



## **47 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1BJ:**

**Heritage Significance Report and Assessment for Statutory Designation**

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**of**

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## Contents

1.0.	Introduction .....	2
1.4.	Summary.....	2
1.5.	Authorship.....	2
1.6.	Methodology.....	3
2.0.	Location and Context .....	4
3.0.	History and Development of 47 Fleet Street.....	4
4.0.	Description of the Subject Site .....	13
5.0.	Summary of Significance of 47 Fleet Street .....	21
6.0.	Assessment for Statutory Designation .....	23
6.1.	Assessment for Statutory Listing .....	23
6.1.2.	Architectural Interest .....	23
6.1.3.	Historic Interest .....	24
6.1.4.	Aesthetic Merits.....	24
6.1.5.	Age and Rarity.....	24
6.1.6.	Intactness.....	25
6.1.7.	National Interest.....	25
6.1.8.	Conclusion .....	25
7.0.	Conclusion .....	26

47 Fleet Street, London – Designation Assessment Report

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## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. 47 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1BJ is an unlisted building within the Fleet Street Conservation Area, City of London. It is a four-storey building with a mansard storey and basement; the ground floor and basement are occupied by El Vino, a wine bar which has been located within the building since c.1915. The upper floors have historically been in business uses as offices, although many are now unoccupied. The building was largely reconstructed in c.1910 following the widening of Fleet Street but remains within its narrow medieval plot.

1.2. This report has been produced in order to assess the eligibility of the building for statutory designation as a statutorily listed building. It therefore complies with the requirements of the NPPF and Historic England guidance regarding heritage issues and understanding the significance of any potential assets.

1.3. This report sets out:

- The history and development of the subject site;
- A summary of the heritage significance of the subject site;
- An assessment of the eligibility of the subject site for statutory and non-statutory designation using established criteria published by Historic England and DCMS when considering buildings for designation.

### 1.4. Summary

- The subject site possesses medium to high evidential and communal values, and medium historical and aesthetic values. The setting is considered to be of medium value.
- It is considered unlikely that the subject site possesses sufficient special architectural and historic interest to be eligible for statutory listing.

### 1.5. Authorship

- **Dorian A T A Crone** BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC - Heritage and Design Consultant. Dorian has been a Chartered Architect and Chartered Town Planner for over 30 years. He has also been a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation for 25 years. Dorian is a committee member of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), ICOMOS UK and Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has been a court member with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and a trustee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. He is currently a trustee of both the Dance and Drake Trusts.

Dorian has worked for over 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector with English Heritage, responsible for providing advice to all the London Boroughs and both the City Councils. Dorian has also worked as a consultant and expert witness for over 20 years advising a wide variety of clients on heritage and design matters involving development work, alterations, extensions and new build projects associated with listed buildings and conservation areas in design and heritage sensitive locations. He is a Design Review Panel member of both the London Borough of Islington and Design Council – CABE – and a panel member of the John Betjeman Design Award and the City of London Heritage Award. Dorian has also been involved with the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Architectural Awards and the Philip Webb Award along with a number other public sector and commercial design awards.

- **Dr Daniel Cummins** MA (Oxon) MSc PhD – Historic Environment Consultant. Daniel is an historian with a BA and Master's in History from Oxford University and a doctorate from the University of Reading, where he specialised in ecclesiastical buildings and estates and had his work published in leading academic history journals. Daniel has a Master's in the Conservation of the Historic Environment and provides independent professional heritage advice and guidance to leading architectural practices and planning consultancies, as well as for private clients. He undertakes detailed historical research, significance statements, character appraisals, impact assessments and expert witness statements for new development projects, as well as for alterations and extensions which affect the fabric and settings of Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings, the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, the outstanding universal value of World Heritage Sites, and all other types of heritage assets.

## 1.6. Methodology

This assessment has been carried out gathering desk-based and fieldwork data. The documentary research was based upon primary and secondary sources of local history and architecture, including maps, drawings and reports. Attention was given to the London Metropolitan Archives. Dates of elements and construction periods have been identified using documentary sources and visual evidence based upon experience gained from similar building types and sites. A site visit was conducted on 29 May 2018 when a survey of the site and of the surrounding area was conducted by visual inspection to analyse its significance. Consideration has been given to its historical development and the building types and materials of the key buildings which contribute to the identification of the built form and the understanding of the character of the local area.

## 2.0. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. No. 47 Fleet Street is located on the south side of the road adjacent to Hare Place (an historic alley and court accessed from Fleet Street) and opposite the junction with Fetter Lane. It is located within the Fleet Street Conservation Area, designated by the City of London in 1971 with later extensions; an appraisal and management strategy was adopted by the City in 2016.



Figure 1: Map of the Fleet Street Conservation Area, showing the location of the subject site and nearby statutorily listed buildings.

- 2.2. No. 47 is located adjacent to the Grade II statutorily listed Nos. 49-50 Fleet Street which dates from 1911-13 and has a distinctive Portland stone street elevation with attic pavilions to the end bays; it was constructed as both as offices for Norwich Union Insurance and as a gateway to Serjeant's Inn. No. 47 also forms part of the wider streetscape setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Dunstan in the West and the Grade II\* listed Hoare's Bank (Figure 1).
- 2.3. The character of the Conservation Area is defined by its important historical associations as a ceremonial route between the City and Westminster, the historic network of lanes and alleys which contrast with the principal route, a variety in architectural styles and building ages, predominantly five to six storey building heights, views of important buildings including St Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Courts of Justice, associations with medieval institutions such as the Inns of Court and the Templars, and associations with the newspaper industry.

## 3.0. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF 47 FLEET STREET

- 3.1. Fleet Street likely has its origins in the Roman period as a route leading west; it later linked the Roman city with the Saxon settlement to the west at Lundenvic. The area surrounding the route became an important 'suburb' during the medieval period and was brought into the boundaries of the City by the 13<sup>th</sup> century; the area became particularly associated with the legal profession with Serjeant's Inn and the Inner and Middle Temple leased to lawyers, probably owing to its convenient location between the court at Westminster and the commercial centre of the City. Serjeant's Inn dated from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century.

The presence of legal enclaves created a demand for printing and publishing which had become established on Fleet Street by the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The many narrow building frontages along Fleet Street are a legacy of the building plots established during the medieval period. While building activity increased along the street, the flanking land remained open as fields, gardens or orchards (Figure 2). The Great Fire in 1666 obliterated two-thirds of the street and its environs, including Serjeant's Inn, but the street layout survived the Fire, with rebuilding following the same plots as before including on the subject site (Figure 3). Hare Place was known as Ram Alley at this time.



Figure 2: Agas Map, c.1562, showing the approximate location of the subject site.



Figure 3: Morgan Map, 1681-2, showing the rebuilt building on the subject site following the Great Fire.

- 3.2. The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the growth in the commercial character of Fleet Street, with banks such as Hoare's and Child's Bank alongside the established printing and publishing trades, as well as taverns and coffeehouses. The medieval street pattern survived. Horwood's map made during the 1790s is the first to show the subject site in detail located at the north-east side of Ram Court fronting Fleet Street; the building is depicted with a rear projection fronting the narrow Ram Court (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Horwood Map, 1794-99.

- 3.3. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the domination of finance and commerce with most residents moving out the City. Infrastructure and public building works led to upheaval in the townscape. The street was widened in 1830-3, when St Dunstan-in-the-West was rebuilt by John Shaw, and again in 1878, when Wren's 17<sup>th</sup> century Temple Bar was replaced in 1880 by Horace Jones' existing memorial to it. At the eastern end, Ludgate Circus was formed on the site of the Fleet Bridge between 1864-9. The subject site is depicted in a drawing of 1850 and its architectural treatment suggests the building dated from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was two window bays in width and had two shopfronts to the ground floor with a central entrance. The two windows to each of the upper floors were located within a recessed arched opening. There was a steep mansard roof between the party walls and a horizontal flat-topped dormer window of four lights above the parapet (Figure 5). The Goad Insurance Plan of 1886 confirms the building was 4½ storeys in height with a tiled mansard roof, comprising two shops to the ground floor and offices to the upper floors. To the rear on Hare Place and accessed from the easterly shop was a restaurant; this element was of five storeys with a tiled roof and had a window on most floors adjacent to the covered way into Hare Place. The restaurant flowed through into a single-storey element with a circular rooflight and metal roof (Figure 6).
- 3.4. Following the repeal of stamp duty (a levy on all newspapers) in 1855, the newspaper trade grew in vitality and stature and began to more fully dominate the commercial activity of the street. In 1882, the building at No. 47 was subdivided between numerous commercial uses, reflecting the wider character of Fleet Street throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. No. 47 was occupied by four newspaper offices to the upper

floors (The Glasgow News, The Edinburgh Courant, The Edinburgh Evening Express and the Aberdeen Journal). The restaurant was occupied by the Alliance Café, and the shops comprised a drapers and a tobacconists. A further office was occupied by an insurance agent. There had been a drapers present since at least 1840 run by G W Lees and during the 1860s was known as the St Dunstan's Drapery Establishment selling household linens, blankets, flannels, shawls, fancy goods and ribbons (London City Press).



Figure 5: The subject site depicted in 1850.

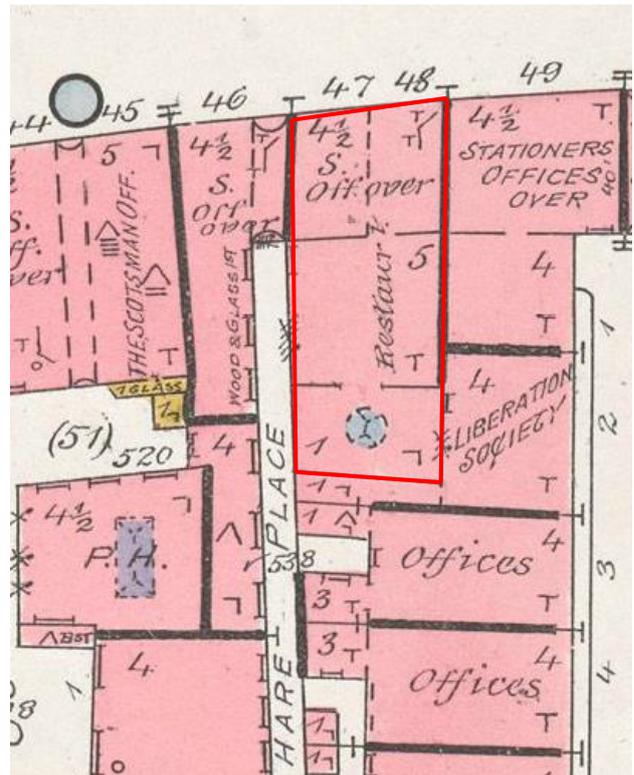


Figure 6: Goad Insurance Plan (1886).

3.5. Further road widening occurred in c.1909-1910 which required the re-fronting of the subject site at No. 47. The Common Council resolved in 1908 to acquire the freehold and a picture gallery present at No. 47 in December 1909 advertised a clearance sale owing to the forthcoming demolition of the premises for the widening of Fleet Street (*The Times*). Plans made by the City in 1909 illustrate that a substantial portion of the north elevation was removed along a diagonal red line extending up to 7' 9" in depth on the west side fronting Fleet Street (Figure 7). Prior to the works, the first floor comprised a large room with chimney stack on the east side; the room had been subdivided into three separate areas for office use. The centre of the building comprised the stairwell; the stairs to the ground floor were located on the east side adjacent to the window overlooking Hare Place, whilst the stairs to the upper floors were located on the west side. Two further offices were located to the rear part of the building with a large chimney stack on the west side and two windows on the south elevation. The second floor had much the same layout, with offices to the front part of the building, the staircase to the upper floors on the west of the central area, and a large office to the rear of the building with three windows on the south elevation (Figure 7).

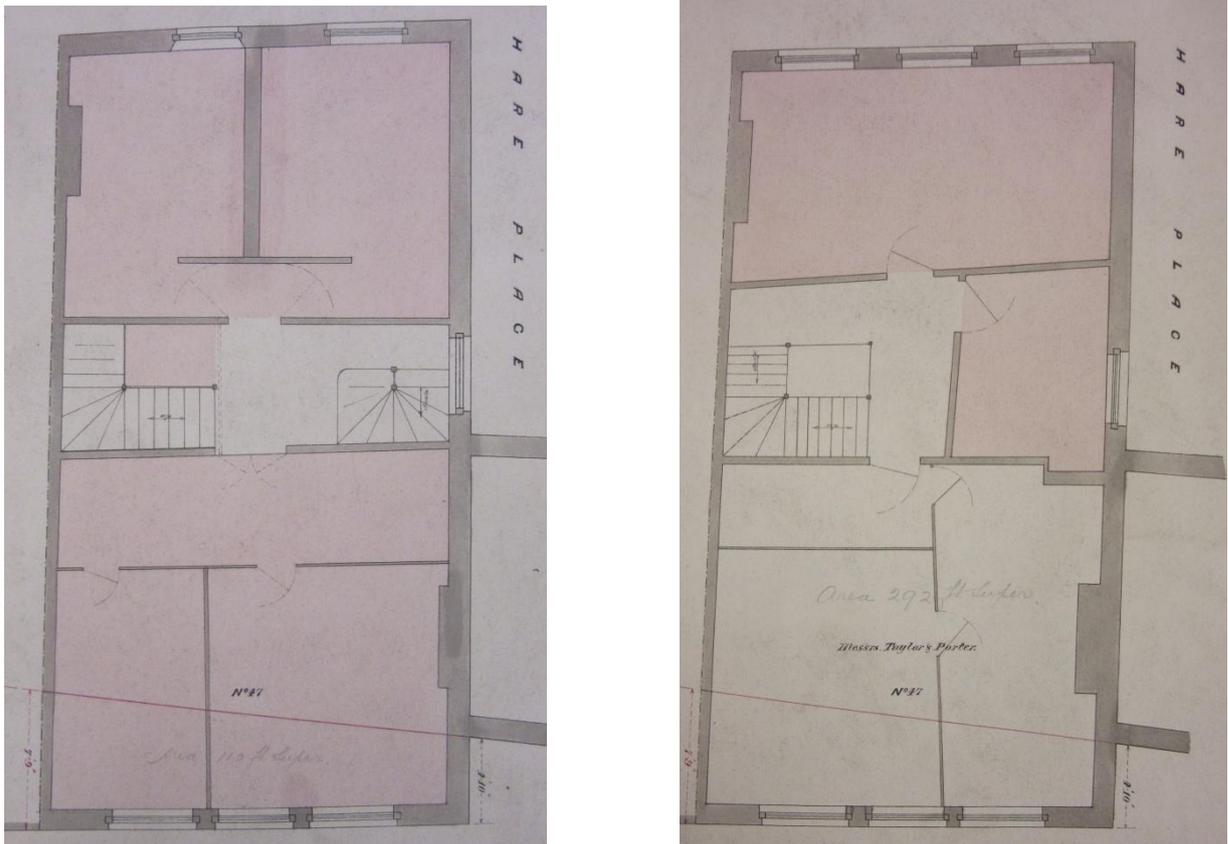


Figure 7: Plan of the First (left) and Second (right) Floors of No. 47, 1909 (LMA, COL/TSD/PL/01/2434).

- 3.6. The new façade at No. 47 had been completed by 1910 with agreements made with the City to install signage to the front elevation in November of that year (LMA, COL/PHD/AD/05/01A/0802). The demolished façade may well already have been rebuilt or substantially altered before this time however; the plans made of the first and second floors in 1909 indicate there were three windows to the street frontage as opposed to the two depicted in 1850 (ref Figure 5). The new façade comprised five storeys rather than a mansard storey; the rebuilt roof was unusually angled to the south-west to allow for the new alignment of the north elevation. It was rebuilt using red brickwork and stone banding to the sills and tops of the windows and the cornice; each window was given a moulded cornice. The design of the windows was clearly a response to the uses of the building as newspaper offices, artist's studios and publishing, comprising large plate glass casements of two lights to achieve maximum light; the mansard storey had a long horizontal window of six lights (Figure 8). Indeed, newspapers again established modest offices to the upper floors of the building, including the Western Morning News and Naval and Military Record to the first floor, the Glasgow News to the second floor, and the Rochdale Observer and Southport Guardian to the third floor. The mansard storey was occupied by a firm of artists (John Parker & Co). A new shopfront had been constructed at ground-floor level comprising two plate glass windows flanked by pilasters with brackets, cornice and fascia, stall risers with glass blocks and a central recessed doorway. The level of architectural detailing was therefore somewhat plain in comparison with many of the other re-fronted buildings on Fleet Street, but was forward-thinking in terms of its practicality whilst still using a clear classical language (Figure 8).



Figure 8: No. 47 as newly re-fronted in 1912 (Historic England Archive, BL21768); the adjoining Nos. 49-50 were still under construction at this time.

- 3.7. In May 1915, the El Vino Company was granted an easement by the City for a lamp at 47 Fleet Street (LMA, COL/PHD/02/050/0812), which suggests this is the date at which the ground floor and basement were occupied as a wine bar. The company was founded by wine merchant Alfred Bower in 1879 at premises in Mark Lane selling imported burgundy, claret and sherry. Bower's success led to the opening of four other premises across London, of which 47 Fleet Street was to become the flagship. Bower was knighted in 1913, became Lord Mayor in 1924 and Master of the Vintners Company in 1926; he died in 1948.
- 3.8. No. 47 survived the bombing of the Second World War unscathed, although many of the buildings immediately to the south on Mitre Court and Serjeant's Inn were damaged beyond repair. By 1951, Hare Court led into a cleared open space of ruined buildings contrasting with its former appearance as a narrow passage (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Ordnance Survey (1951) showing the survival of No. 47 but the destruction of buildings to the south.

- 3.9. Plans of the basement and ground floor dating from 1941 to 1962 depict the layout of El Vino after 1915 and subsequent alterations. In 1941, the basement area comprised a large open space on the east side under the entire length of the building used for wine storage. The north-west part of the basement was partitioned for spirit storage whilst a lavatory was located to the south-west corner. The stairs from the ground floor were located to the centre of the west side (Figure 10). In 1955, the lavatory was removed and two new ones were created on the west side either side of the stairs to provide facilities for both men and women. The cellar space was also extended to the south in 1955 (Figure 11). In 1972, a new bottle bar was created to the north part of the basement with only the 1955 extension remaining for cellaring. In 1941, the arrangement of the ground floor was probably the same as when El Vino took over the building, with a service counter to the east side with a barrel rack. On the west side, the stairs descended to the basement and a partition separated the stairs to the upper floor which were accessed from Hare Place; adjoining the partition was a wine rack. A 6' 6" timber partition separated the rear single-storey part of the building which was still lit by a large lantern rooflight; this area had its own doorway onto Hare Place and a fireplace to the south wall. Small booths had been created on the east side (Figure 10). In 1962, the eastern display window and north-east part of the bar was altered to accommodate an office with a separate access to the side of the main entrance; this necessitated relocating the main pair of front doors inwards and creating a new screen on the west side (Figure 12).

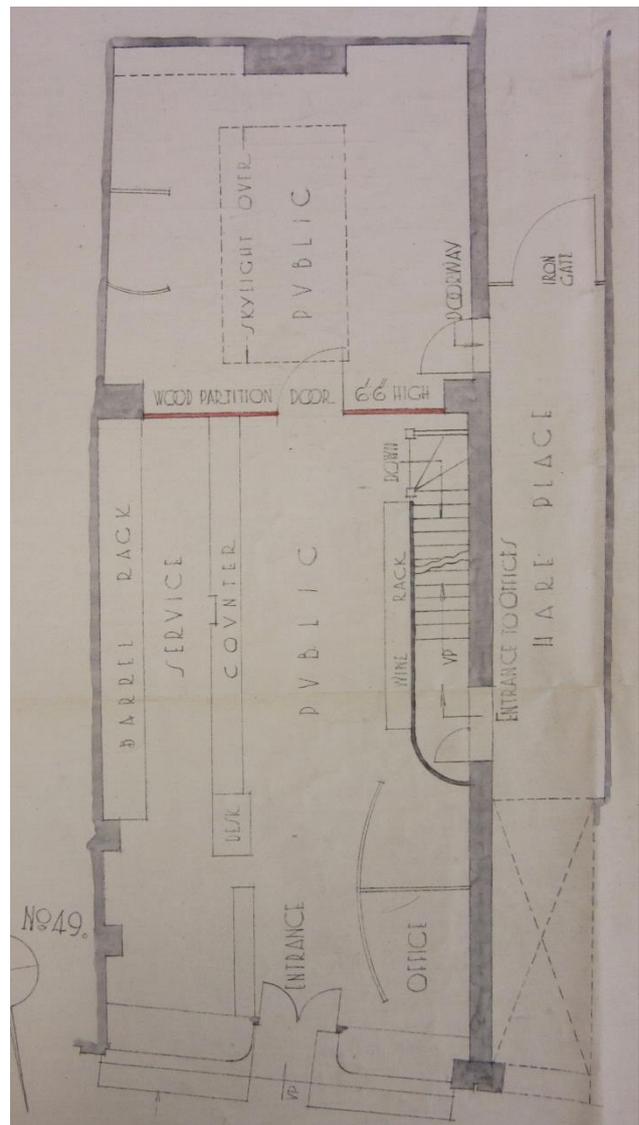
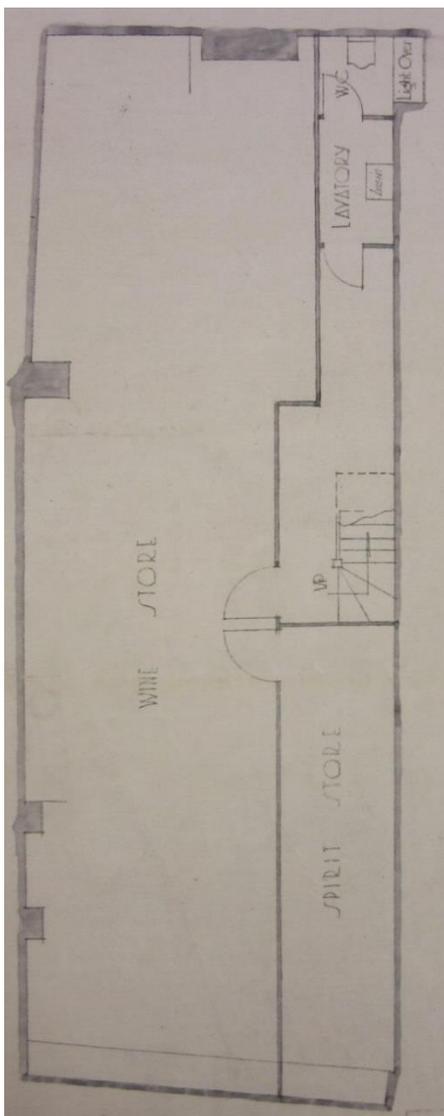


Figure 10: Plans of the Basement (left) and Ground Floor (right) in 1941 (LMA, COL/SVD/PL/02/0545).

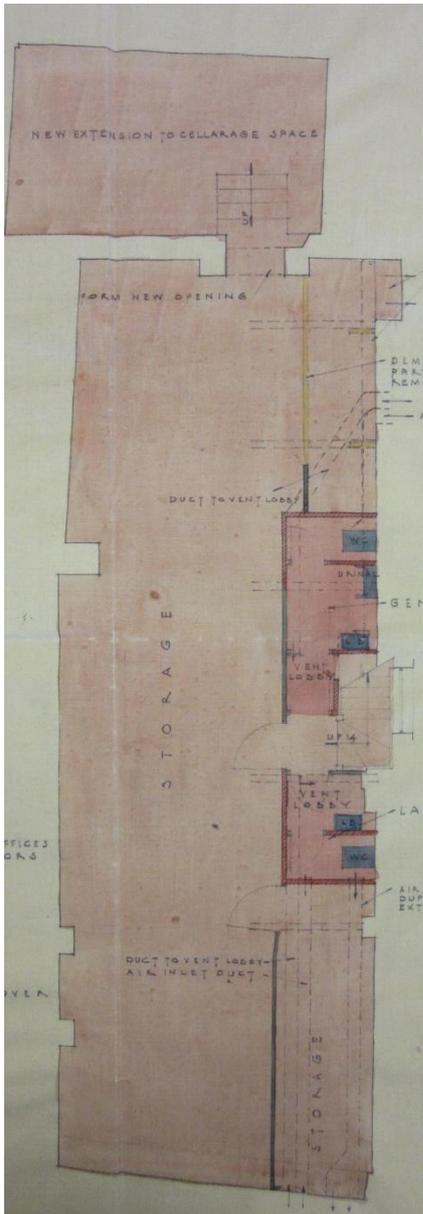


Figure 11: Proposed Plans of the Basement (1955).

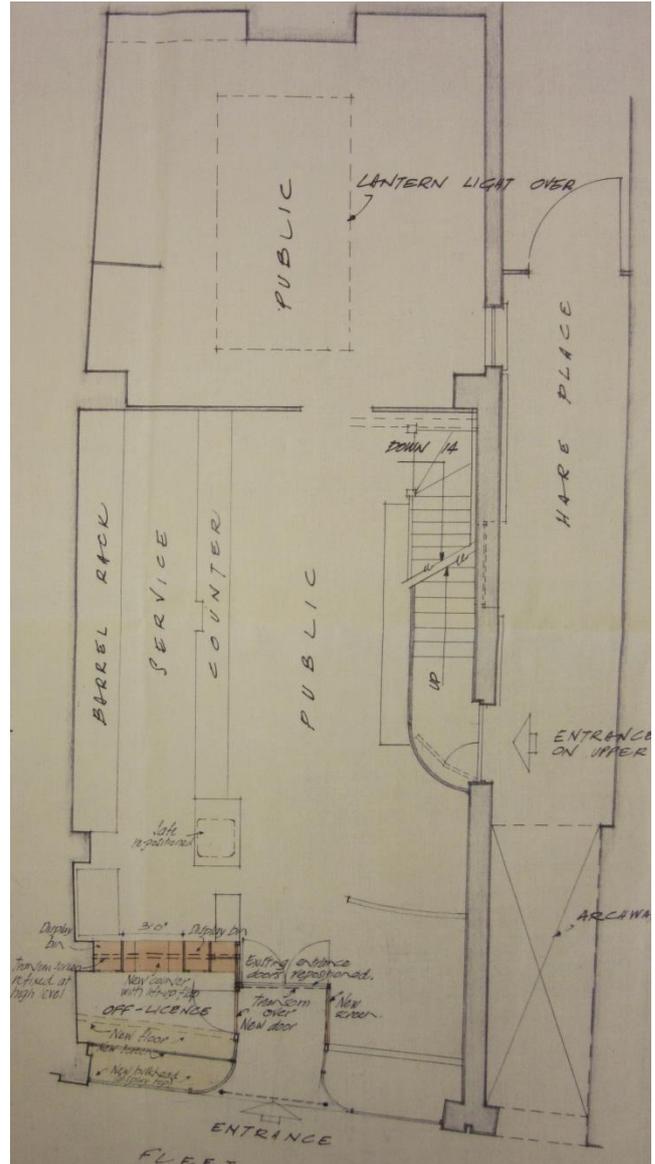


Figure 12: Proposed Plans of the Ground Floor (1962).

- 3.12. It was under Sir Alfred Bower's successor and nephew Frank Bower that El Vino flourished at 47 Fleet Street and became a notorious haunt for some of the most influential journalists and lawyers during the golden age of Fleet Street (Figure 13). It appeared in the Rumpole books as the fictional barrister's favourite hangout Pomeroy's. Political columnist Alan Watkins recalls in his memoirs: "Here the conversation was louder, jollier, more brutish even, accompanied by strong spirits rather than by wine, with much ho, ho, hoing, conducted by tall, heavy men with red braces." House rules were strict, with men having to wear ties and women having to wear skirts; anyone flouting the rules would be bawled at or barred by Frank Bower. Women were famously banned from purchasing drinks at the bar until a discrimination case was brought in 1982, before which they were required to sit at tables in the rear partitioned part of the ground floor; all three appeal court judges declared they drank at El Vino. El Vino was subsequently chaired by Frank Bower's nephews Christopher Mitchell and his brother Sir David Mitchell, a cabinet minister in Margaret Thatcher's government. In more recent decades, the departure of Fleet Street's newspaper community and a less enthusiastic drinking culture among lawyers and the new office workers has radically changed the character of El Vino.



## 4.0. DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECT SITE

- 4.1. No. 47 Fleet Street is a five storey building over a basement that was re-fronted during infrastructure works in c.1910. The front north elevation remains largely unaltered (ref Figure 8) to the upper floors with its simple unadorned and restrained classicism of red brickwork in English Bond, stone dressings, and large two-light casement windows. The attic fourth floor retains its long horizontal “studio” window (Figure 14a). The ground floor shopfront remains much as built with the curved plate glass display windows, stall risers with glazed blocks and pilasters with brackets; the fascia was altered in c.1915, and the pair of entrance doors was re-located inwards in 1962 to accommodate a side entrance into a separate off-licence. The doors with panels to the lower half and glazing to the upper half are likely to be original from c.1910; the 1960s side door was made to match the existing (Figure 14). The roof comprises two pitched roofs with a central valley gutter and covered with grey slate; the original mansard profile was lost in 1910 and the roof rebuilt to accommodate a full-height fourth floor. The roof pitches followed the original alignment of the building and so appear at an unusual angle from the front elevation owing to the change in front building line in 1910.
- 4.2. The rear (south) and side (west) elevations are of more historic interest because these were retained in the rebuilding works of c.1910. The red brickwork is older and in Flemish Bond; the rebuilt rear parapet along with other repairs have used yellow stock brickwork. The windows to the rear elevation all appear to have been replaced in 1910 with horned sash windows and a six-light horizontal “studio” dormer to the mansard roof (Figure 15). However the windows to the west elevation are earlier timber sash windows of six-over-six panes and slender glazing bars and frames rebated within the brickwork, suggesting a date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, the pedimented timber doorcase with carved brackets to the ground floor may also date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figures 15 and 16). The single storey rear south part of the building is likely to be a 19<sup>th</sup> century addition and retains a typically Victorian four-panelled door on its west elevation; it is also built in red brickwork using Flemish Bond. The extension has a flat roof behind the parapet and a large 20<sup>th</sup> century lantern rooflight (Figure 15).



Figure 14: The ground floor shop front at No. 47 illustrating changes made in 1962.



Figure 14a: The front (north) elevation dating from c.1910 with shopfront from c.1915 (altered 1962).



Figure 15: The rear (south) and side (west) elevations with surviving late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century brickwork.



Figure 16: The likely late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century doorcase and windows to the west elevation.

- 4.3. The basement and ground floor form part of the El Vino wine bar. The basement was converted from a wine and spirit cellar in 1972 to a bottle bar and appears to have been substantially remodelled since that time with the introduction of restaurant uses in two separated seating areas, kitchen facilities and timber fixtures matching the style of the ground floor (Figure 17). Little or no fabric of any historic interest survives at this level. The fabric on the ground floor appears to date largely from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with some mid-20<sup>th</sup> century additions. The bar counter of mahogany and bottle rack (with an early example of a telephone) likely date from c.1915 following the arrival of EL Vino at No. 47 (Figures 18 and 19). The timber and glazed partition on the west side is also likely to be early or original. The layout of the bar area remains unchanged, separated from the single-storey rear area by the 1940s timber partition. The timber and glazed partitions in this area are early if not original to c.1915, as is the fireplace with its floral tiles (Figure 20). Fixed around the ground floor are a number of brass plaques commemorating former regulars at El Vino and reflect the notoriety of the establishment among those in the legal and media worlds; plaques include those to James Crespi QC remembered for his great girth, intellect and anecdotes, the theatre and music critic Philip Hope-Wallace, the distinguished legal clerk Cyril Batchelor, and Bill Cathles who managed a publishing company and spent most of the day at his usual table in El Vino.



Figure 17: The basement was converted to a restaurant post-1972.



Figure 18: The bar counter and bottle racks, largely dating from c.1915, the north end altered in 1962.



Figure 19: The early 20<sup>th</sup> century bottle rack and telephone.



Figure 20: The rear area within the single-storey block.

- 4.4. The upper floors are accessed via the doorway on Hare Place. There is considered to be little fabric of historic interest on these floors. The rooms on the first to the fourth floors all appear to have been remodelled if not rebuilt within the shell of the south and west elevations in c.1910. The closed string staircase with plain square balusters and turned newels are typical of the Edwardian period on a staircase of secondary importance (Figure 21). The position of the staircase was re-located in 1910 to the south-west corner of the building rather than in the centre (ref 1909 plans in Figure 7). None of the internal doors are original on the upper floors. Several of the rooms (first floor front, second floor rear, and fourth floor front and rear) have typically Edwardian cast iron fireplaces; there is some surviving cornicing and skirting and likewise dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with examples in the rear rooms matching that in the remodelled front rooms and fourth floor (Figures 22 to 25). The unusual change in ceiling height in the first floor front room is likely due to the re-fronting works in 1910; in this room the large plate glass casement windows are juxtaposed alongside the earlier timber sash window which once lit the staircase (Figure 22). Most window furniture has been replaced, although there are some original examples of latches on the fourth floor (Figure 24). The second floor front room was inspected but photographs were not permitted by the tenant; this room contains original part glazed “office booths” which date from the time when the upper floors were used as newspaper offices. The third floor was not accessible during the site visit.



Figure 21: The early 20<sup>th</sup> century staircase to the upper floors; its re-location suggests the entire interior was remodelled during the re-fronting works of c.1910.



Figure 22: The first floor front room with lowered ceiling and Edwardian fireplace, with an 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century window to the west elevation.



Figure 23: The second floor rear room, showing Edwardian cornicing and skirting with an Edwardian fireplace and horned sash window to the rear south elevation.



Figure 24: The fourth floor front room depicting cornicing, skirting, horizontal “studio” window and fireplace all dating from the 1910 re-fronting works.



Figure 25: The fourth floor rear room with elements from the same period.

## 5.0. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE OF 47 FLEET STREET

- 5.1. The aim of a Significance Assessment is, in the terms required by Paragraphs 128-129 of the NPPF, a “*description of the significance of a heritage asset*”. In the context of a historic building which has been the subject of a series of alterations throughout its lifetime, it is also a useful tool for determining which of its constituent parts holds a particular value and to what extent. *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (March 2015) states that understanding the nature of significance is important for understanding the need for and best means of conservation. Understanding the extent of that significance leads to a better understanding of how adaptable a heritage asset may be. Understanding the level of significance provides the essential guide as to how policies should be applied.
- 5.2. The descriptive appraisal will evaluate the undesignated site against listed selection criteria of ‘Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings’, DCMS, 2010. Historic England’s (formerly English Heritage) criteria outlined in ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance,’ which partially overlap with the Statutory Criteria, have also been considered and encompass the following values:
- **Evidential Value** – relating to the potential of a place to yield primary evidence about past human activity;
  - **Historical Value** – relating to ways in which the present can be connected through a place to past people, events and aspects of life;
  - **Aesthetic Value** – relating to the ways in which people derive sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;
  - **Communal Value** – relating to the meanings of place for the people who relate to it, and whose collective experience or memory it holds.
- 5.3. Although not officially considered to be one of the four principal values, **setting** is increasingly viewed as an important value that makes an important contribution to the significance of a heritage asset. This assessment of the contribution to significance made by setting should provide the baseline for establishing the effects of any proposed works on significance.

The level of significance for each value and the setting will be assessed using the following grading:

- **High** – values of *exceptional or considerable* interest;
- **Medium** – values of *some* interest;
- **Low** – values of *limited* interest.

- 5.4. No. 47 Fleet Street is considered to possess **medium to high evidential value**. This value is derived largely from the research value of the standing and potentially buried fabric and what it might reveal about past uses and activities on the site. The fact that site has been in continuous occupation since at least the medieval period through to the rebuilding after the Great Fire and subsequent reconstructions would indicate potential for buried remains, although these may have been truncated by the formation of later basements. The building itself displays at least three phases of construction from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the re-fronting works of c.1910. The earlier work (brickwork and some timber sash windows) is confined to the west and south elevations, whilst the interior and north elevation

appear to have been entirely re-built or remodelled during the Edwardian period. Indeed there are substantial surviving interiors dating from this period, including fireplaces, cornicing, the staircase to the upper floors and joinery. All internal doors are modern. The front north elevation remains unchanged from c.1910 and the ground floor shopfront has been subject to only minor alterations during the 1960s. The layout of the wine bar at El Vino to the ground floor is largely intact with its original Edwardian fixtures and fittings with some minor 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations. With the exception of the some partitions within the second floor front room which are characteristic of newspaper offices, no surviving fabric relates to any particular former use of the upper floors.

- 5.5. The subject site is considered to possess **medium historical value**. The site embodies the continuous uses of Fleet Street since the medieval period with buildings on this site dating back to at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The existing building illustrates the substantial commercial uses of the buildings on Fleet Street during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a centre for newspaper offices, hence the forward-thinking design of the windows fronting Fleet Street in c.1910. It does not appear that any newspapers of national note were based here, however, rather the upper floors housed the offices of small regional newspapers and journals. The shopfront to the ground floor represents a typical Edwardian design. The re-fronting of the building for the widening of Fleet Street is clearly legible in the surviving external fabric, a common circumstance on Fleet Street during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The association of the building with El Vino from c.1915 provided the ground floor especially with notoriety and renown among leading figures in the media and legal professions.
- 5.6. 47 Fleet Street is considered to possess **medium aesthetic value**. The design of the Edwardian north façade is considered to be somewhat plain compared with many of the other surrounding buildings which were re-fronted at this time. Although in a classical idiom, the architectural detailing and quality of the materials is not high, whilst the unusual angled roof profile arising from the re-fronting creates an awkward junction with neighbouring buildings. The north elevation is considered to be forward-thinking for the time however, with the incorporation of practical large plate glass casement windows and “studio” windows to suit the uses of the offices within. The shopfront to the ground floor is considered to be of some quality and retains its original Edwardian character, enhanced by the largely intact interior to the ground floor and fragmentary survival of fixtures and fittings to the upper floors. The rear elevation is less successful, with evidence for numerous poor-quality repairs and replacements of windows and brickwork over time. The side west elevation has some quality and interest with its doorcase and windows dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century; however these are difficult to appreciate owing to the narrowness of Hare Place and proximity of the neighbouring building.
- 5.7. 47 Fleet Street is associated with the El Vino wine bar which became a notorious haunt for some of the most influential journalists and lawyers during the golden age of Fleet Street. It appeared in the Rumpole books as the fictional barrister’s favourite hangout Pomeroy’s. There is therefore considerable potential for collective memory, experience and identity associated with El Vino. The departures of the newspapers from Fleet Street and changing social habits have led to demise in the notoriety of the wine bar during last two decades however, but it remains intimately associated with the culture and character of Fleet Street. The building therefore possesses **medium to high communal value**, although this is limited to the ground floor and basement; the upper floors were used as offices and studios and were unlikely to possess such potential for collective memory and experience.

5.8. The setting of 47 Fleet Street is considered to be of **medium value**. The setting is divided between the busy urban streetscape of Fleet Street to the north and the quieter narrow alley of Hare Place to the south (a remnant of the medieval layout), both located within the Fleet Street Conservation Area. The building is located adjacent to the Grade II statutorily listed Nos. 49-50 Fleet Street and the front north elevation forms part of the streetscape setting of a number of other statutorily listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Church of St Dunstan in the West. To the south around Hare Place and Mitre Court, the setting of the rear elevation of No. 47 is less sensitive and is surrounded by post-war redevelopment following extensive bomb damage.

### 5.9. Summary of Significance

The significance of 47 Fleet Street therefore lies in the intactness of its front north elevation and ground floor fittings, and its previous and existing uses, producing medium to high evidential and communal values. There is also historical and aesthetic values of some interest associated predominantly with the development of the site and its relationship with the wider history of Fleet Street, and the plain though forward-thinking design of the Edwardian north elevation.

## 6.0. ASSESSMENT FOR STATUTORY DESIGNATION

### 6.1. Assessment for Statutory Listing

6.1.1. An appraisal of the special interest of the subject site has been undertaken in the context of the DCMS *Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings* (2010), which sets out the Secretary of State's policy by identifying the factors which are used to assess whether buildings have special interest. The criterion for inclusion of a building on the list is the existence of "special architectural or historic interest". General principles include age and rarity, aesthetic merits, selectivity, national interest and state of repair. These overlap with Historic England's Listing Selection Guide for *Commerce and Exchange Buildings* (2017), which will also be considered in the assessment.

#### 6.1.2. Architectural Interest

*'To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms'.*

47 Fleet Street is the product of an on-going process of development from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The building is not associated with an identified architect for any of its several phases of construction and, from the exterior, displays a mixture of styles and periods which contribute to its evidential value. Clearly the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century building on the site was of some quality given the high-quality brickwork in Flemish Bond, surviving timber sash windows and door case to the west elevation (and ref Figure 5). Apart from these fragmentary survivals, the interior and north elevation were rebuilt and remodelled in c.1910. The design of the Edwardian north elevation retained a classical idiom but is plain in its design and use of materials with English Bond brickwork, ornamentation limited to stone banding and stone cornice, and large casement windows to the upper floors and horizontal "studio"

windows to the top floor. Whilst these elements possess limited architectural interest in themselves, the design was forward-looking for 1910 – rather than adding a grand and heavily ornamented new façade as other owners did following the widening of Fleet Street, the façade at No. 47 was kept simple and practical to reflect and enhance the activities of the offices within. The ground floor is a good example of an Edwardian shopfront with only minor alterations, but it is not considered to be of an exceptional or rare design and is typical of its period with recessed entrance flanked by plate glass display windows and framed by pilasters with brackets and cornice.

The internal layout of the basement and upper floors possesses no technological innovation or significant plan form; the former has been remodelled since 1972, whilst the latter have a simple practical layout for office uses. The interest of the ground floor interior lies in its surviving layout and fixtures and fittings (notably the bar counter, bottle rack and some part-glazed partitions) which have remained largely unchanged since at least 1940. Whilst this is a good largely unaltered example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century wine bar, the ground floor of the building was not designed to be so as part of the architectural design of the building as a whole. Indeed, the existing fixtures and fittings were added after the completion of the new façade and are not considered to be of any intrinsic architectural merit.

### 6.1.3. Historic Interest

*'To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing'.*

The historic interest of 47 Fleet Street is covered in detail at paragraph 5.5. The historic interest of the building is that it embodies the organic development of Fleet Street from medieval times, the growing importance of the newspaper industry during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (limited to the offices of small regional newspapers and journals in this case) and the association with the El Vino wine bar and its patrons. This does not constitute special historic interest in terms of the criteria outlined above.

### 6.1.4. Aesthetic Merits

*'The appearance of a building – both its intrinsic architectural merit and any group value – is a key consideration in judging listing proposals'.*

*'Quality of elevational design, interest of planning, quality and survival of decorative elements, innovation rather than imitation; these considerations will be important'.*

The aesthetic merits of 47 Fleet Street have been discussed in detail at paragraph 5.6. This principal north elevation of the building is a simple though forward-thinking design for a commercial office building with ground-floor shopfront of the Edwardian period which reflects the character and development of the Fleet Street Conservation Area. As discussed in 6.1.2, the quality of the elevations and detailing are somewhat plain, not particularly distinguished or innovative to denote intrinsic architectural merit.

### 6.1.5. Age and Rarity

*'Listing in these circumstances is largely a comparative exercise and needs to be selective where a substantial number of buildings of a similar type and quality survive. In such cases, the Secretary of State's policy is to list only the most representative or most significant examples of the type'.*

The Historic England listing criteria for Commercial Buildings state that these buildings survive in such large numbers that they need to be carefully assessed for listing. The more modern the building, the stronger claim to special interest must be. In terms of age, most of the surviving fabric at 47 Fleet Street dates from the Edwardian period, meaning that a high degree of special architectural or historic interest or technological innovation would be necessary to merit statutory listing; it is not considered that the building possesses such qualities. It is also not considered that the shopfront displays any elements in terms of its design or plan which would be considered rare, despite the medium to high evidential value. Whilst simple unadorned commercial buildings have experienced less protection through the medium of statutory listing, No. 47 is not considered to be a rare example in terms of bespoke and intact newspaper offices to the upper floors and a wine bar added some years after the completion of the building to the ground floor.

#### 6.1.6. Intactness

The Historic England listing criteria states that careful assessment is needed as to whether enough survives of the special interest for designation to be warranted because commercial buildings are prone to substantial change and alteration. As detailed above in paragraph 5.4, No. 47 Fleet Street has remained largely unaltered in terms of its fabric and front north elevation since substantial remodelling works in c.1910; the shopfront at ground floor level survives largely intact within only minor alterations. The Edwardian works obliterated any previous fabric or plan form but for the brickwork, doorcase, external door, and sash windows to the west and south elevations which survive as fragmentary evidence of earlier phases. The ground floor appears to have retained its layout and fixtures and fittings installed when El Vino took over the lease in c.1915, including the bar counter, bottle rack and some partitions. There appears to have been no unsympathetic or inappropriate replacements to joinery or original fabric since 1910, although all internal doors to the upper floors appear to be modern; there is some survival of internal joinery, cornices and fireplaces to the upper floors. The basement has been entirely remodelled as a restaurant and kitchen in recent times.

#### 6.1.7. National Interest

*'...the most significant or distinctive regional buildings that together make a major contribution to the national historic stock. Some buildings will be listed because they represent a nationally important but localised industry.'*

No. 47 Fleet Street is not considered to make a significant contribution to the national historic stock of Edwardian commercial buildings designed for retail and office uses.

#### 6.1.8. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing analysis, it is considered that the likelihood of the subject site being eligible for **statutory listing is unlikely**. Whilst the degree of intactness may be considered to be medium (hence the medium to high evidential value), the building is considered to lack sufficient special historic and architectural interest to merit statutory listing.

## 7.0. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. Having examined the building against the criteria established by the DCMS and Historic England, it is considered that it is **unlikely that the subject site is of sufficient special historic and architectural interest to merit statutory listing**. Despite the medium to high evidential value and the degree of intactness of the Edwardian north elevation and fixtures and fittings to the ground floor, 47 Fleet Street is considered to be unexceptional in its design and surviving fabric, incorporating none of the high-quality design, literate detailing, innovative technology or rare and unusual fixtures and fittings which would merit statutory listing. However, the age, uses and design of the building are considered to contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Fleet Street Conservation Area (the principal characteristics are set out in para 2.3).