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Development Management
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall, Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE**FAO ELAINE QUIGLEY**

Dear Elaine,

39-40 RUSSELL SQUARE AND THE SCIENCE BLOCK, LONDON, WC1B 5DA**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990
APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT****PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

Montagu Evans LLP has been instructed by the British Museum ('the Applicant' / 'the Museum'), to submit an application for planning permission and listed building consent in relation to proposals for internal and external alterations at 39-40 Russell Square ('the Site'). The proposals comprise remedial works and minor alterations to make the accommodation suitable for office use, associated storage and welfare, as part of the decant operations enabling the Museum's wider programme of works for the South West Energy Centre ('SWEC') and East Road Building ('ERB').

The description of development is as follows:

"Internal and external alterations to the building, including internal refurbishment and installation of external grilles and louvres."

The Proposed Development has been subject to pre-application discussions with officers at the London Borough of Camden ('LB Camden') and Historic England.

Application Contents

Please find enclosed the following information:

1. Schedule of Required Information, prepared by Montagu Evans;
2. Completed application Form, prepared by Montagu Evans;

3. Application Covering Letter (i.e. this letter), including Planning Statement and Heritage Statement, prepared by Montagu Evans;
4. Site Location Plan @1:250, prepared by Wright and Wright;
5. Drawing Schedule, prepared by Wright and Wright;
6. Application Drawings (existing and proposed), prepared by Wright and Wright;
7. Design and Access Statement including Sustainable Design and Construction Assessment, prepared by Wright and Wright; and
8. Schedule of Works, prepared by Wright and Wright;
9. Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by Encon;
10. Lighting specification prepared by Steensen Varming; and
11. Completed Community Infrastructure Levy Form, prepared by Montagu Evans.

THE SITE

The Site comprises 39 Russell Square, set over four storeys (+ basement) and the 'Science Block' located to the rear. The Building forms part of a row of terraces on the west side of Russell Square and is bound by 38 Russell Square and 41 Russell Square. The Site is located within the administrative local authority of the London Borough of Camden ('LB Camden') and is located within the Central London Area for the purposes of the Local Plan. The existing use of the Site is office under Use Class E.

The Building was Grade II listed in 1969 within the group listing comprising *nos. 38-43 Russell Square and attached railings*. The list description is as follows:

"Terrace of 6 houses. c1800-03. By James Burton. Multi-coloured stock brick with rusticated stucco ground floors. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each, No.38 with 5-window return, mostly blind, to Montague Place. Round-arched doorways with pilaster-jambes, cornice-heads, fanlights, sidelights and double panelled doors. No.38 has entrance on return with stuccoed Doric projecting porch. No.40 doorway converted to use as a window. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes. Cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Stucco cornice at 3rd floor level. Parapets above attic storey. Interiors: not inspected. Subsidiary Features: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas."

No. 39, which is listed at Grade II, is a post-1955 reconstruction behind a retained historic façade and is of interest primarily for the survival and quality of its principal (eastern) 19th century elevation to Russell Square. The rebuilding to the rear (which we understand to be the result of bomb damage sustained during WWII) is of no particular historic value or architectural quality. The laboratory extension to the rear, known as the Science Block, is likewise of no special merit, and is likely to date from the same period.

The Site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

PLANNING HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

A review of the planning history available on LB Camden's online planning register has been undertaken and is set out at Appendix 1.0. In summary, a certificate of lawfulness was approved confirming a lawful office use (Class B1 at the time), and subsequent permissions relate to its refurbishment for purposes within that Class. The property now benefits from an open Class E use.

The buildings are suffering the effects of water ingress, are not currently used on a permanent basis and are not suitable for occupation in their current condition. Investigative and opening up works have been undertaken to determine the extent of water ingress in the building fabric. This scope of works was agreed with LB Camden through an exchange of letters in May 2023, and the result of these investigative works has informed the works now proposed.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

To no.39, the proposals comprise remedial works to repair and prevent future damage to the listed building fabric, in addition to minor alterations (the installation of kitchenettes) to make the building suitable for office accommodation, associated storage and welfare. Largely, existing services are utilised, with the new kitchenettes connecting to capped services installed during the 2017 works. Some new servicing is however proposed to facilitate the use of the building.

The Science Block requires more substantial refurbishment, and the proposals likewise comprise remediation works, including structural repairs. It is proposed to strip out the existing modern stud partitions, fixtures, fittings and services to enable the refurbishment of the building to support workshop accommodation at the upper level and welfare on the lower level. Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery systems are to be installed, and existing ventilation fenestration will be utilised where possible, requiring minor alterations only to the elevations.

The works comprise:

Internal Alterations – Basement (01)

- Structural opening to the corridor outside the small locker room to be increased to provide a full-height opening;
- Reinstatement of door opening to from 39 RS to the Science Block with door height to match existing doors;
- Remove and retain an existing door in proposed large locker room for reinstatement to west of existing location within new frame and new architrave, including forming a new door opening for the proposed location;
- Installation of kitchenette joinery units to be connected into existing services;
- New raised access floors (+300mm) to accommodate new drainage connections from WC and showers to existing below ground drainage in large locker room;
- Installation of new WCs and showers at basement ; and
- Installation of new entrance door.
- New floor finishes to Science Block and areas suffering from water ingress in 39 RS

Internal Alterations – Ground Floor (02)

- Reinstatement of door from 39 RS to the Science Block with door height to match existing doors;
- New steps from 39RS to the Science Block lobby to mitigate the level change between the buildings; and
- Replacement of existing entrance door.
- New floor finishes to Science Block Decorative remedial works

Internal Alterations – First Floor (03)

- Installation of kitchenette joinery units to be connected into existing consented services;
- Installation of lightweight partition and lockable door between the project space and kitchenette;
- Removal of existing floor finish to replace with new flooring;
- Removal of existing roof finish to replace with new liquid roofing finish
- Decorative remedial works

Internal Alterations – Second Floor (04)

- Installation of kitchenette joinery units to be connected into existing services.
- Decorative remedial works

Internal Alterations – Third Floor (05)

- Installation fire rated partition and door to create fire lobby

- Removal of existing roof finish to replace with new liquid roofing finish with removal of timber decking and reinstatement with paving slabs;
- Decorative remedial works

Services

- New roof vent for workshop equipment extract / intake on west elevation of Science Block;
- New roof opening to accommodate new shared MVHR intake for workshop equipment on south elevation of Science Block;
- Installation of 600mm x 600mm MVHR exhaust grille / louvre at basement level on the south elevation of the Science Block;
- Installation of 600mm x 600mm MVHR intake grille / louvre at basement level on the south elevation of the Science Block;
- Existing BWIC with pipework to be increased to 400mm x 200mm at basement level on the south elevation of the Science Block to accommodate new refrigerant pipework;
- Removal of FF&E throughout, including capping or removing all associated services, and reusing associated penetrations for proposed works where possible;
- Stripping out all existing heating pipework, pipes, sanitary ware and associated services;
- Suitable penetration to be allowed, if required, for the proposed air conditioning units and MVHR or BWIC units on the first and second floors;
- Plywood soffit to be removed on first floor;
- Redundant duct cowls to be removed from the Science Block and made good for new mechanical ductwork; and
- Redundant plant and organic growth to be removed on the second floor;
- New ventilation for workshop specialist extraction in existing opening on third floor;
- New roof opening to accommodate new shared MVHR intake on third floor;
- Installation of replacement air conditioning units in the second-floor comms rooms and first floor conditioned stores (2 rooms) and associated air tightness works to existing door to maintain room temperature;
- Door opening to fire escape ladder to be blocked and made good on first floor level for safety reasons;
- Demolition of hoarding and adjacent door on second floor and installation of new external steel roof access ladder on south elevation ;
- New Mansafe fall arrest system with bolts attached to the flat roof, parapet wall and adjacent 39 RS wall on north and south elevations; and
- Installation of new compliant fixed companionway ladder at roof level to provide safe roof access for maintenance.
- New external lighting to Science Block.

LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and S.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant listed building consent or planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the decision maker 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.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with policies of the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory development plan for the Site comprises the following documents:

- The London Plan (March 2021); and
- Camden Local Plan (July 2017).

The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) and National Planning Practice Guidance are also material considerations in the determination of any planning application. There are various supplementary planning guidance documents which have also been considered, including the following:

- The Character and Context SPG (June 2014).

The Site is subject the following designations:

- Central London Area; and
- Bloomsbury Conversation Area.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

As noted, 39 Russell Square was listed at Grade II in 1969 as part of a terrace (Nos. 38-43). No. 39 itself is a 1950s reconstruction behind a retained front façade comprising the amalgamation of two properties (39 and 40) into a single property (39). To the rear is a post-1955 extension known as the 'Science Block.'

We understand that the whole building was previously used as research laboratories associated with the Museum and subsequently as welfare accommodation for staff. The interior of the extension is basic with half height stud partitions, of modern date and of no architectural or historic interest.

The interest no.39 derives largely from the historic value and architectural quality of its front elevation which makes a positive contribution to the surrounding CA. The rear façade is of inherently less interest as a 1950s rebuilding of the secondary elevation and is of no notable architectural quality. The only surviving internal feature of any historic interest – a fireplace - is not proposed to be amended as part of this Application.

The Science Block is likewise of no special merit, and its interiors are functional, containing no fabric of interest. The existing lightweight partitions are modern and, in our view, can be removed without affecting character or special interest. The barrel-vaulted roof, which has a slightly more unusual form, will be retained and repaired through the proposals.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS

The repairs to No. 39 itself, including masonry and render repairs to the Russell Square façade and balconies, are necessary and beneficial. Sampling will be carried out to ensure like-for-like matches in terms of materials and finishes. The proposals have been developed with careful consideration given to the sensitivity of fabric and are designed to be like-for-like, and the minimum necessary to make good and prevent further damage.

Internal alterations to No. 39 are minor and affect wholly modern fabric. They will not, therefore, impact the historic or architectural significance of the building or the way it is appreciated. The installation of new kitchenette units and the re-

forming of previous internal connections at levels 01 and 02 from the Science Block to no.39 are in areas of previous alteration, and the plan form of the building will not materially change as a result of these works. Services installed in 2017 will be utilised, with only minor alterations required in respect of the kitchenettes, which will connect into capped services. Some BWIC will be required to provide new mechanical servicing at Level 01 and a plant room on Level 02. In all cases, changes are proposed in areas of previously altered fabric, is light-touch and designed to be easily reversible.

For these reasons we conclude that the works to no.39 will conserve special interest, both of the listed building and the contribution it makes to the Bloomsbury CA.

Works to the Science Block likewise affect primarily modern fabric and the new servicing required to bring the building back into beneficial use will largely reuse existing service runs and fenestration, with only minor elevational changes to accommodate MVHR. Redundant plant is removed from the elevations and fabric made good. Repairs to the barrel-vaulted roof to prevent further water ingress comprise the replacement of the existing waterproofing, along with that to the rear terrace and roof above the stair core of No. 39.

In summary, the proposals comprise the sensitive refurbishment and upgrade of the buildings to address existing issues of water ingress and damage to fabric, to provide suitable accommodation to facilitate temporary Museum decant activity. Repair works are sensitive and localised, and servicing is carefully integrated to minimise any impact on sensitive fabric, retaining historic character. Notably, the internal alterations do not cause harm to significance on an appreciation thereof. Overall, we consider that the proposals meet the requisite design and heritage policies at national, regional and local levels. The statutory requirements set out in the P(LBCAA)1990 are likewise satisfied.

AMENITY AND NOISE

In terms of amenity, the Proposed Development is unlikely to negatively impact on surrounding residents given that the immediate neighbours to the rear (where most notable changes are occurring) are also within British Museum ownership. The Site is not proposed to be altered to Russell Square and will therefore not alter the relationship to existing properties. We therefore conclude that there no amenity concerns arising from the proposals with respect to outlook, privacy and light.

The Proposals seek to maintain the exterior appearance of the building, with the exception of new louvres to serve plant machinery including MVHR, BCWI and AHU. The proposed plant units are largely replacement units. A noise report has been prepared by Encon. This confirms that all plant will be 10dBa below background noise levels at the nearest effected property. The proposals therefore accord with **Local Plan Policy A4**.

The lighting proposed to the rear extension to its northern and southern sides of the building would be discrete and of a low luminance level, sufficient to light the pathways to the building from the Museum estate. There will be no glare or light spillage, such that it would cause adverse effects on amenity. It is therefore considered that proposal is compliant with **Policy A1**.

SUSTAINABILITY

National, regional and local policy supports sustainable development as a key design feature, with the Local Plan requiring the incorporation of sustainability principles into Proposals, as mentioned in **Policy D1**.

As aforementioned, the design of the Building is sensitive to its historic nature and the Proposals seek to retrofit and refurbish the existing Building with a high-quality design to ensure it can be retained and futureproofed. the proposals

upgrade the building services plant to comply with Part L of the building regulations. The principle of retrofitting the Building meets sustainability requirements, particularly **Policy D1** (Design) and **S17** of the London Plan.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the proposals are considered to accord with the relevant sections of the Development Plan and meet with national guidance and with the statutory provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The Application fee has been calculated in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) (England) 2012 (as amended). The fee, amounting to £234.00 (plus service charge), has been paid via the Planning Portal upon submission.

We would be grateful if LB Camden could confirm that our Application is completed and will be validated shortly. In the meantime, should any further clarification, information or assistance be required, please contact Graham Allison (Tel. 07818 012 421 / graham.allison@montagu-evans.co.uk) or Rosie Adamson (Tel. 07826 552 595 / rosie.adamson@montagu-evans.co.uk) or Shonagh Ramsay (Tel. 07584 154 755 / shonagh.ramsay@montagu-evans.co.uk) of this office in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,



Montagu Evans LLP