



Ambassadors Hotel, Bloomsbury

Design and Access Statement

April 2023

Hospitality,
Architecture
& Interiors

Merchant Exchange
20 Bell Street
Glasgow
G1 1LG

Contact
+44(0)141 552 2194
info@ica.studio
ica.studio



Scope

This document has been prepared to support the application for proposed changes to the external embellishments of Ambassadors Hotel in Bloomsbury London.

It is broadly proposed to change the facade **lighting**, external **signage** and **terrace** finishes with planting scheme for the existing building housing an operational hotel.

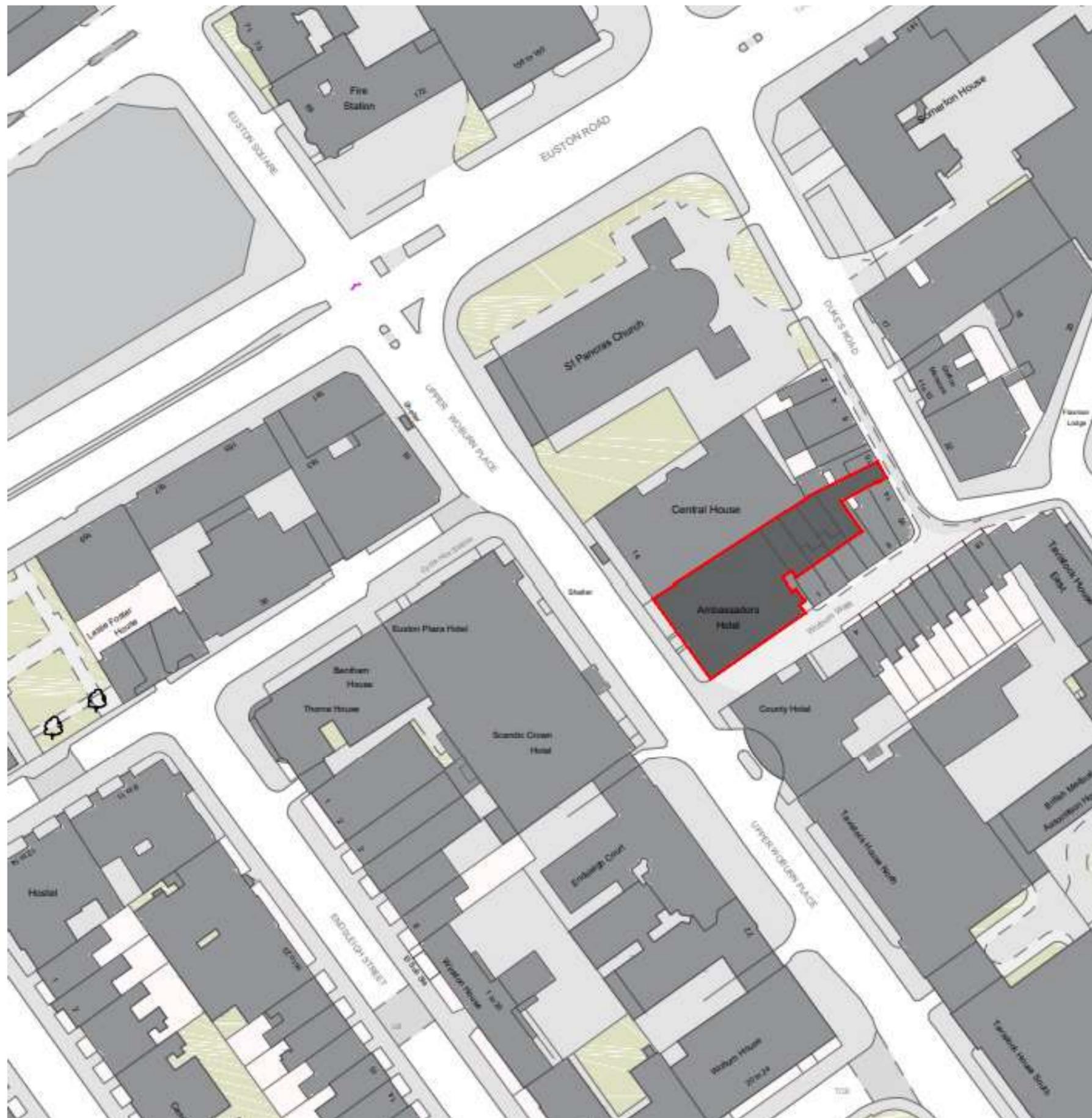


Image
Location Plan

Site and Setting

Location

Located in the **London Borough of Camden in Bloomsbury**, a once aristocratic enclave and one of London's first suburbs the site sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area - developed over 200 years by the Earl of Southampton to offer greater space between houses (after the Great Fire of London) within a huge estate.

The area is characterised by a network of quiet squares and grand Georgian terraces. The area has long attracted artists, authors and lawyers who weaved the area's ambience into their work.

Upper Woburn Place and adjacent Woburn Walk are named after Woburn Abbey, the main country seat of the Dukes of Bedford, who developed much of Bloomsbury.

Woburn Walk is a pedestrian street in Bloomsbury, London,[1] that was designed by architect Thomas Cubitt in 1822, and it is one of the first examples of a pedestrian shopping street in the Regency era. The street is home to many Grade II listed buildings which are well-preserved, including the black painted bow-fronted shops windows.

Site Description / Use

The application site is located on the corner of Upper Woburn Place and Woburn Walk. It is occupied by an eight storey stone fronted Georgian building which is currently occupied by an operational hotel.

Access

The site is accessed via 3 public entrances, 2 from Upper Woburn Place using stepped access and an entrance via Woburn Walk accessed via ramp and steps. The site benefits from a wide area of pavement to the front and pedestrianised area to side.

Vehicular access is possible to the front of the building, and a public bus stop within 15m of the main entrance.



Existing

The existing 8 storey hotel on Upper Woburn Place was designed by Welsh architect Alfred Swash in the late 1800s., in the desirable residential enclave of **Bloomsbury**.

The Bloomsbury district was planned and built as an affluent Regency era residential 'suburb' with eafy squares and elegant Georgian architecture. The district is known for its numerous garden squares and flora, and is the location of notable institutions in the cultural, intellectual, and educational spheres.

This hub of thinking, inovation and learned debate brought into being the now infamous **Bloomsbury Set**. A fashionable group who became members of an exclusive club concieved by artists and literaries to openly discuss their memoirs. A club called **The Memoir Club**.

This included writers such as Virgina Woolf, Lytton Strachey and E.M Forster and with artists, critics and ballerina, Duncan Grant, Clive Bell and Lydia Lopokova.

It is intended that the existing hotel at 12 Upper Woburn Place be reinvented as The Memoir Club - a celebration of the values of its namesake.

The existing restaurant (Number Twelve) will become The Adeline - Virginia Woolf's first namesake.

In review of the existing facade and kerb appeal as part of the refurbishment - an area of improvement was identified in the external lighting design and restaurant terrace.

Lighting

There is evidence that inefficient and high powered fitting are being used.

These fixtures have poor optical control causing unwanted light spill and high glare and the overall lighting strategy is considered to be dated.

Flood lights are used to ineffectively highlight signage and a few architectural elements.

The steps to the main entrance are not directly lit, leaving potential for trips or falls.



Images:
Ambassador
Bloomsbury Hotel
lit up at night - as
Existing.
From Elektra Lighting
design document



Proposed Improvements

It is the intension to evoke, a sense of the heyday of 'The Club' ideals as epotomised by The Bloomsbury Set.

In the 1920s, as a way of reconnecting after the war, a small collective was established of artists and writers to candidly share their autobiographical writings.

The BloomsburySet (or Group) helped to establish Bloomsbury as fashionable and avantgarde. The proposed lighting and signage proposals hark back to a stylish 20s art deco-esque energy, where 'The Memoir Club' within speaks of deeply intimate unconventional exclusivity - born from the artistic fervour of a literary club without sociatal confines.

Lighting

Design by Elektra Lighting.

It is proposed that improvements to the facade lighting will focus on subtly highlighting the ornate heritage features and its materiality, whilst ensuring guests receive a warm and inviting feel.

Square light fittings fixed to the terrace upstand - lighting across the pavement to be removed to limit light spill.

Signage

Purple blade signs shown in adjacent images are proposed for replacement, along with the signage over the entrance to 12 Upper Woburn Place on the corner, for the new The Memoir Club restaurant.

The tall metal orb encased light fittings on the wall piers either side of the hotel entrance stair are to be replaced with art deco illuminated globes

Terrace

Proposed upgrade to ground floor external seating terrace (right of main hotel entrance) to include:

- Flooring. Replacement tiling.
- Metal Gate to side steps to restrict access out of hours.
- Planting. Box planters and feature pots

Images:
(clockwise from top left):
Ambassador
Bloomsbury Hotel .

The Bloomsbury Set.

The new branding for
the The Memoir Club.

Concept image for
restaurant branding.

Woburn Walk , leafy
conservation area .



Proposal

Lighting

Design by Elektra Lighting.

This is achieved by creating contrasts and drawing attention to the historic details. Elektra has ensured the approach is sympathetic to its surroundings and Conservation Area with careful attention taken to prevent unwanted lighting pollution into the night sky or surroundings.

Existing lighting locations and fixings are being used where possible. The luminaires specified have been chosen for their adjustability and high optical control to ensure light spillage is reduced.

It is proposed that the facade and ground floor access is improved by the inclusion of the following lighting installations.

1. Lamps under the canopy highlight and draw guests into the entrance. An optically controlled wash of warm white light will be used to uplight the brick facade, drawing out the natural hues of the brickwork.

2. Narrow beam uplights between windows and columns will enhance the form and texture of the stonework and frame the building. Linear LEDs on window sills and feature ledges as shown on adjacent image.

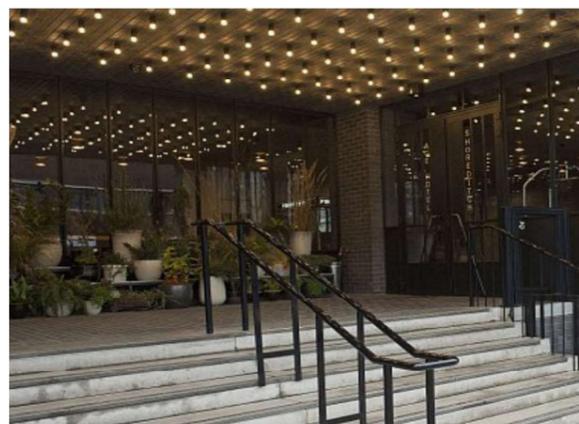
3. Stair tread lighting to steps and downlighters to the ramp for improved visibility and accessibility.

All lighting specified is all energy-efficient LEDs and a minimum quantity as possible is being used.

An intelligent lighting control system will ensure that the scenes change according to a photocell over the course of the evening and into the night. The overnight setting will have a paired back, dimmed scene as the full facade will not be required to be lit all night.

This will be an upgrade from the timer system currently in place, as the lighting will be in sync with the daylight shift.

Refer to detailed Lighting Strategy document for details of fittings, fixings, lamps and locations. - for lighting and signage.



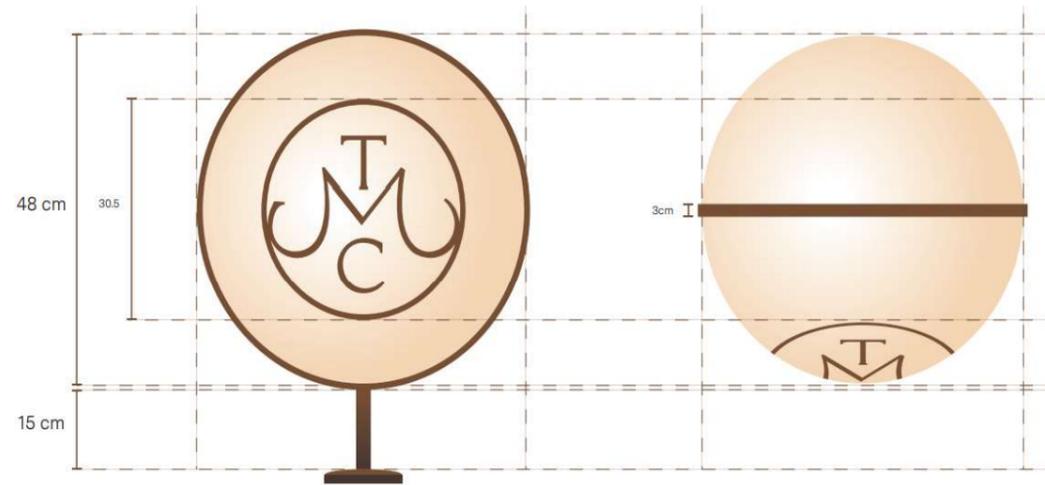
Images
Top:
Ambassador
Bloomsbury Hotel
lit up at night - as
Proposed
From Elektra Lighting
design document

1. Under canopy
2. Feature uplighters and linear LEDs
3. Tread washers



GLOBE LIGHT

Opal Acrylic Sphere lit internally and brushed brass identity mounted on front. Brass rim across vertical diameter. Mounted on Brass Plinth to replace existing lights. 2 of.



Proposals

Signage

All internally illuminated

For the signage lighting, the approach has been taken to integrate the lighting within the signage to help reduce the amount of unwanted light pollution.

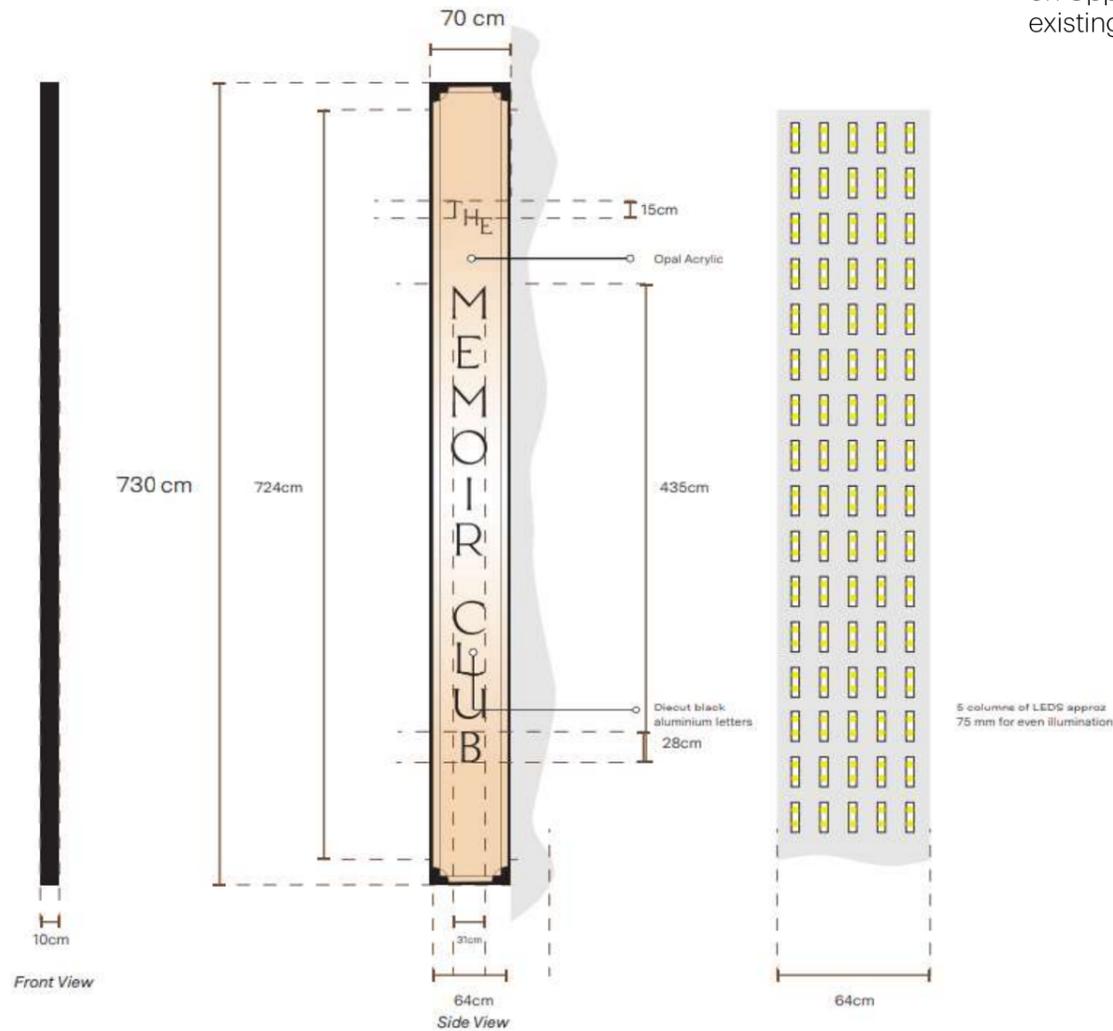
2 x Globe signs either side of Upper Woburn Place front steps: Illuminated internally (replacement of existing orb type lights atop stone piers and consistent with existing lamps in same location)

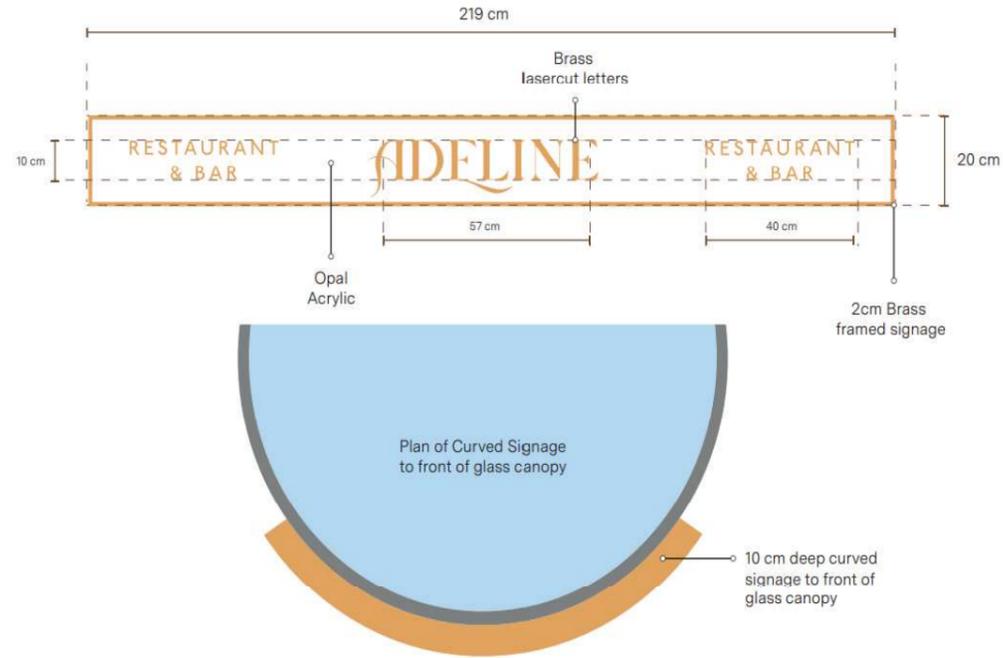
2 x Blade signs, internally illuminated mounted on Upper Woburn Place facade: Replacement of existing signs with use of existing power and fixings



BLADE LIGHT

Aluminium case finished in Black with laser cut internal frame design, mounted Opal acrylic which holds black aluminium letters. Sign design repeated front and back. Foamex carrier panels to be supplied complete with white leds mounted to both sides. Position to replace existing blade signs. 2 of





CURVED CANOPY

Shaped Brass frame panel and signcase with laser cut brass letters mounted on opal acrylic. Backlit with LED Replacement of signage existing in this location

Proposals

Signage

1 x deep curved brass box internally lit sign to existing glass canopy front over entrance to Restaurant - to replace existing. Brass lasercut lettering within backlit opal acrylic.

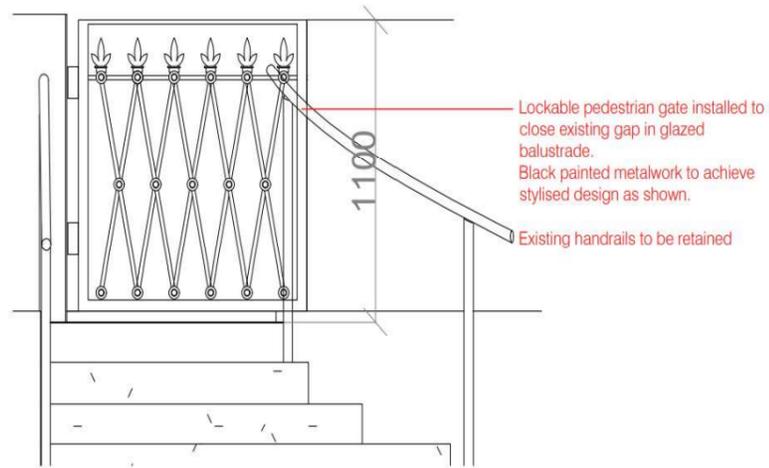
Access

Access to the hotel is via steps to the main entrance, where additional tread lighting has been proposed to improve visibility, or via an existing ramped access to the side, aligned with the street pedestrian crossing.

Access to the corner restaurant is as existing, but a metal gate is proposed to secure the seating terrace out of operational hours.

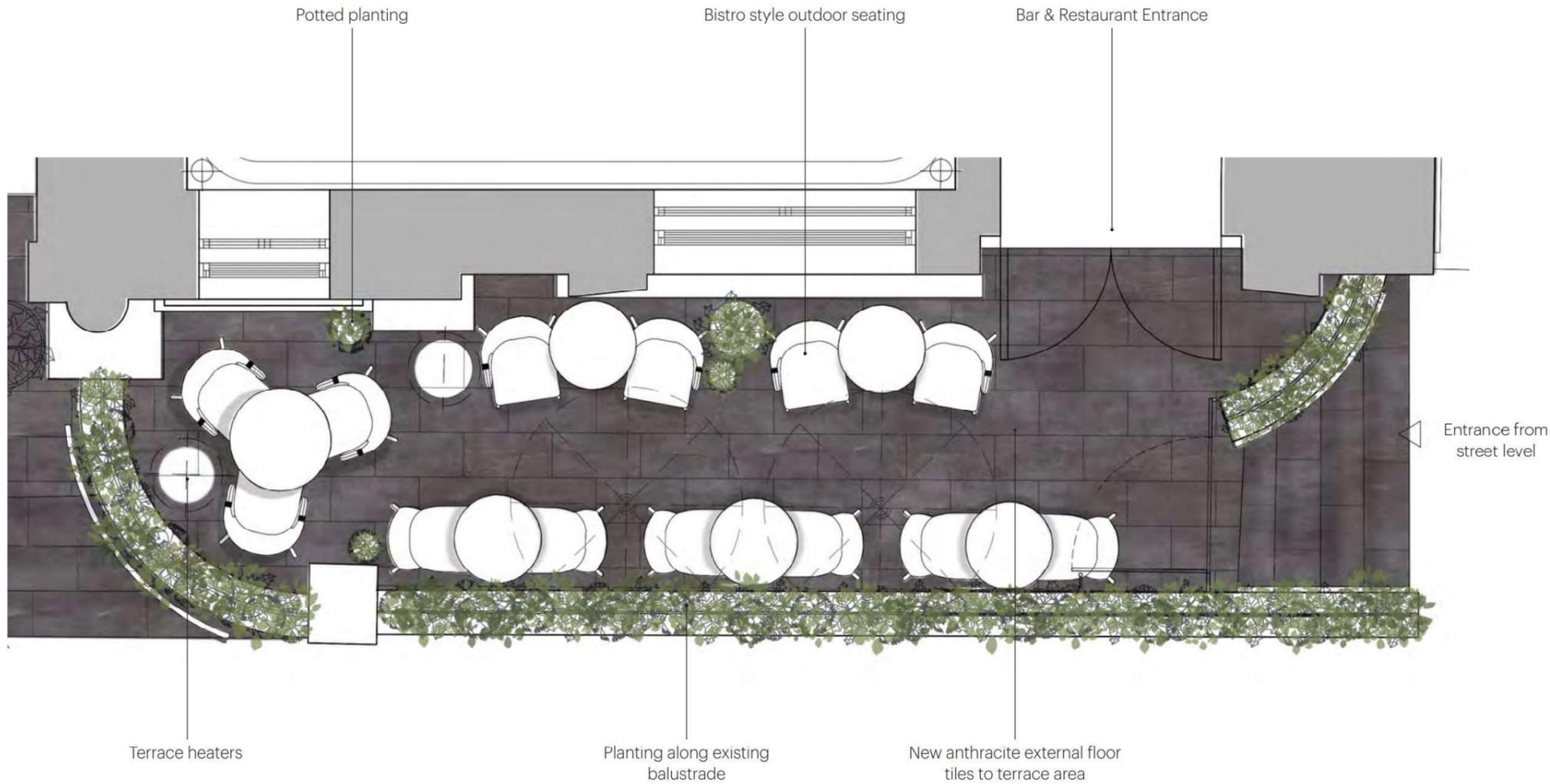
Gate

Details of the gate are intended to replicate the decorative balconies visible along Woburn Walk.



4. New Gate Detail

Scale 1:20



Terrace

Flooring

This application includes a proposal for the replacement of the external terrace paving to a anthracite paving tile.

Gate

Access to terrace (and restaurant) from street level to be restricted during closing hours. The proposal is for a metal gate - design to replicate in intent - the balcony ironwork along Woburn Walk

Planting

Linear rectangular trough planters added - butted along inside of glass balustrade to accommodate plants of sufficient height and trailing plants to create a good impact without looking too bulky. Curved section to be same planters, in suitable configuration.

Linear LED strip lights are proposed along the line of planters to illuminate the foliage and delineate the terrace edge.

Main entrance left hand side of double doors to have 1 x 800mm high x 350mm diameter ceramic pot planted with 2.8m high pyramid evergreen Jasmine and 1 x 600mm high x 280mm diameter ceramic pot planted with 1.2m high Chameropsis Palm

Entrance doors to Restaurant - 1 x 900mm high x 450mm diameter ceramic pot planted with a 3.5m high Pyramid Evergreen Jasmine



Images

Top:
Exteranal Terrace
Design Proposal
showing new flooring,
gate and planting

1. Anthracite Grey
paving

2. Patio Concept for
furniture

3. Ceramic Pot with
Evergreen Jasmine



Nicholas Roberts
Design Associate
nicholas@ica.studio

Hospitality,
Architecture
& Interiors

Merchant Exchange
20 Bell Street
Glasgow
G1 1LG

Contact
+44(0)141 552 2194
info@ica.studio
ica.studio