a few houses on one side only. Twenty years later the whole character of this locality was considerably changed. Belgrave Square and Wilton Crescent had sprung into existence, as also had Cadogan Square and Cadogan Place, together with a few connecting streets. Sir Richard Phillips, in his 'Walk from London to Kew,' published in 1817, speaks of the creeks which at that time ran from the Thames, 'in the swamps opposite Belgrave Place,' and adds that they 'once joined the canal in St. James's Park, and, passing through Whitehall, formed by their circuit the ancient isle of St. Peter's'. By the middle of the 19th century, Belgravia had been completely developed with Victoria Station opening to the south in 1863.



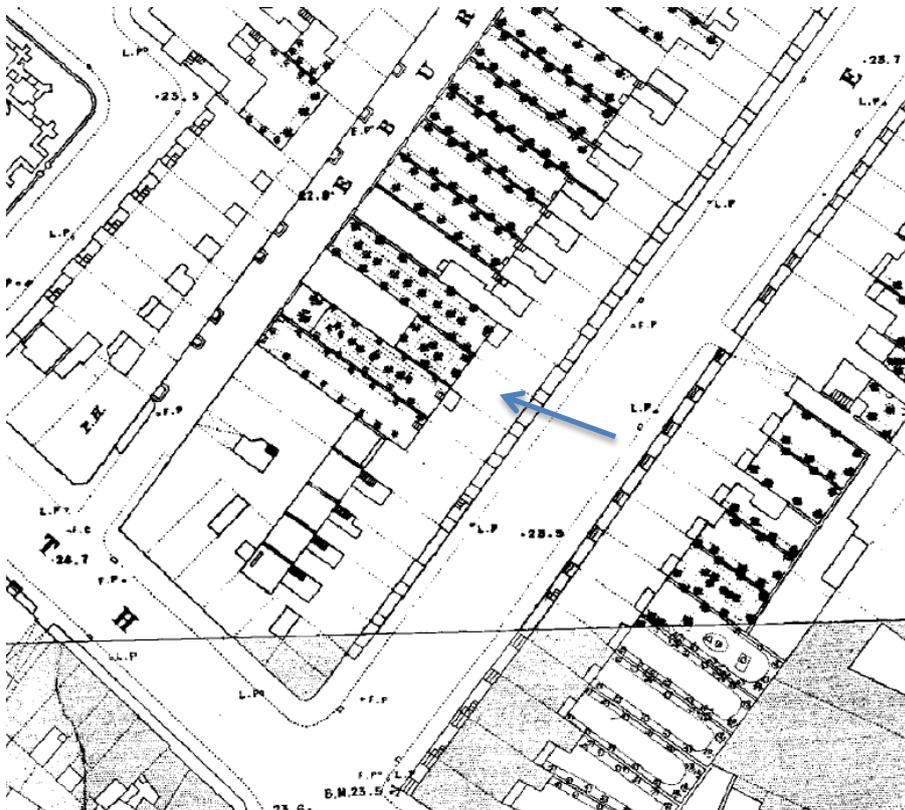
Cubitt's Map of 1865, which indicates the imminent building of No. 98 and the terrace

The history and use of 98 Ebury Street

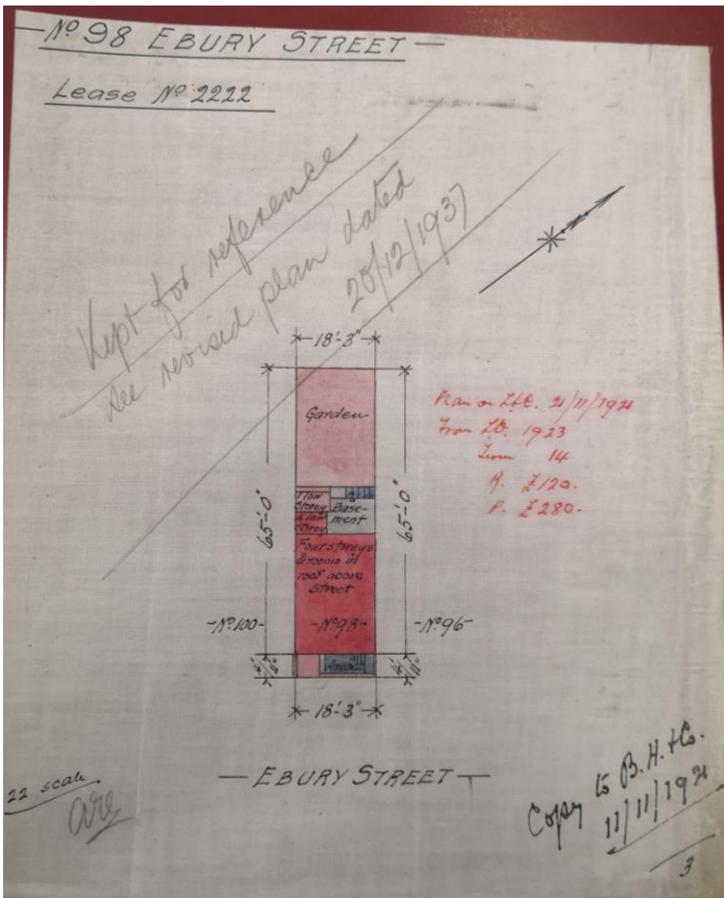
17. As can be seen from that plan, Ebury Street had not been completely developed. The lease plans in the Archives show the land for the property and neighbours were in fact established in 1824, with a 99 year lease 'On Ground in the 5 Fields, Pimlico':



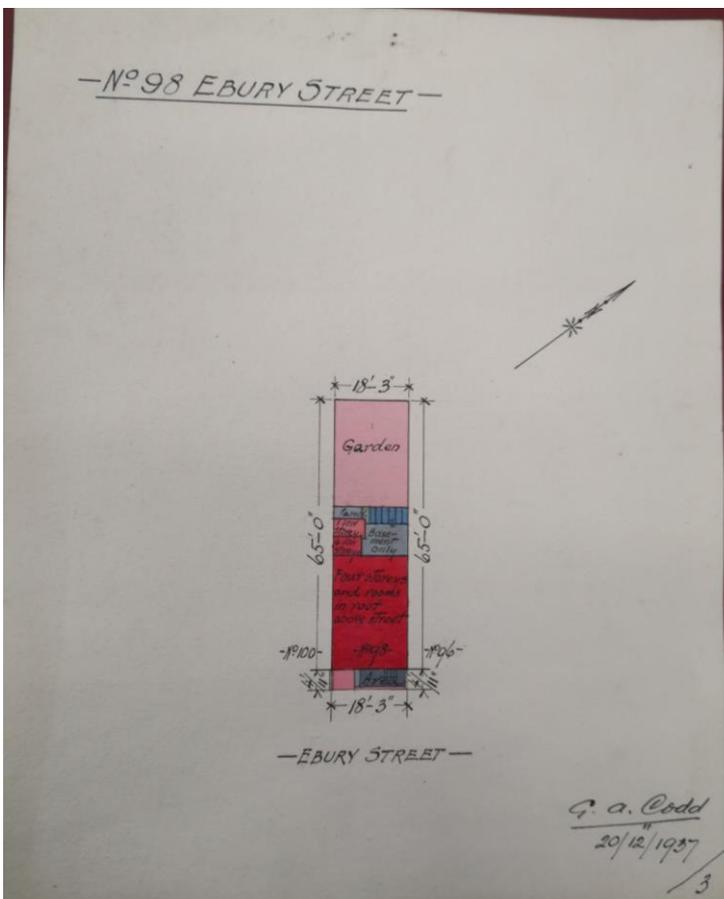
18. The earliest historic mapping available for the completely developed Ebury Street is from 1871.



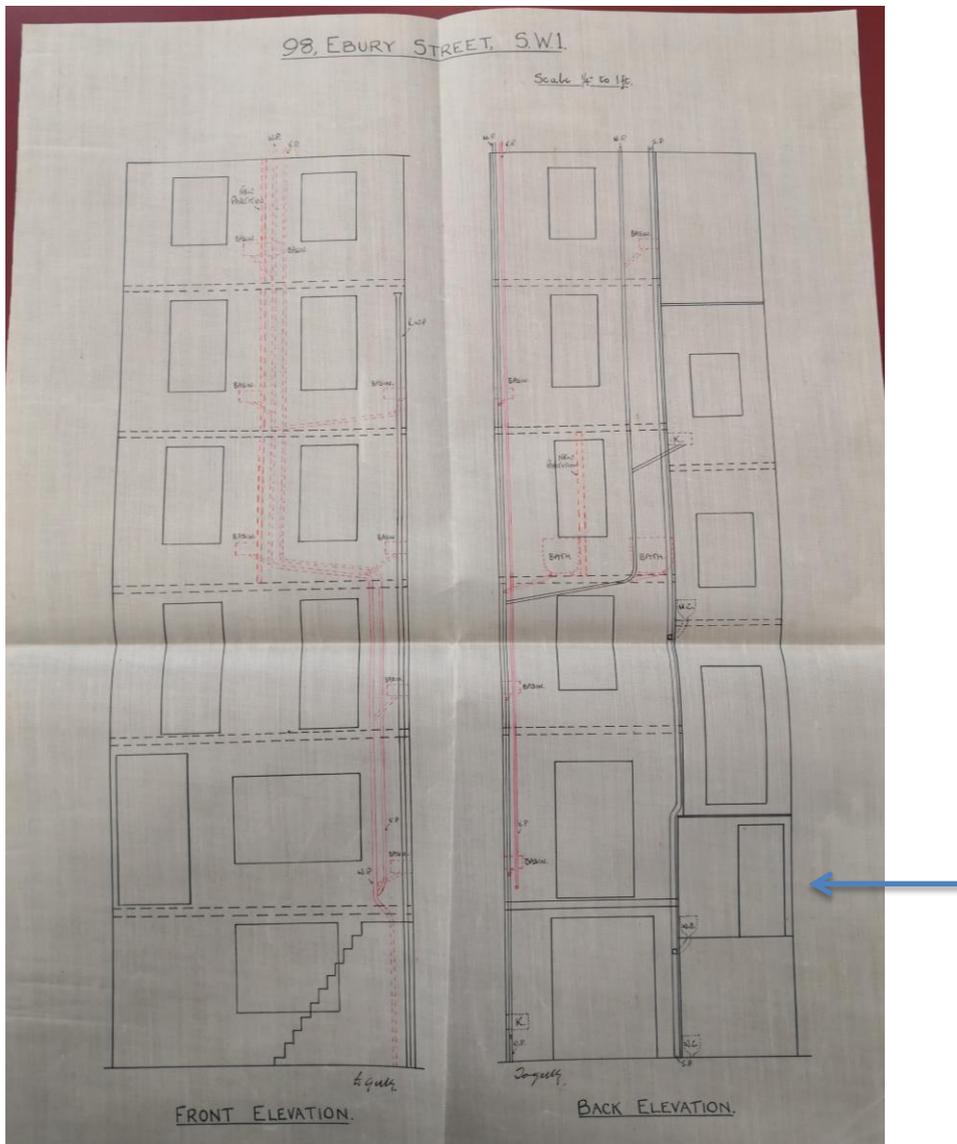
19. A renewed lease was granted in 1921 as the original 99 year lease was reaching its end by that time. This showed that the rear of the property saw a basement lightwell with access to the garden, a small four storey closet wing and a projecting single storey element from that closet wing:



20. This arrangement remains in an updated lease plan from 1937:



21. The Archives show that at this time the property had already changed from its original use as a single family house as it had been converted into apartments in the early 20th Century. This is a common feature of Ebury Street properties; I have advised in relation to a number of similar properties in the immediate vicinity where records show they were converted at that time.
22. The lease plans show that originally the rear closet wing was of different form: four storeys, with a single storey projection to the rear. It is now just a four storey closet wing. The plans are also useful in showing that the current rear open area is the same as that which originally existed: whilst there appears to have possibly been originally a covered area to that location, the width and depth of this area is the same as is currently seen on site, ie to the edge and beyond the existing four storey closet wing.
23. Drainage plan records from 1938 show the installation of plumbing and sanitary wear to all floors, and that the windows had been modified at that time:



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPT.
 Recd. 1 APR 1938
 Plan No. 9121
 Duplicate handed to Works Dept. 1 APR 1938

City of Westminster.

PUBLIC HEALTH (LONDON) ACT, 1936

NOTICE OF NEW BUILDINGS, DRAINAGE, WATER-CLOSETS, ETC.

To THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND COUNCILLORS
OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

Address and Description of Premises 98. Ebury Street
WESTMINSTER, SW1.

I hereby give Notice that I intend, at the expiration of seven days from the service hereof (unless I receive instructions from you to the contrary), to begin to lay or dig out the foundation of the above house or building, or to lay, rebuild or repair drains thereat, or to construct or reconstruct water-closet, or other sanitary works, with apparatus and drains connected therewith, as shown on the plan and section attached hereto, the construction of these works, and the construction and fixing of such other works and apparatus in connection therewith, the particulars of which are given below, to be in conformity with the statutory requirements and the By-laws of the London County Council made in that behalf.

Christian and Surname of the person intending to carry out the aforesaid works ... WILLIAM A. WHITE.

Address 1, UXBRIDGE TERRACE, W.11

State whether Architect, Builder or Owner BUILDER

If Architect or Builder, name of Firm and Address of Owner of Premises MRS. H. BROWN, 98 Ebury Street, SW1.

Date _____ Telephone No. (if any) _____

The plan and section (in duplicate) must be drawn in ink to a scale of not less than 1/4 inch to a foot. Proposed buildings must be coloured pink, and existing buildings a different colour. The plan must show the stories of which the several portions of the building consist. Proposed drains must be shown by red, and existing drains by blue lines: an existing drain which is to be retained must be shown by a blue line with a red line adjoining. The location of the w.c. in adjoining rooms and to the street or other open space must be shown, together with section showing mode of ventilation, of w.c., and of intercepting lobby where this exists.

The following are to be used as references on the plan:—

W.C. Water Closet.	G. Gully.
U. Urinal.	I.T. Intercepting Trap.
B. Bidet.	I.C. Inspection Chamber.
C. Cistern.	R.W.P. Rain-water Pipe.
D. Down-pipe.	S.P. Soil Pipe.
E. Ejector.	V.P. Ventilating Pipe.
F. Foul-water pipe.	W.P. Waste Pipe.
K. Sink.	

For Statutory requirements re Drainage, &c., please see overleaf.

Detailed description to be filled in by applicant

NOTE: Plans should indicate existing conditions in BLUE or BLACK and proposed alterations and additions in RED.

Is "one pipe" system of drainage to be adopted?	/
Drains:—Sizes, material and fall.	/
Intercepting trap:—Description of.	/
Inspection chambers:—Construction of, and description of covers.	
Soil and ventilating pipes:—Sizes and material.	<i>From New 2" I.C.C. 1/4 gal main desc Back. 2" I.C.C. (vertical) 1/4 gal as no gas new 1/4 gal</i>
Ventilating pipes from traps:—Sizes and material.	<i>1/4 puff to 1/2 vent pipe h.c.c.</i>
Waste pipes for baths, lavatory basins, bidets and sinks:—Sizes and material.	<i>2" Waste Vent as above h.c.c.</i>
Ventilating pipes of traps of waste water fittings:—Sizes and material of main and branch pipes.	
Method adopted for:— 1. Constant ventilation of water closet and urinal apartments. 2. Lobby approaches to water closet when provided.	/
General Remarks—	

Attention is drawn to the following provisions in the Shops Act, 1934:—

In every shop there must be provided and maintained:—

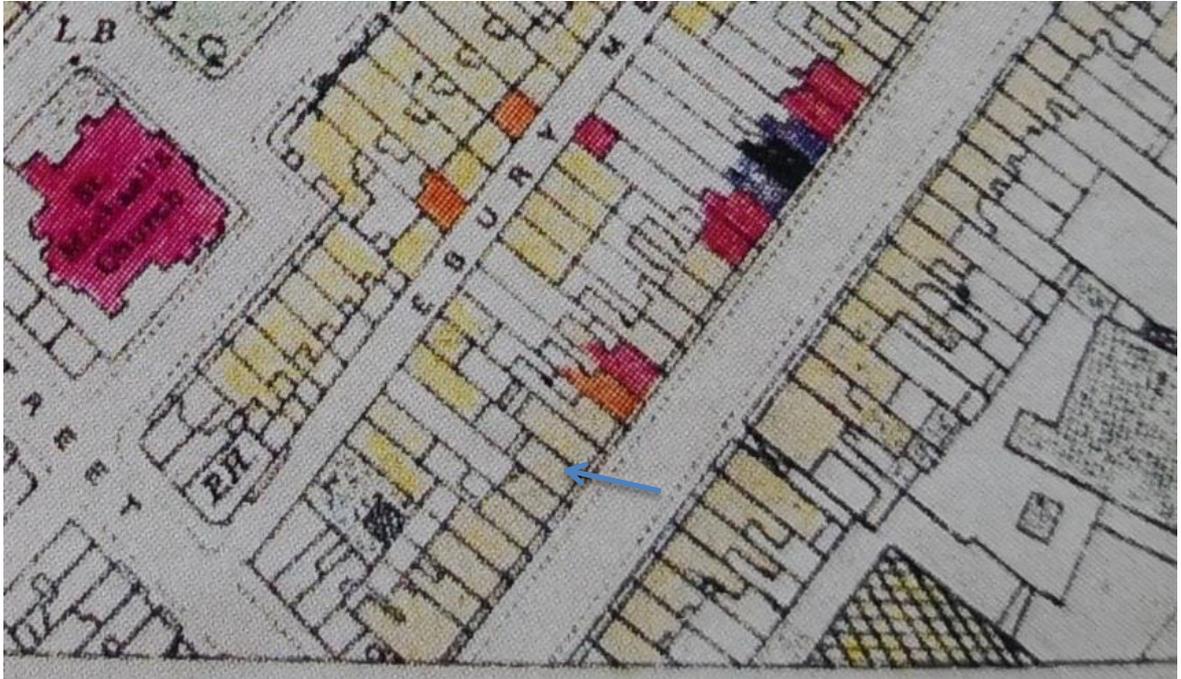
- suitable and sufficient means of ventilation;
- suitable and sufficient means to maintain a reasonable temperature; and
- suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences available for the use of persons employed in or about the shop, unless the shop is exempted from this requirement by a certificate issued by the City Council.

Underground rooms used or intended to be used for habitable purposes must conform to regulations made by the City Council in respect thereof, a copy of which may be obtained in the Public Health Department.

24. The 1938 drainage drawing shows that, indeed, there was still a single storey part to the closet wing at that time (marked). It evidently was removed post that date. The rear elevation further shows any structure covering the rear yard had been removed by that time.
25. The appearance of the building at around this time is shown in photographs at the Archives which, although undated, are understood to be from the 1920s. A modified front window can be seen in these photographs:



26. The London County Council bomb damage map shows that the terrace was hit by a bomb during WWII further to the north east. There was evidently widespread damage arising from this, though officially categorised as *'blast damage, minor in nature'*:



27. The Archives contain a photograph of the bomb damage, and a record of the event, which records there was one fatality:



90, EBURY STREET.

Date 11.5.41. No. 1464.
20

CITY OF WESTMINSTER
15 MAY 1941

DIST. *136/13*
POST No. *13*
SECTOR No. *130*
INCIDENT No. *146/130*

AIR RAID DAMAGE REPORT

- Precise location: *90 Ebury St.*
- Date & approx. time of occurrence: *11.54. 0045*
- Type of Bomb, etc. *HE* (a) Exploded or Unexploded? *Exploded*
- Was there fire? *NO* (a) If so, is it extinguished?
- Mains damaged: GAS WATER ELECTRICITY TELEPHONES SEWERS
- (a) Is Gas still escaping? (b) Is Water still escaping?
- Details of Services still at Site (A.R.P. Utility Police): *None*
- CASUALTIES**

	In Streets &c.	Buildings without Shelters	Shelter Trenches	Surface Shelters	Vaults	Streg'd Basem't	TOTAL
Killed	/						/
Ambulance Cases	<i>none</i>						
F.A.P. Cases	<i>none</i>						
TOTAL	/						/

- TRAPPED (a) Got out: *none* (b) Still trapped: (c) TOTAL
- DAMAGE TO PROPERTY (a) Major:

90 Ebury St Serious Structural damage.

 (b) Minor:

92 Structural damage
- Further information of importance:

The dead man was. Mr. F. Const. 108 Ebury St. Who was at the time on duty as a fire fighter.

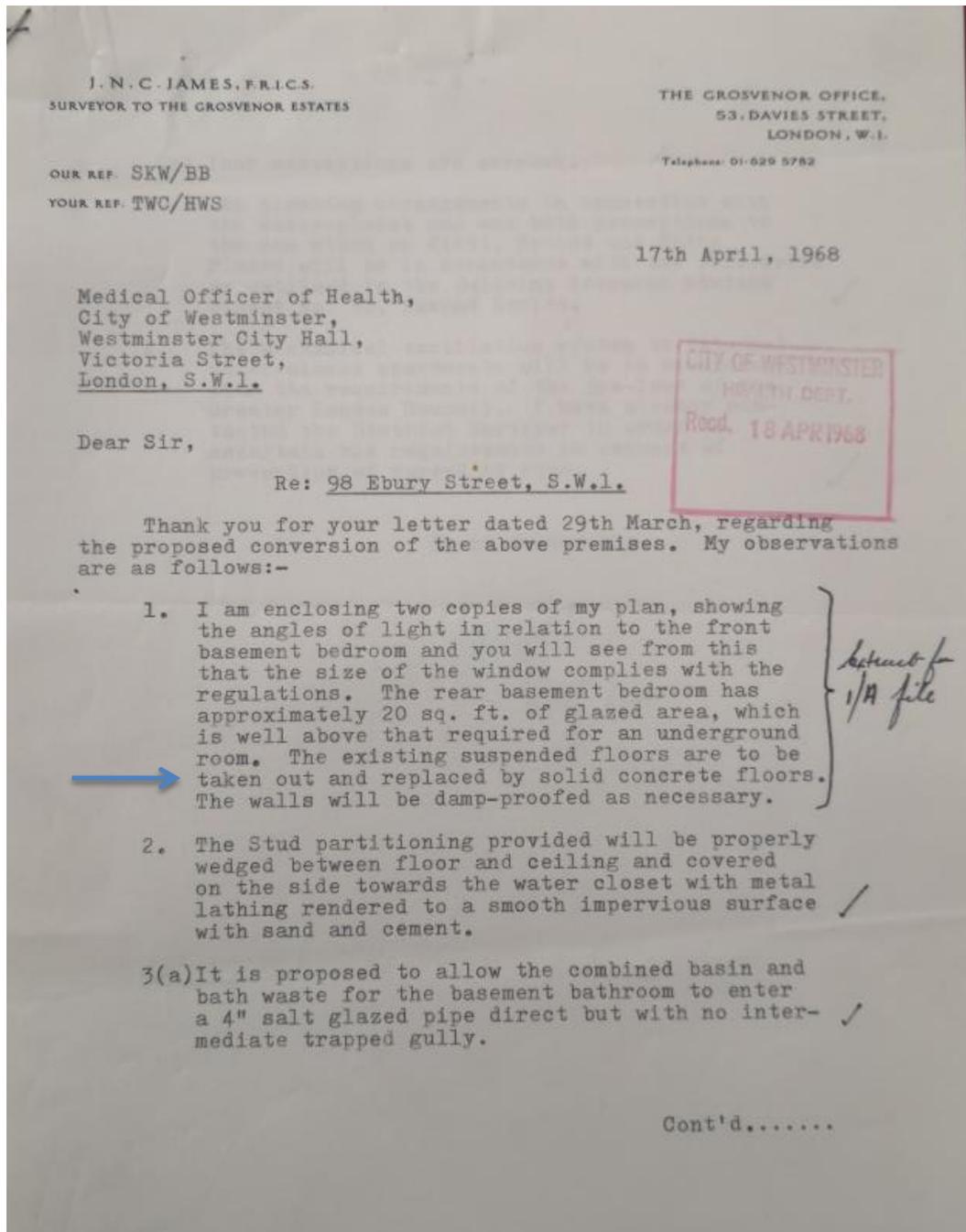
Date *12.5.41* Signature *J.M. Giles*
Rsp. Post Warden.

Continue and sign overleaf if necessary

28. Mapping from 1950 shows that changes occurred to the rear of various properties in the Ebury Street terrace, including a rear addition to a number of houses:

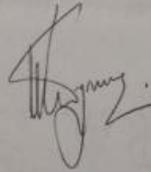


29. In 1969 there were further changes to the property in connection with the use of the property as apartments. This saw replacement of the original floors to concrete floors in places, as correspondence from the Grosvenor Estate's surveyor confirms



- (b) Your assumptions are correct. ✓
- (c) The plumbing arrangements in connection with the water-closet pan and bath connections to the new stack on First, Second and Third Floors will be in accordance with the principles as outlined in the Building Research Station Digest No. 32, Second Series. ✓
- 4. The mechanical ventilation system to internal water-closet apartments will be in accordance with the requirements of the Bye-laws of the Greater London Council. I have already contacted the District Surveyor in order to ascertain his requirements in respect of prevention of spread of fire. ✓

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. J. Jones', is written below the typed name 'J. J. Jones'.

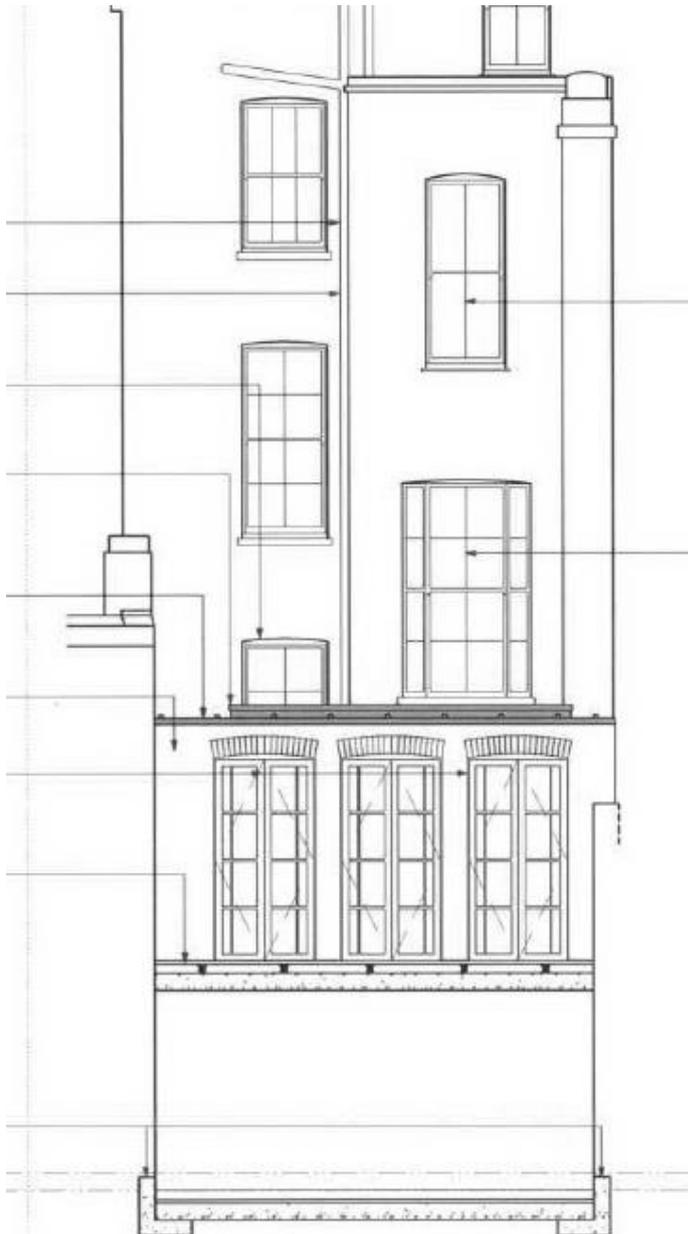
30. Since the works to the property in the late 1960s/early 1970s relating to flats, the only planning record at the property is for planning permission and listed building consent for a basement and ground floor addition. This was refused permission and an appeal dismissed in 2017 (ref. 16/10111/FULL & 16/10112/LBC). Regard has been paid to this scheme in the current submission, as it is evident that previous proposal paid little regard to the original fabric or layout of the building.

Similar works to properties in the area

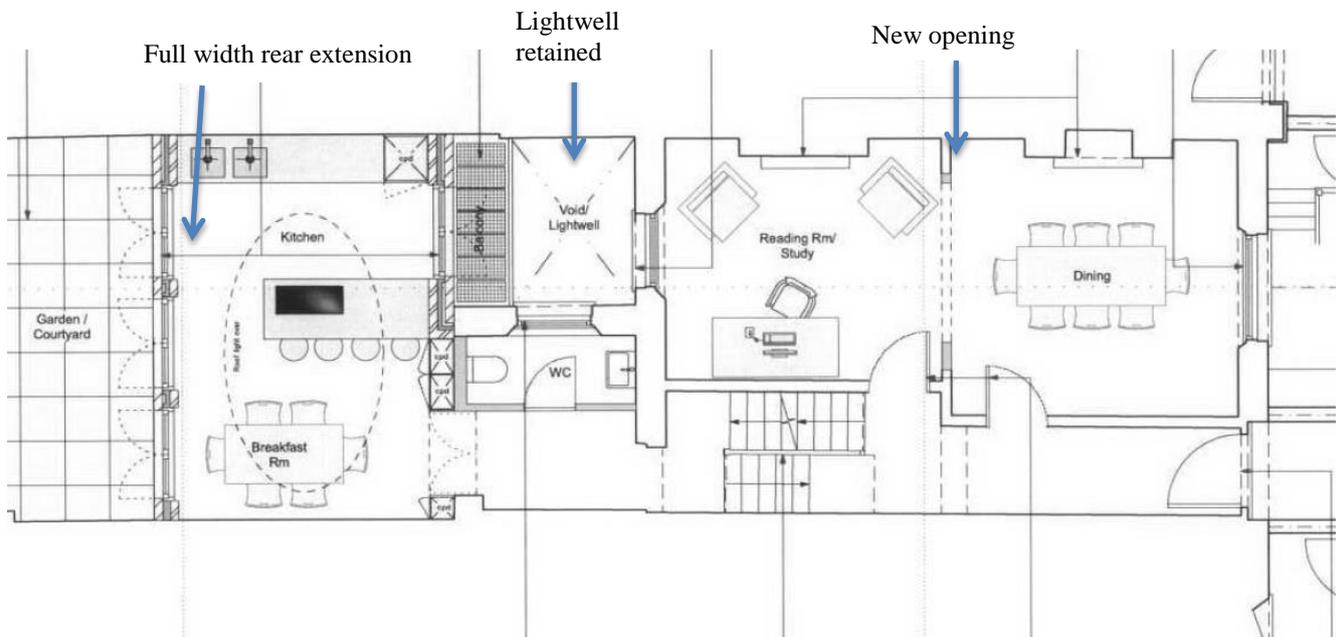
31. It is relevant to have regard to similar works that have occurred to nearby listed Ebury Street properties, since these have been undertaken in the context of similar heritage protection policies, including the current development plan and the NPPF.

96 Ebury Street

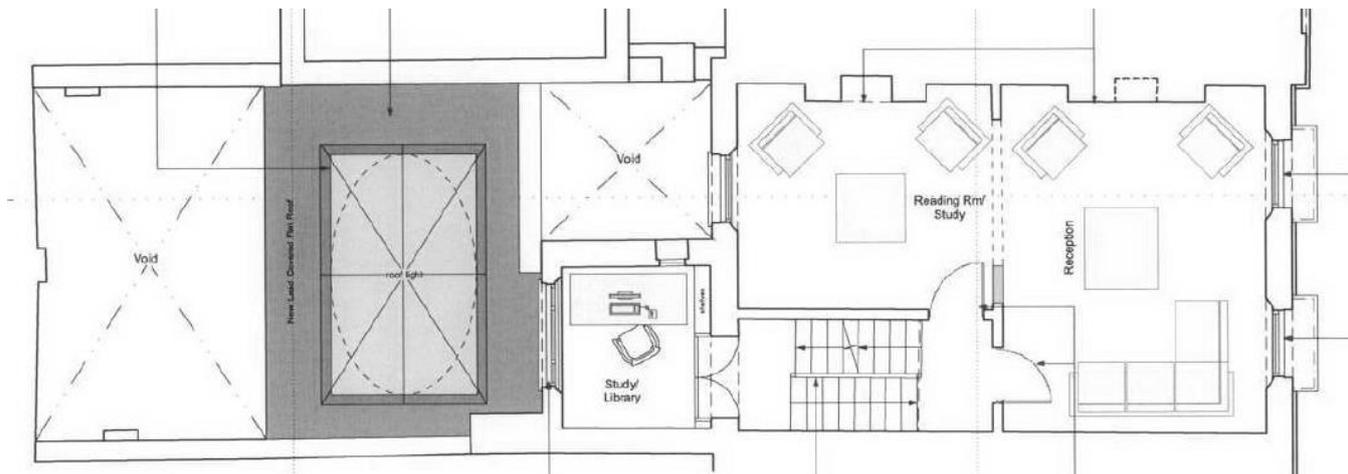
32. Permission was granted at the adjoining property in 2011 for a change of use from hotel to be a single family dwellinghouse (refs. 11/03592/FULL & 11/03593/LBC). The works saw the demolition of an existing rear addition and the erection of a full width rear addition, which came from the rear closet wing and retained a lightwell to the property. There was also an opening created between the front and rear rooms at ground and first floors:



Rear elevation



Ground floor



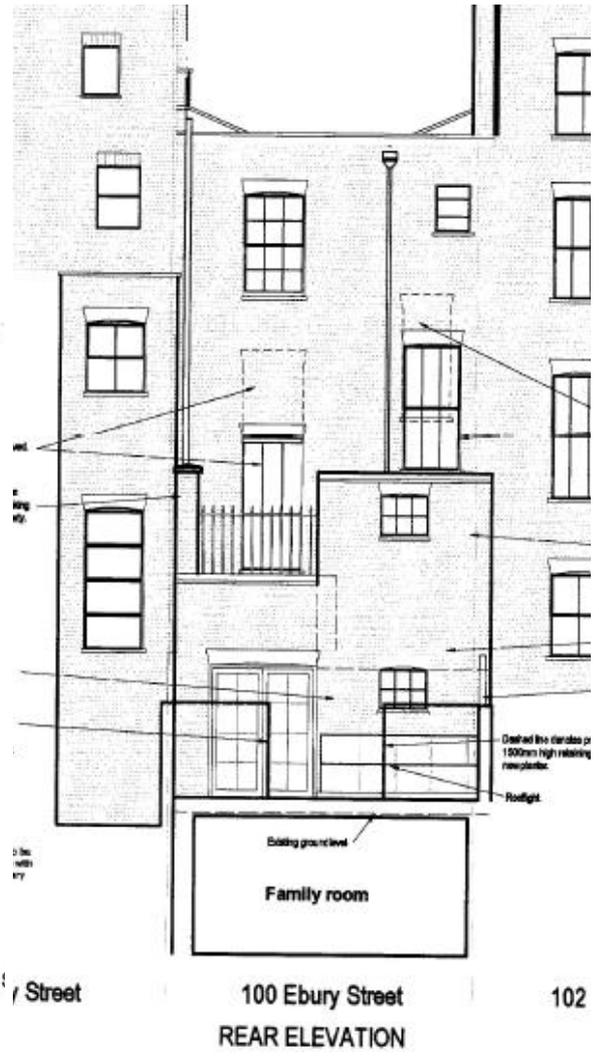
First floor

100 Ebury Street

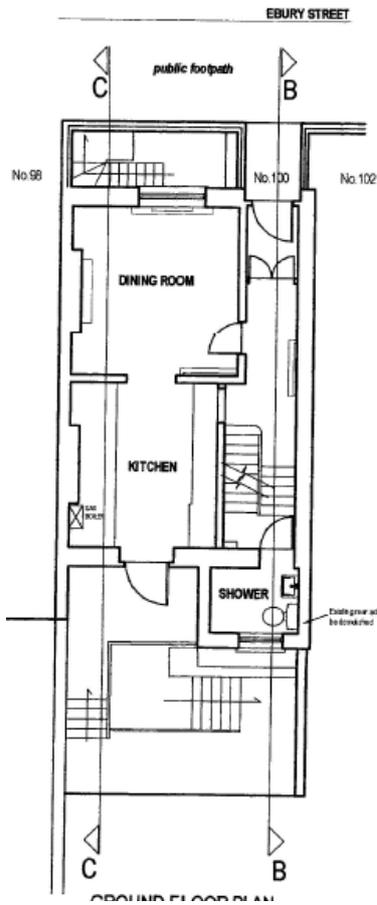
33. The other adjoining property was extended to the rear in 2008 (ref. 08/02328/FULL & 08/0329/LBC), along with a basement and rear terrace addition. The property did not have any rear addition to the building originally, as the 'existing' plans show (overleaf). The new works saw a rear extension off the rear building line and closet wing:



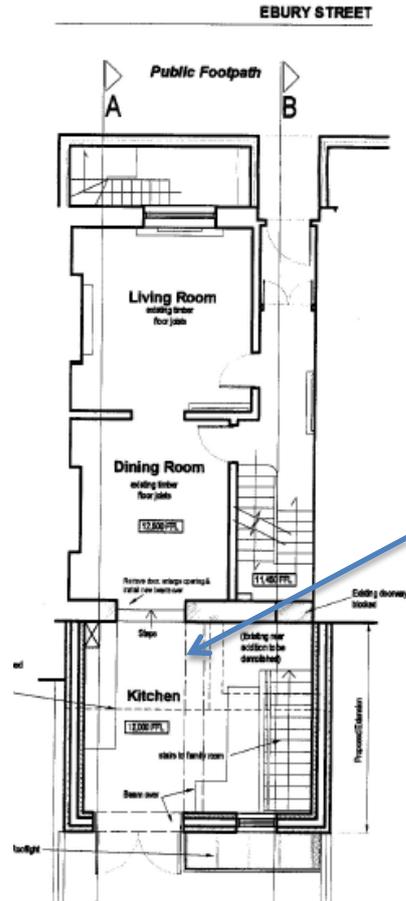
Existing rear elevation



Proposed rear elevation

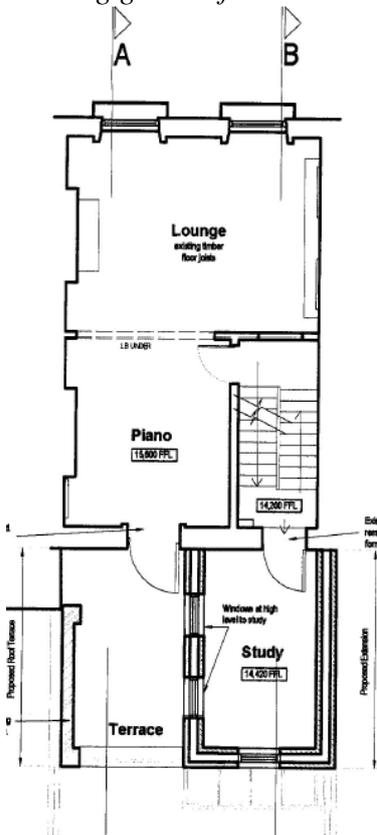


Existing ground floor



Proposed ground floor

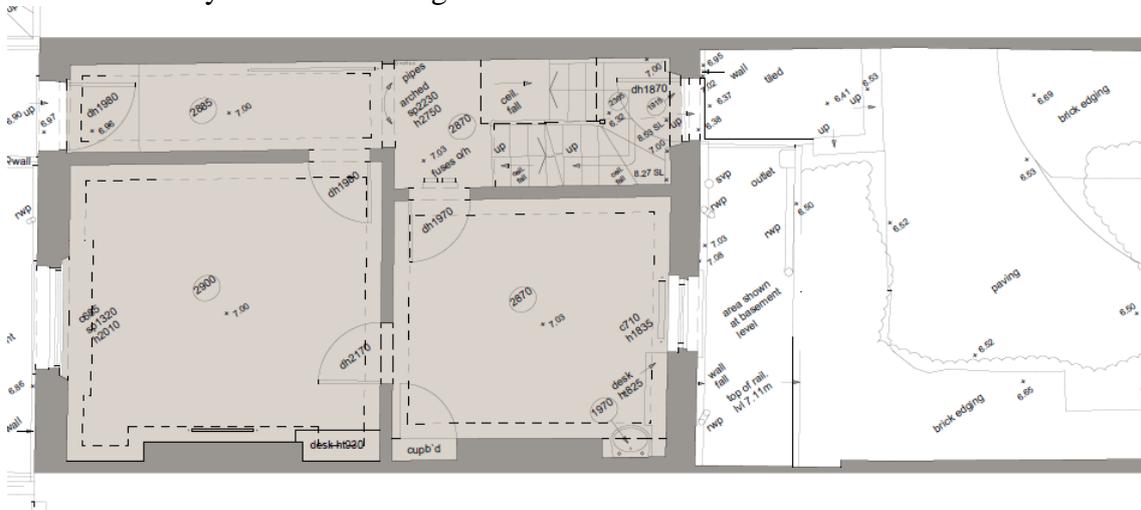
Full width rear extension



Proposed first floor

109 Ebury Street

34. Permission was granted in 2017 and then modified in June 2018 for a closet wing extension and single storey extension at ground level, and an opening between the rooms at ground floor (ref. 18/02806/FULL & 18/02806/LBC). This property did not have any rear addition at ground or LG level:



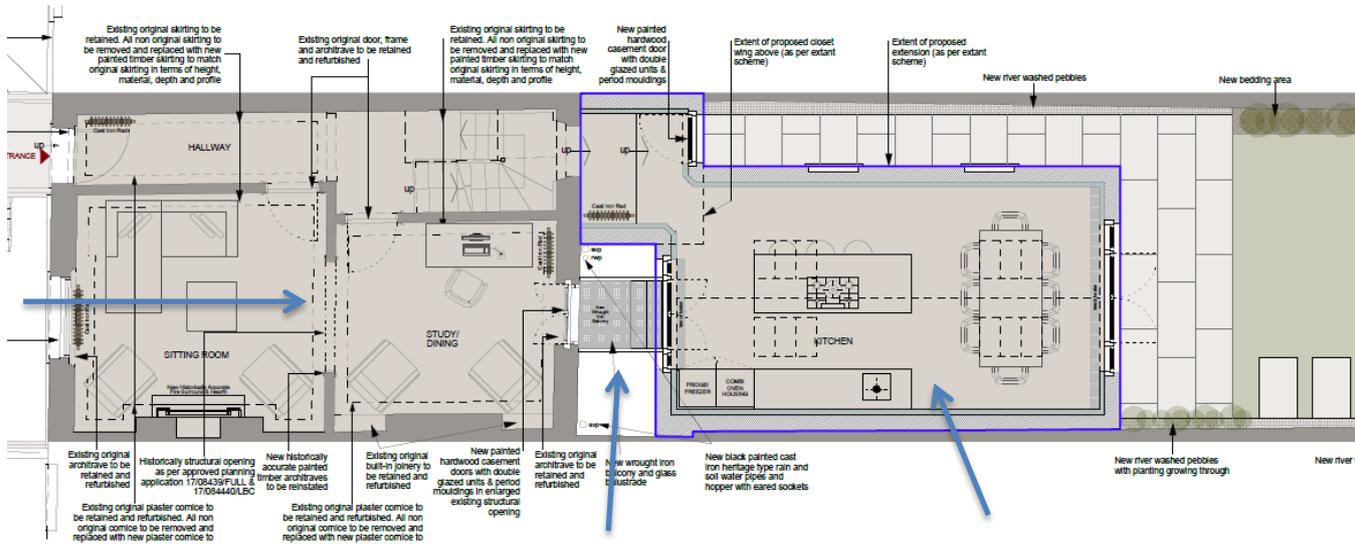
Existing ground floor



Existing rear elevation

35. The approved rear addition was therefore to an unaltered rear elevation. This is shown as a new room coming across most of the width of the house:

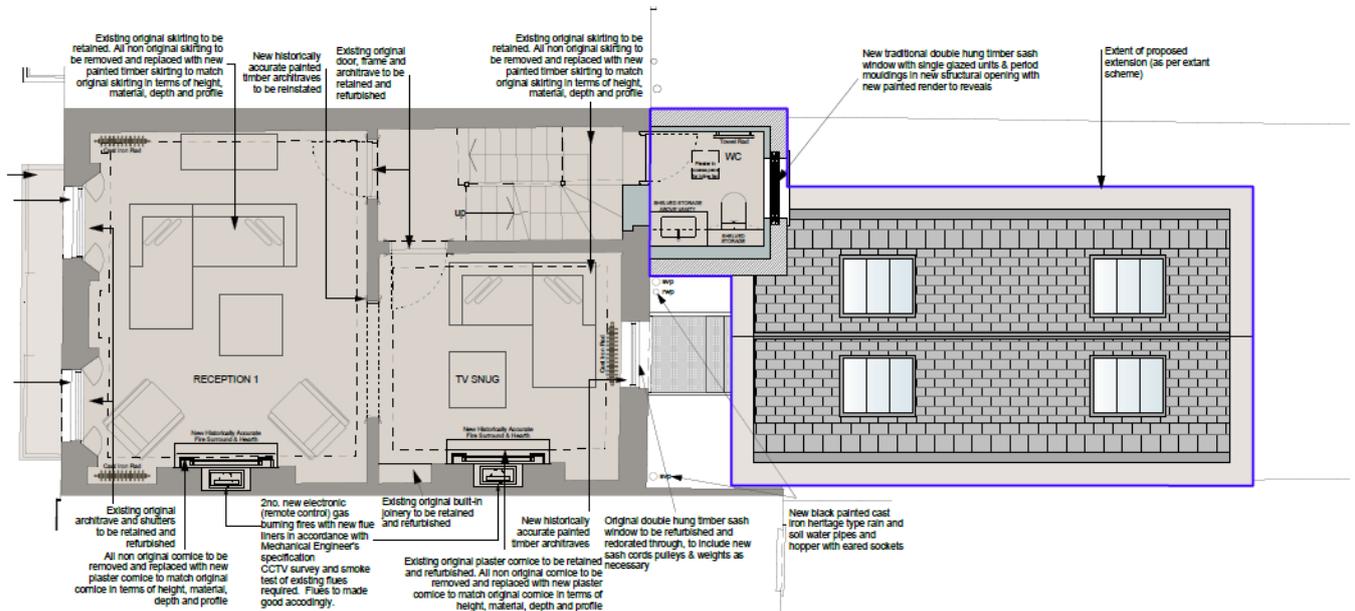
New opening between principal rooms



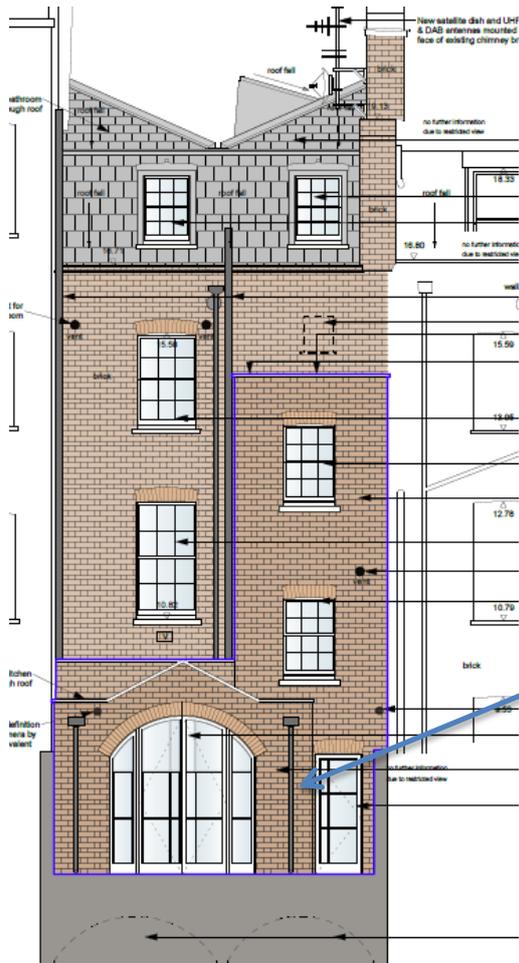
Retained lightwell

Partial width rear extension

Proposed ground floor



Proposed first floor

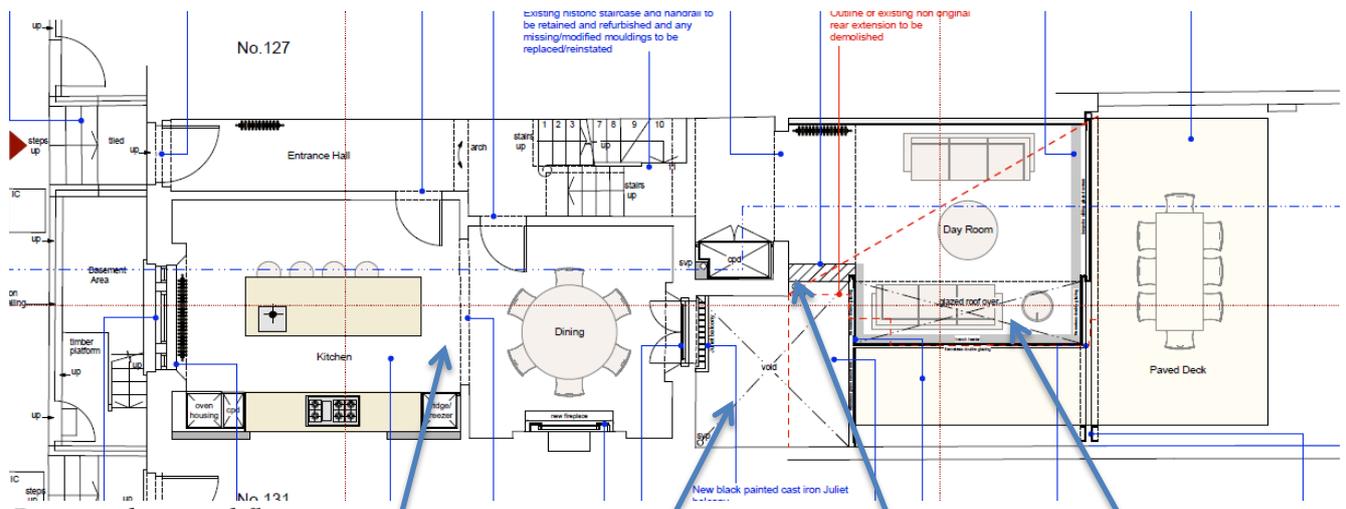


Partial width rear extension

Proposed rear elevation

129 Ebury Street

36. Permission was granted for the change of use of a hotel to a single family dwellinghouse and a rear extension at ground floor in 2012 (ref. 12/07825/FULL & 12/07826/LBC). The new rear extension replaced an existing addition, and the design of this was shown as a contemporary piece of architecture across most of the width of the house, with again a lightwell retained to the house. This came from the existing closet wing. A new opening was formed between rooms at ground floor:



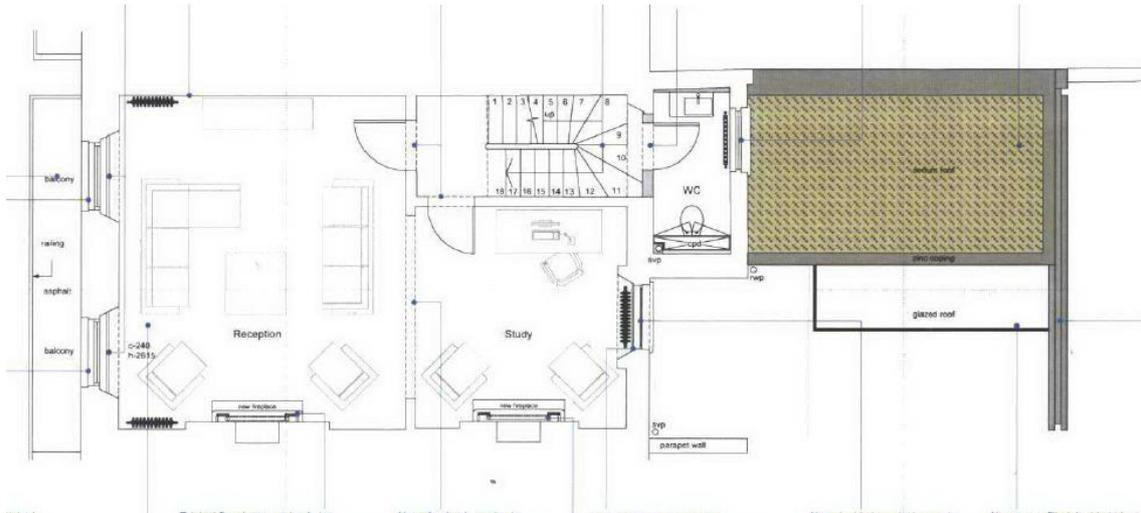
Proposed ground floor

New opening between principal rooms

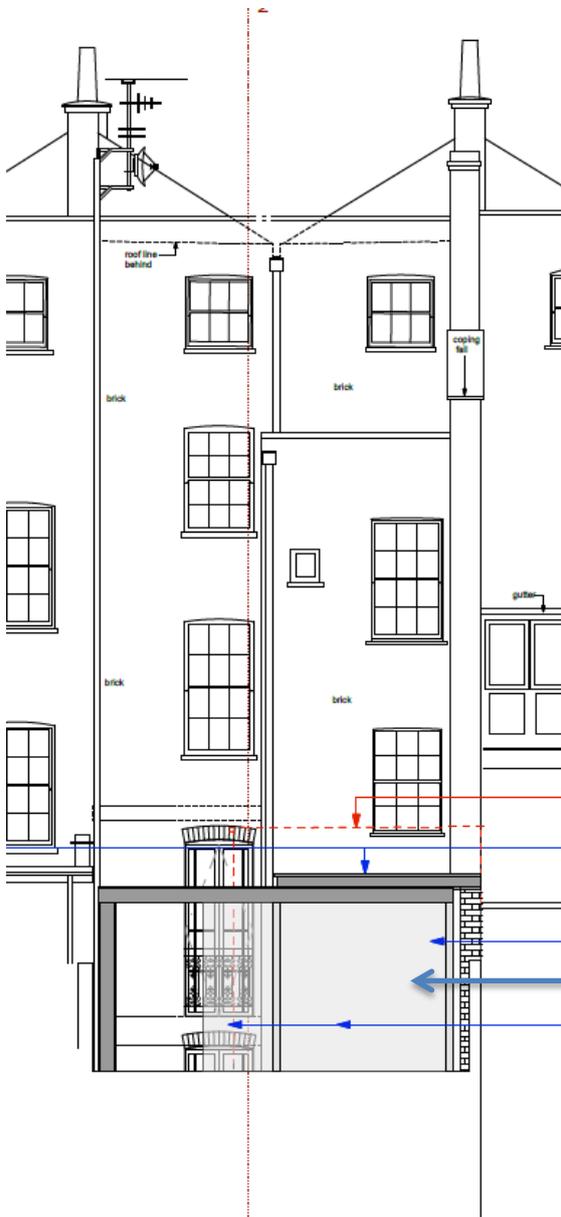
Retained lightwell

New rear extension taken from closet wing

Partial width rear extension



Proposed first floor



REAR ELEVATION

Proposed rear extension



Partial width rear extension, taken from closet wing



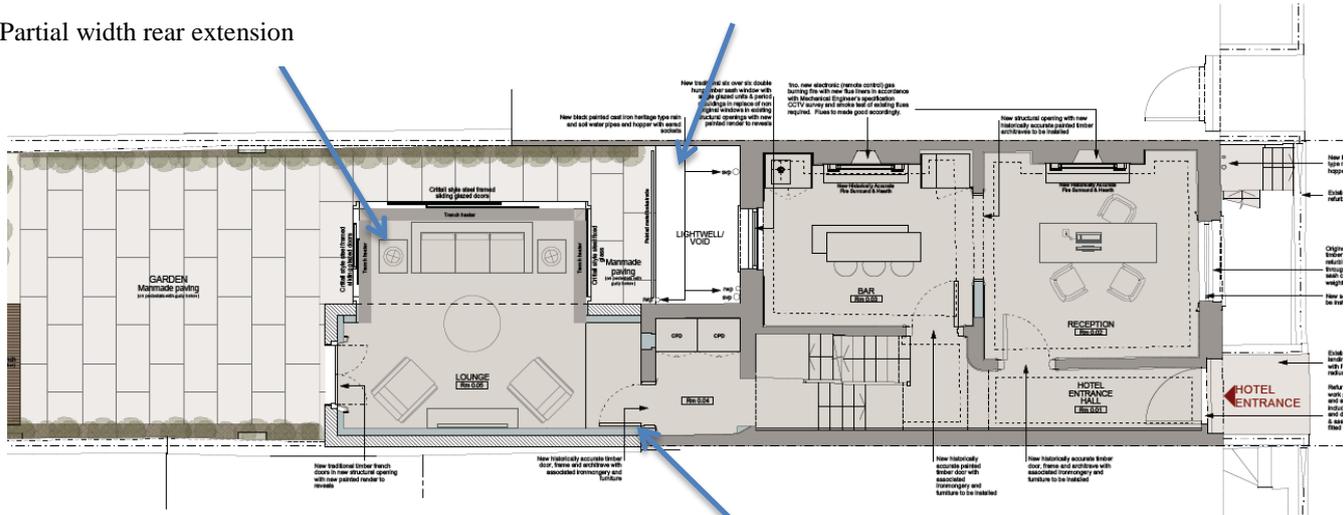
Proposed rear elevation perspective drawings

102 Ebury Street

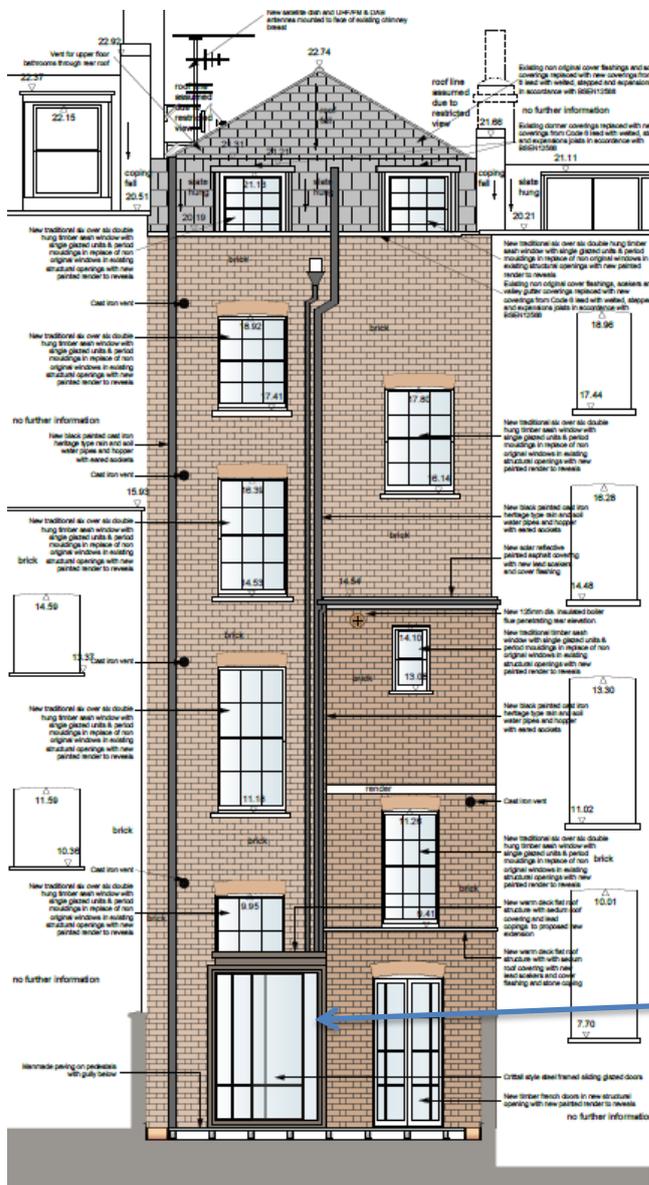
37. Planning permission and listed building consent were granted for a single storey rear extension at ground floor, and internal and external works at 102 Ebury Street in July 2019 (refs. 19/02298/FUL & 19/12299/LBC). The new extension is to be of a modern design and across the rear elevation, leaving a lightwell between the extension and the main building. Internal works will also see the opening up between the front and rear rooms at ground floor:

Retained lightwell

Partial width rear extension



Proposed ground floor



New extension, taken from closet wing

Partial width rear extension, taken from closet wing

Proposed rear elevation

Appraisal of property

38. The application property is an attractive early 19th Century townhouse that plays an important role in its positioning within the listed terrace of Ebury Street. The building forms part of the development of the early/mid-19th century development of Belgravia, and it has historical interest from its survival as part of the development of Belgravia

Exterior

39. The front elevation of the building displays proportions and architecture that are set out in the list description, and this exterior is an important part of the character and appearance of the Belgravia Conservation Area and to the setting of the rest of the terrace that is listed for its group value. Aesthetically, the appearance of the property's Ebury Street elevation has significance as part of the terrace, and it contributes to the development and streetscape of Ebury Street and Belgravia.
40. Views from the property's principal front elevation are along the street as well as the adjacent terrace. The setting of the rear elevation is restricted due to surrounding buildings.
41. The fenestration to the front elevation has been changed over the years. At ground floor there has been the insertion of a bay window, which evidence suggests was in the early 20th Century, and probably was carried out in association with the conversion to flats at that time. This has altered the proportions of the front elevation and the balance of the terrace. The windows at lower ground floor are also later additions in terms of their proportions – most likely at the time of conversion to flats – and the glazing itself is post-War, which no doubt followed the bomb damage. These elements detract from the significance of the rear elevation.
42. The fenestration at the rear elevation has also been altered, with brick scars around the windows where the proportions have changed and there have been new lintels, cills and frames. The rear lightwell is enclosed by a mid-20th Century wall. The evidence from the 1921 and 1937 lease plans show that this rear area was once in fact not a lightwell but was covered. This evidence also shows that the rear closet wing to the property once had a single storey element to it.
43. The tall party walls to the adjoining properties are also dominant in the views of the rear elevation. However, the overall significance of this elevation remains of medium significance.

Interior

44. The conversion of the property to apartments at an early stage in its history led to significant intrusion into the original floor plan of the building, and later modifications in the 1960s perpetuated these changes. The original entrance hall has been modified to provide access to the flat, and then the flats above. This has seen disruption of the rear room to provide a corridor and kitchen, with the corridor then providing access to a new staircase to the lower ground floor. The window in the rear elevation at ground floor has been altered to accommodate the kitchen.

45. At lower ground floor the original corridor to the front vaults area has been closed in order to provide a bathroom. The corridor at the rear of the property has been filled in, which once provided access to a vault under the closet wing. The original vault to the rear has been further modified with new openings created to the rear lightwell.
46. The proportions of the rooms at lower ground floor and the front room at ground floor remain as original. However, all ornamentation has been removed, including windows, fireplaces and, in parts, the chimney breast.
47. The condition of the building is poor, with a lack of maintenance evident and areas of damp.
48. The significance of the interior has therefore been reduced due to the lack of original ornamentation and the severe disruption to layout due to the conversion to flats, and the new staircase and corridor layout. However, despite these changes the general hierarchy of rooms is evident, with the simple plan form of front and rear rooms still seen at both levels. Those elements of the building are important and hence retain a medium significance to the building.

Assessment of changes

Changes to the interior

49. The works to the interior of the building have been approached to have a minimum impact on the layout and hierarchy of rooms, and having regard to the previous appeal and pre-application discussions at the property. That previous appeal scheme would have seen the removal of much of the original layout and fabric that remains, and would have created a plan form at odds with the property.
50. Close regard has also been paid to recent extensions on Ebury Street. As demonstrated earlier, these include extensions to properties that come from existing closet wings, and which extend over much (but not all) of the width of the building with the retention of a lightwell to the rear. There has also been alteration to the main rooms at ground floor. These cases include permissions granted in the same policy context as now, ie the UDP (2007), the City Plan (2016) and the NPPF (2012), most notably at No. 102 (in 2019), No. 109 (in 2018), and No. 129 in 2012).
51. The current scheme shows the retention of the simple two room layout at both ground and lower ground floors. At ground floor there would be a new opening between the rooms with nibs and downstand retained. Such an arrangement exists in nearby properties, where the aforementioned planning history shows this has been allowed by the Council recently.
52. Non-original architraves, skirting, cornices and doors would be removed at both floors and new appropriately-detailed ornamentation introduced, including new fireplaces. This would be an enhancement to the rooms.

Extension to the rear

53. The new extension to the rear would involve a connection at both ground and lower ground floors. This would be taken from the rear closet wing, so providing a link only through the original service corridor areas; there would not be any breach of the rear elevation of the house. As noted earlier, this arrangement of a link to a rear extension through the closet wing was permitted recently at Nos. 102, 109 and 129. It has also been noted that the rear closet wing to the property of No. 98 itself has been modified in the past, as it originally saw a single storey element.
54. The new rear extension at lower ground floor would retain the original side wall that to what is now the rear lightwell area; as noted earlier, this area was originally covered. The rear retaining wall to the garden would be moved and the size of the lightwell reconfigured to be commensurate with that seen at other properties; most notably that adjoining at No. 96. This is a sensitive approach to this element of the works since the rear open area was never built as a lightwell, and so there is no historical necessity to retain the open area of the size that it currently exists: it is more appropriate to show a lightwell that is in proportion to the host property, and as seen along the street.
55. The size of the new extension itself would not be excessive in plan form, with it extending only over part of the rear width of the plot as was recently permitted in Ebury Street, so not disrupting the hierarchy of rooms in the house.

56. The new addition would be kept away from the rear elevation. In this way there would not be any intrusion to the original rear elevation of the house, or to the floorplan of the house, and a clear 'break' would be retained with the retention of the lightwell. This overcomes the objection from the Inspector at the previous appeal, where that scheme had proposed a somewhat clumsy extension from the rear wall in a single, large room connected to the house that would have subsumed the closet wing and be of disproportionate scale.
57. The width and siting of the proposed extension therefore better reflects those seen at adjoining properties, and ensures the retention of the floor plan of the house. The previous Inspector commented on this approach, saying *'The evidence shows that the extension to No 96 includes a void adjacent to the historic rear wall of that property and the side wall of its closet wing, thereby allowing the closet wing to remain a significant feature within the extended building. This approach also creates a degree of separation between the historic and later elements of the building'* (paragraph 12). The same design approach now is therefore appropriate. Furthermore, as set out earlier, such a design approach has been taken at other nearby Ebury Street properties, ie also at Nos. 102, 109 and 129.
58. The modern design of the ground floor extension would further assist in maintain a clear definition of new fabric to the house. Again, this design approach has been accepted in many instances along Ebury Street, as outlined earlier with reference to planning history. Much of the garden area would remain undeveloped and so sufficient space for drainage and planting remain. The width of the extension would enable a sufficient margin of undeveloped garden to be retained, so satisfying the Council's policy relating to basement development.
59. The Council have thus accepted that the ground and lower ground floors of properties can be altered to provide additional living space, provided there is no intrusion into the original layout and floor plan of the building (that was the shortcoming that led to the failure of the previous appeal at No. 98). The provision of modern architecture has also been accepted.

Exterior work

60. The works to the exterior of the building would see the removal of later additions, including the insensitive bay window and modern metal windows at the front elevation. The altered windows on the rear elevation would also be reinstated to their original proportions, and original headers and cills.
61. The modern design of the proposed extension would be acceptable for the area, as noted earlier. It is a clear distinction to the main house. A sufficient rear garden area would remain.

Effect on significance and consideration of public benefits

62. The works to the property will involve the very limited loss of some original fabric through the creation of the link to the new extension at the back. The opening at lower ground floor would be through the small vault that has already been modified.

There would also be the opening up between the rooms at ground floor, which is similar to that allowed at other Ebury Street properties.

63. There will be the provision of a new extension to the rear of the property that would, clearly, represent a non-original element of work.
64. This work is considered to lead to a less than substantial degree of harm, since this Appraisal has earlier determined that the significance of the building as a designated heritage asset is the exterior of the building and the contribution to the designated heritage asset of the Belgravia Conservation Area. The new extension would mirror that seen at the nearby properties in general scale and form, whilst the general design approach is similarly seen in the area. The extension to the rear would involve works to areas of the building that have been altered in the past, ie the previous single storey element to the closet wing and the previous structure that comprised the current open area at LG floor.
65. Thus, in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF, that must be weighed against public benefits of the proposal. The PPG defines public benefits as (paragraph 020):

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework [...] Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

Public benefits may include heritage benefits, such as:

- *sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting*
- *reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset*
- *securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.*

66. Paragraph 015 of the PPG includes the following definition of viable use for a heritage asset

The vast majority of heritage assets are in private hands. Thus, sustaining heritage assets in the long term often requires an incentive for their active conservation. Putting heritage assets to a viable use is likely to lead to the investment in their maintenance necessary for their long-term conservation [...]

It is important that any use is viable, not just for the owner, but also the future conservation of the asset. It is obviously desirable to avoid successive harmful changes carried out in the interests of repeated speculative and failed uses.

If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative viable uses, the optimum use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes.

The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most profitable one. It might be the original use [...]

Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused provided the harm is minimised.

67. It is apparent in this case that there are a number of very notable public benefits:

- The property has seen insensitive internal alterations from conversion to apartments. The works show removal of modern partition work within the building that brings the layout back to that more closely resembling the original layout, and so the plan form of the building would be better appreciated.
- There would be extensive renovation of the property and maintenance of the building. The complete absence of original decoration and ornamentation would be rectified by the insertion of historically accurate detailing throughout.
- The insensitive bay window and metal windows at the front elevation, and the modern windows in the rear elevation, would be removed and replaced with windows of proper proportions and detailing. This would be an important benefit to the significance of both the listed building and to the Conservation Area as heritage assets.
- The dwelling would be brought up to modern standards for servicing, fire regulations, building regulations, safety and energy efficiency.
- These works would secure the optimum viable use as a residential dwelling in the long term, allowing a secure ownership and active use.

68. Thus the proposal supports the optimum viable use of the listed building as a home, and is part of the investment necessary for its long-term conservation. This is in accordance with paragraphs 185 a), 192 and 196 of the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance.

Balanced conclusions

69. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains the statutory duty in relation to heritage assets and states that, *'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*
70. In conservation areas, the statutory duty is set out in Section 72(1), which states that *'In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2)3, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'*
71. One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework is that *'Planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'* (paragraph 184). Paragraph 193 advises that *'great weight should be given to the [designated heritage] asset's conservation'* and that *'the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be'*.
72. In essence, this means that a balancing exercise of harm versus benefit must be carried out, but there is a duty and presumptive desirability of preserving the assets, which must be given considerable importance and weight. This was confirmed in *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northants DC, English Heritage, National Trust and SSCLG* [2014].
73. The heritage significance of the property arises due to the exterior quality and the contribution paid to the group of listed buildings and the wider conservation area. The interior of the building is of low significance due to the extensive changes over the years. The original form of the building as a whole has been altered due to apartment use since the early 20th Century, with many changes over the last century to facilitate this. The ground and lower ground floors have suffered from this use in layout and due to the removal of any original ornamentation.
74. The proposed changes to the interior of the property are appropriate and sensitive. There would be limited work to the layout of the building, which is similar to that recently permitted in the area, and there would be an enhancement arising from the new arrangement and the reintroduction of traditional detailing. The rear extension mirrors that seen at other properties, and recently permitted by the Council. Both the internal and external changes directly address the shortcomings of the previous scheme and the comments of the Inspector.
75. These changes are appraised as causing less than substantial harm to the building as a heritage asset. There are very clear public benefits arising from the proposed works, as outlined earlier. These works would all help secure the optimum viable use for the property in the long term. These matters therefore satisfy the tests of the PPG, in that the significance of the heritage asset would be sustained and enhanced, the risks that currently exist to the property through lack of maintenance would be

removed, and the use would support the long term conservation. Thus, in accordance with the NPPF, there are benefits that clearly outweigh any harm.

76. It is therefore concluded the works would be consistent with the NPPF. There would consequently be no conflict with Policies DES9 and DES10 of the Westminster UDP, or Policy S25 of the City Plan. The proposals would also comply with the objectives of the draft Policies 40, 41 and 46 of the emerging City Plan.

Photographs



Front elevation of property, showing modern bay window



Modern window to lower ground floor front elevation



Ground floor front room, showing absence of original ornamentation



Ground floor rear room, with modifications and partitioning for use as kitchen



New staircase to lower ground floor



Lower ground floor front room, showing alterations to room and poor condition



Lower ground floor rear room, similarly showing alterations to room and poor condition



Corridor at lower ground floor, with bathroom to front and modern stairs; line of original stairs still evident from brick scarring



Rear elevation of property, showing alterations to windows and enclosure to basement



Extension to rear of 96 Ebury Street adjoining



Rear extension to 100 Ebury Street adjoining



View of rear area that was originally covered but now appears as over-sized lightwell



Blocking of vault to rear of property (top) and new opening to vault (bottom)